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**International Understanding and World Peace:  
The American Council of Learned Societies, 1919–1957**

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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## Abstract

International Understanding and World Peace:  
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by Ariel De

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Established in 1919 by a small coterie of internationalists, the American Council of Learned Societies emerged as the nation's foremost humanities association, representing American academics at home and abroad. These interwar internationalists hoped to bring the collective wisdom of the humanities to bear on the contemporary problems of state-building, which involved making governmental policies more rational, and nation-building, which involved promoting civil society in order to develop the requisite knowledge to live in an increasingly complex world. To achieve these ambitious ends, the Council redefined the humanities along positivist and social scientific lines, cultivated a national network of forward-looking scholars, and established the broad intellectual framework for area studies and cultural diplomacy during the 1920s and 1930s. Global conflict, however, once again engulfed the nation, and the American government urgently faced both an intellectual crisis stemming from a lack of knowledge of the Far East, and a bureaucratic crisis arising as a consequence of a federalist tradition that had inhibited the growth of strong national institutions capable of

wartime program operations. In response to these crises, the federal government turned to the Council to develop strategic academic knowledge and to implement wartime cultural operations.

This dissertation analyzes how the organization of knowledge and the evolving relationship between the public and private spheres have shaped the development of national policies in the U.S. Using the Council as a case study, I examine the interplay between governmental functions and specialized knowledge from the period between the two world wars to the early years of the Cold War, focusing specifically on public-private initiatives in area studies and cultural diplomacy. I conclude that although nongovernmental organizations like the Council played a vital role in linking academics to the federal government, public-private partnerships were often divided by competing goals. For instance, whereas the public sector regularly sought to use area studies and cultural diplomacy to achieve political ends, the Council consistently retained academic and democratic aspirations for the use of such strategic knowledge. Today, many historians argue that nonstate actors either serve the interests of elites seeking to maintain sociopolitical hegemony, or reflect a logical response to specific problems or modernizing trends. The history of the Council demonstrates, however, that nongovernmental organizations are frequently at odds with other institutional actors, and that these differences contribute to a larger political culture characterized by the ineluctable tension between academic specialists and public policymakers.

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## INTRODUCTION

### **The Council and Intellectual Internationalism**

In the aftermath of the destruction wrought by World War I, John Franklin Jameson, one of the leading historians of the twentieth century, wrote:

Did not the war teach us with still more emphases...the value and the need of investigation in human studies...The greatest of all calamities might never have taken place if men and nations had understood each other...The avoidance of war [is] not to be secured without a more solid and complete, as well as a more diffused knowledge of ethnography, human geography, linguistics and other philology.<sup>1</sup>

Jameson's remarks reflected the interwar internationalist philosophy, which considered expert knowledge, an educated public, and rational national policies key to world peace. Internationalists believed that the old world politics of nationalism and imperialism stemmed from ignorance, and that future peace and prosperity depended upon the development of "scientific"—i.e., objective and apolitical—knowledge. They created nongovernmental institutions that participated in governance, espoused the ideals of professionalism, and argued that the free and open exchange of rational knowledge would strengthen democracy at home and abroad. According to this philosophy, multilateralism and collaboration would put an end to nationalist politics and the destruction such politics triggered. Jameson and his activist humanities colleagues gave institutional expression to this internationalist philosophy with the creation of the American Council of Learned Societies (hereafter referred to as "ACLS" or the

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<sup>1</sup> John Franklin Jameson, "A Statement Respecting the Plans and Needs of the ACLS," 27 April 1921, folder 1921–1929, box 20, ACLS Papers, Carnegie Corporation of New York Archives, Rare Books and Special Collections, Columbia University Library, New York [hereafter designated CCNY Arch].

“Council”), a federation of professional and honorary associations focused on strengthening relations among national humanities societies. The liberal and scholarly internationalism from which the Council emerged thus pinned the aspiration for future global peace on cultural understanding and intellectual exchange.

Initially, the Council defined the humanities so broadly as to include all academic studies, but eventually circumscribed the definition to academic fields outside the natural and social sciences, such as philosophy, literature, aesthetics, fine arts, musicology, philology, linguistics, archaeology, history, and cultural anthropology. To promote the humanities both domestically and abroad, it created a multipurpose program focused on scholarly interests. The ACLS provided funds, in the form of fellowships, grants, and study-aids, to individual scholars; promoted underdeveloped humanities fields, for example Renaissance studies; created tools for scholarly research, such as translations, bibliographies, and indexes; organized large-scale projects, like dictionaries and linguistic atlases; promoted interdisciplinary and international activities through conferences and seminars; and participated in public service through assistance to projects with national interest. The federation created the popular *Dictionary of American Biography* and the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, and contributed to the creation of scholarly journals, most notably *Speculum* and the *Journal of the History of Ideas*.<sup>2</sup> Jointly with other academic associations, the Council also sponsored the National Commission on the Humanities in 1963, which issued a report on the state of the humanities in America that ultimately led to the creation of the National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities the next year.

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<sup>2</sup> ACLS, “A Brief History of ACLS Activities,” *Annual Report* 21 (Spring 1980): 15.

This eclectic strategic approach to the humanities reached out in two directions: *inward* toward the academic community and *outward* toward the policy community, thus building a bridge between scholarship and governance through support for innovative and pragmatic initiatives in nonwestern (or area) studies and cultural diplomacy. Nonwestern studies aimed at developing knowledge about Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America in order to introduce Americans to the rest of the world, create knowledge for policymaking, and redefine the university as a center for the development of both “pure” research as well as practical and objective knowledge. This academic approach used the humanities and the social sciences to provide interdisciplinary and regional analysis, relying upon universities and scholars—not the federal government—to play the leading role in developing such expertise. Cultural diplomacy initiatives aimed at improving relations between nations by focusing on ties between peoples and cultures, not just governments. Internationalists hoped that strengthening these ties would improve governance, deter war, and relegate partisan politics to the pre-modern past. Accordingly, the ACLS represented the United States in the International Union of Academies, the League of Nations, and the United Nations Education, Science, and Cultural Organization, and played a role in managing academic exchange programs like the Fulbright exchange program.

The history of the ACLS from 1919 to 1957 tells two stories. One is that of a fledgling group of international humanists who expanded the role of the humanities in the twentieth century by promoting scholarly research and building relationships between intellectual associations and the federal government. Believing that world peace could only be achieved via improved inter-cultural understanding, the architects of the ACLS recognized as early as the 1920s and 1930s that America was unprepared to live in a global world in which Asia, Latin

America, and Eastern Europe were significant players. Accordingly, Council members attempted to bring the nation's dispersed humanities resources to bear on the problem of American provincialism by promoting the humanities as a vital tool for policymaking and educating the public. After a significant struggle, they succeeded in raising funds, developing national and international partnerships, expanding their program operations, and winning the support of both the philanthropic community and the federal government.

The history of the ACLS also tells the story of the evolving relationship between the public and private sectors, a story which dates back to the American colonial period and Alexis de Tocqueville's early commentary on Americans' penchant for association-building.<sup>3</sup> Although American history is replete with instances when nongovernmental organizations have participated in governance, the history of the Council provides a unique perspective.<sup>4</sup> The ACLS was created in 1919 toward the end of the Progressive Era, that turn of the century wave of reform movements intent on expanding the social safety net and curbing the excesses of both industry and patronage politics. Generally secular in nature, these reform movements placed great faith in the power of professionals and experts to solve social ills. Two forces largely shaped Progressive Era reformism. One was the second industrial revolution, and the accompanying nationalization of industry and increased urbanization, which led to an

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<sup>3</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1904).

<sup>4</sup> The scholarly literature on philanthropy and volunteerism in American history is immense. The literature on Afro-American, labor, and women's history, as well as domestic and foreign policy, cannot help but focus on the role of voluntary and nongovernmental organizations seeking to influence public and private policy and contribute to public discourse. Important works on American women's history and women's volunteerism include: Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990); Nancy Hewitt, *Women's Activism and Social Change: Rochester, New York, 1822–1872* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); and Kathleen D. McCarthy, *American Creed: Philanthropy and the Rise of Civil Society, 1700–1865* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

intensification of problems like crime, poverty, prostitution, and the breakdown of traditional community structures. The other was a long-established political culture grounded in principles of federalism and the accompanying ethos of limited national government. The tradition of limited government undercut the development of problem-solving governmental agencies and bureaucracies, and created a fertile ideological and institutional environment for decentralized Progressive Era reform movements.<sup>5</sup> As Kathleen McCarthy explains in *American Creed*, “local, state, and federal government officials have historically brokered partnerships with nonprofit organizations for the provision of charitable, health, and educational services, a practice that obviated the need for permanent bureaucracies, lowered costs, and allowed substantial flexibility in public policymaking.”<sup>6</sup> The Council thus emerged as the quintessential Progressive Era organization in that it was a voluntary and forward-looking association of private scholars leveraging their professional academic expertise to participate in national governance.

Yet, while the ACLS emerged from Progressivism, the organization lived its institutional life in the twentieth century, an era marked by the expanding role of the federal government and an increasingly complicated and crowded field of nongovernmental organizations. In this new era, public and private activities increasingly occurred in tandem, sometimes in collaboration, while at others times in competition. To a certain extent, this dynamic revealed the inherent conflict that has always existed within public-private partnerships. Yet this conflict was

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<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Kish Sklar, “The Historical Foundation of Women’s Power in the Creation of the American Welfare State, 1830–1930,” in *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States*, ed. Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (New York: Routledge Press, 1993), 54.

<sup>6</sup> McCarthy, *American Creed*, 193.

especially acute for those nongovernmental organizations whose activities spanned the interwar years, when they operated with a high level of autonomy, to the postwar period, when the federal government increasingly played a dominant role. The wartime and Cold War crisis, and the partnerships that emerged to meet these challenges, quickly highlighted differences and the difficulty in reconciling the competing aims of the public and private sectors.

At first glance, the ACLS's institutional and political trajectory and its coordination with contemporaneous public efforts appear relatively straightforward, as both shared the goal of spreading knowledge for democratic purposes, defeating the Axis powers in wartime, and increasing America's supply of intellectual expertise in the postwar period. The Second World War and the Cold War effectively made the federal government and Council partners: the state relied on the ACLS's experience and operating know-how in the field of intellectual resources, while the Council benefited from federal funding and a seat at the policymaking table. Moreover, it was assumed that the coordination of state and ACLS wartime efforts would be harmonious because Council members were unlikely, reluctant, and inexperienced state-builders. Unlike social scientists, who explicitly focused on public policy issues, and scientists, who frequently emphasized their utilitarian problem-solving skills, humanists underscored their role as outsiders to the political process and as preservers of a historically rich but largely eclipsed tradition of learning that linked the distant past to the present.

Despite the apparent compatibility, however, the relationship between the Council and the public sector was not natural or logical, but complicated, idiosyncratic, and sometimes tense and conflicted. This relationship was shaped by a number of factors, including the compatibility of their goals and by both pre-existing and newly emerging institutional and intellectual commitments. The federal government's primary goals were nationalistic and it sought

knowledge for the purposes of politics and policymaking. Academic internationalists in the ACLS, however, embraced an idealistic vision emphasizing knowledge about subjects from antiquity to the present for the purpose of mutual understanding. Internationalism provided moral vision and a broad set of assumptions about the importance of rational, scholarly knowledge, which inevitably left an intractable imprint on its program initiatives. Council members operated in the gray area between scholars, policymakers, and foundation officers and, therefore, tried to serve multiple communities with sometimes competing interests. Their naiveté about the tension between the public and private sectors and their lack of preparedness to confront these challenges ultimately undermined their effectiveness and even threatened their very survival.

The dissertation provides a history of the ACLS with an emphasis on its area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives, highlighting the changing relationship between the public and private sectors in the interwar and postwar years. The first chapter focuses on the Council's origins in the liberal internationalism of the 1910s and 1920s, when its founders were steeped in the politics of progressivism, which emphasized private sector institution building, and a new enthusiasm for scientific methodology. They were part of a small network of activist scholars who built bridges between universities, foundations, and the federal government by creating professional associations, participating in World War I operations, and, in the immediate postwar period, creating the ACLS. These activist scholars first came together in the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and then in the National Board for Historical Services and Inquiry, both World War I organizations focused on leveraging American academic expertise for wartime planning. They struggled with the tension between public and private goals in the decade leading up to Council's creation and in its early years.

The second chapter analyzes the 1930s when the ACLS expanded its initiatives and defined its vision for the humanities in greater detail. Under the stewardship of Waldo Leland and Mortimer Graves, the organization implemented an activist scientific humanities program that emphasized nonwestern studies and cultural diplomacy. The legacy of the 1930s, however, was contradictory. Rhetorically, these initiatives combined politics, democracy, and academic expertise, but in reality remained largely isolated and ineffectual. Even at the end of the 1930s, when the world erupted into war, members were surprisingly unprepared for both war and the expanding role of the public sector. Another contradiction lies in the fact that area studies and cultural diplomacy developed along competing institutional and intellectual paths. The former remained rooted in academia, while the latter became tied to public sector nationalist initiatives. This two-track approach was the result of numerous factors, including the dominant role of the university, as well as the federal government's relative strength in diplomacy as opposed to national education.

Chapters three and four focus on the ACLS and its role in area studies and cultural diplomacy during the Second World War and the early postwar period from 1945 to 1957, respectively. They explore how the Council's interwar initiatives shaped public sector activities and how, in turn, the wartime and the Cold War crisis affected the Council. In wartime the federal government relied on the Council's academic and cultural initiatives. For instance, Waldo Leland, the organization's executive director, represented private sector scholarly associations and foundations in the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations, while Mortimer Graves, the executive secretary, helped the U.S. Army develop the Army Specialized Training Program, which was designed to expand the nation's international and linguistic expertise. In the postwar period, the Council continued to operate grant programs and represent

the U.S. in cultural diplomacy initiatives, such as the Fulbright program and United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The ACLS's legacy was complicated, though. On the one hand, it contributed to the federal government's intellectual capacity by organizing and providing access to expertise. On the other, however, its proximity to the state made it vulnerable to federal-style witch hunts, like the McCarthy-era investigations that left the Council and other internationalist scholarly organizations reeling. In the mid-1950s, the ACLS's future seemed bleak and many believed that its dissolution was imminent. The Council was ultimately saved, however, when the Ford and Rockefeller foundations developed a strategic agenda to promote area studies and the first generation of Council leadership was replaced.

### **Historical Lessons**

The Council participated in some of the major trends of the twentieth century, including the increasing role of specialized knowledge in the public and private sectors, the rise of the modern institutional ecology of knowledge creation and policymaking that bound together foundations, universities, and the state, and the fusion of academic and nationalist interests. As such, a detailed history of the ACLS provides a window into the impact of these significant historical trends on both an institutional and individual level, revealing who participated in these trends and at what cost. Specifically, the Council's evolution from 1919 to 1957 reveals important historical lessons. First, it highlights the importance of intellectual and institutional commitments in shaping larger bureaucratic relationships. Although the Second World War and the Cold War increased nationalist pressures and undermined the ideals of academic freedom, the ACLS—and the cultural and intellectual initiatives that it helped popularize—proved resilient, protecting important elements of the internationalist agenda. The Council's wartime and postwar history highlights the gradual and contested process by which new forms of knowledge and

knowledge-producing groups enter public and political discourse, both shaping and shaped by the larger institutional and intellectual environment.

Second, it underscores the extent to which nongovernmental organizations have historically been an important part of public bureaucratic expansionism and policymaking. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner aptly describe the state as "...a series of dynamic relationships, changing over time and from context to cultural context."<sup>7</sup> Lacey and Furner emphasize the negotiated, evolving, and collaborative character of political culture and policymaking, and the complex interactions between the individuals and institutions that create knowledge. In the American context, for instance, the post-World War II expansion of public sector expenditures did not produce a commensurate increase in the size of government. As Donald Critchlow explains, "instead it strengthened the complicated network of relationships among the federal government, state and local governments, and private groups, including nonpartisan research institutes."<sup>8</sup>

Third, the Council's history provides a detailed example of how federal expansion in the 1940s and 1950s drew the American university, large foundations, research institutes, and professional associations into government-related business on a more permanent basis and on a dramatically larger scale than in the interwar period.<sup>9</sup> The Second World War and the early Cold

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Lacey and Mary Furner, "Social Investigation, Social Knowledge, and the State: An Introduction," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States* ed. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner (Cambridge, England: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 9.

<sup>8</sup> Donald Critchlow, "Think Tanks, Antistatistism, and Democracy: The Nonpartisan Ideal and Policy Research in the United States, 1913–1987," in *State and Social Investigation*, 280.

<sup>9</sup> Louis Menand, "The Marketplace of Ideas," ACLS Occasional Paper, no. 49 (2001); available from <http://www.acls.org/op49.htm>, Internet, accessed 20 February 2003; Roger Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War I*

War stimulated phases of rapid federal growth and changed the institutional and ideological environment for creating knowledge and social policies. In the case of area studies, both the ACLS and the federal government relied on a university-based system for creating academic knowledge. In the case of cultural diplomacy, however, the Council and the federal government developed a more complicated and intense collaborative program, clashing over goals and function. Why did the Council and the state have conflict over cultural diplomacy, but not area studies? How did the state's differing capacities in education and cultural diplomacy affect national policies? One possible explanation is that the federal government historically had a minor role in education and therefore a weak administrative and intellectual capacity. As a result, it willingly allowed nongovernmental organizations to play a significant role. In the case of cultural diplomacy, however, the State Department had strong institutional capacities and, consequently, was a more assertive partner. Despite the different histories of area studies and cultural diplomacy, the Council contributed to the federal government's growing capacities in linguistic and cultural relations. This strengthening relationship between the public and private sectors came at a price, however. In the early postwar years, the Council, as well as the Rockefeller and Ford foundations, were scrutinized in McCarthy-era investigations. Both foundations were forced to defend their internationalist activities and were undermined by the new Cold War political ideology that considered intellectual diversity—the hallmark of the academic and cultural communities—a threat.

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(New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

## **Historiographical Debates**

Historians have long struggled with how to characterize the relationship between the public and private sectors during the past century. They often debate the intellectual implications of public and private collaboration, the effect of the expanding role of the federal government on knowledge and nongovernmental organizations, and whether the Cold War compromised disinterested expertise and scholarship. The two dominant historiographical approaches are defined along political lines: the left argues a causal link between foundation support of expert knowledge and the maintenance of ruling class interests, while proponents of the search-for-order paradigm contend that nongovernmental organizations (and ideas) are a logical and benevolent response to historical circumstances. These historiographical debates suffer from two weaknesses. First, they provide only high-level analysis of large institutions and historical trends, thus losing the integral bottom-up perspective provided by detailed historical studies of individual institutions such as the Council. Second, because these debates are intensely ideological, the participants fall prey to the intellectual straightjacket of reducing the role of scholarly ideas and nongovernmental organizations to simplistic political functions and interests.

Scholars with a left-leaning political orientation argue that foundations, and the scholarly associations they help to fund, share common interests with the state, and together they conspire to promote hegemony and mute democratic discourse. According to influential Italian communist intellectual Antonio Gramsci, hegemony is the political, intellectual, and moral authority that the ruling class uses to take and maintain power, and it includes both persuasion and physical coercion. American academics have applied the concept of hegemony to the study of philanthropy, foundations, and academic expertise. According to proponents of a leftist approach, academics and nonprofits serve as either the knowing or unwitting agents of American

capitalism and imperialism. For example, Donald Fisher argues in *Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences* the Rockefeller and Carnegie philanthropies funded the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to develop partisan, politically-interested social scientific knowledge that legitimized capitalist relations. Fisher thus employs a Gramscian analytical framework, which uses the concept of hegemony to explain the role of the social sciences in the organization of power and knowledge. The SSRC and the foundations that supported it, according to Fisher, were “sophisticated conservatives” that harnessed social science knowledge to preserve the underlying social and economic structure.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, William Minter and Laurence Shoup in *The Imperial Brain Trust* and William Domhoff in *Who Rules America?* also take traditionally leftist positions in their analysis of foundations and scholarly and professional associations. Minter and Shoup view foreign policy groups, like the Council on Foreign Relations, as a forum for elites to develop a nationalist foreign policy and maintain global cultural and economic hegemony. Domhoff in turn uses C. Wright Mills’s concept of the “power elite” to argue that conservative members of the private sector, the state, and the academy are collaborating to maintain economic, political, and cultural power.<sup>11</sup> According to him, cultural diplomacy serves the soft side of American imperialism, wooing allies and potential friends with academic exchange initiatives, movies, literature and propaganda. Finally, other scholars like Edward Berman in *The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* and Robert Arno in *Philanthropy*

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<sup>10</sup> Donald Fisher, *The Fundamental Development of the Social Sciences: Rockefeller Philanthropy and the U.S. Social Science Research Council* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1993).

<sup>11</sup> C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956).

and *Cultural Imperialism* also focus on the role of coherent groups of elites pursuing their interests by exerting control over public institutions.<sup>12</sup>

The few existing scholarly analyses of area studies are also intensely ideological. Edward Said is a leading leftist and cultural studies theorist. In *Orientalism*, Said argues that area studies is essentially hegemonic and imperialistic, and is little more than a scholarly attempt to define and dominate the nonwestern world. Other critics of area studies assume that because area studies began as a wartime activity then it must serve the interests of intellectual nationalism.<sup>13</sup> Robert McCaughey's *International Studies and Academic Expertise* is one of the only historical analyses of the rise of international studies in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> Although he does not argue that there is a conspiracy among elites to maintain power (and therefore he is not a traditional leftist), McCaughey is highly critical of the expanding role of the federal government in the development of academic knowledge in the Second World War and Cold War. He argues that prior to the 1940s, international studies operated in a decentralized and public intellectual community and enjoyed freedom of expression. The Second World War and the Cold War, however, politicized knowledge and shifted international studies into the isolated university setting. McCaughey waxes nostalgic for the days of "openness" when an eclectic, informal

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<sup>12</sup> William Minter and Laurence Shoup, *The Imperial Brain Trust: The Council on Foreign Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977); William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1967); Edward Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: SUNY Albany Press, 1983); Robert Arno, *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad* (Cambridge, England: G. K. & Co., 1980).

<sup>13</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Vicente L. Rafael, "The Cultures of Area Studies in the United States," *Social Text* 41 (Winter 1994): 90–111.

<sup>14</sup> Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

group of missionaries and internationalists dominated the intellectual scene and laments professionalization, specialization, and state intervention (politicization.) He criticizes the state and celebrates the private sector, implying that the former represents “politics” (read: propaganda) and the latter “freedom” (read: truth.)

Another historiographical camp attempting to explain the character of public–private collaboration emphasizes the search-for-order paradigm in which new social, economic, and political challenges are met with new institutional strategies. Proponents imply that area studies and cultural diplomacy are logical responses to the wartime and Cold War crisis and growing social, political, and economic complexity.<sup>15</sup> For instance, foundation insiders describe foundation activities in broad brush strokes, rarely focusing on specific issues or examining changing relationships over time. Instead, they explore the role of individuals and historical circumstances, and emphasize the reasonable, forward-looking, and humanitarian nature of foundation policies and programs.<sup>16</sup>

Despite their many differences, the two dominant interpretive approaches share important assumptions and methodologies. Scholars from both camps conduct general studies and make theoretical or ideological arguments backed up with anecdotal evidence. Neither tests the merits of their arguments through a rigorous analysis of an individual organization or initiative. In

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<sup>15</sup> Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) represents the search-for-order paradigm.

<sup>16</sup> Scholars who describe foundation programs in terms of a logical and rational response to external changes include the following: William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collecting the Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); Raymond Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952); Waldemar Nielsen, *The Endangered Sector* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Robert Bremner, *American Philanthropy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); Merle Curti and Roderick Nash, *Philanthropy in the Shaping of American Higher Education* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963).

addition, both argue that the relationship between the public and private sectors is essentially stable and harmonious. The left argues that the leaders of the public and private sectors are bound together by their common economic and nationalist interests. According to them, an organization like the ACLS has no independent will and functions as the servant of elites. Ironically, the search-for-order historiographical camp also argues that the public and private sectors have a harmonious relationship, but ignores whether or not they share common political interests and instead emphasizes their shared logic and rationalist response to historical trends. According to this interpretive approach, the ACLS succeeded because of growing internationalism and public and private need for linguistic and geographical knowledge. Both historical models minimize the complexity of public and private relationships, which were rooted in an ongoing dialectic in which the roles and responsibilities were continually renegotiated over time.

Recently, however, historians have made some analytical progress by exploring the interrelationships of political culture, institutional arrangements, and organizational structures.<sup>17</sup> Stanley Katz and Barry Karl focus on the role of federalism in the development of American philanthropy and social policy, arguing that until the New Deal and the postwar expansion of public services, America “was a culture which would have been threatened down to its partisan and regional roots by any attempt to create a nationally unified conception of social policy. Into the gap created by this impasse stepped the modern foundation, a system of national

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<sup>17</sup> Gary Brett, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Roger Geiger, *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900–1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

philanthropy—privately devoted to increasing the welfare of mankind.”<sup>18</sup> In their view, the history of volunteerism and philanthropy should be considered in relation to the “history of the debate over the appropriate role for the federal government in achieving the reforms at which it aimed.”<sup>19</sup>

Taking the analysis another step further, the historian Theda Skocpol focuses on national structural factors, arguing that the character of the state shapes the success or failure of social policies as well as the social groups that attempt to influence it. In the case of the U.S., the federal structure is highly decentralized: the executive, legislative, and judicial branches are autonomous, and strong local governments create both opportunities and obstacles for advocates of social policy and reform. Writing about the U.S., Skocpol and John Campbell assert that:

The dispersed authority through the federal system, the division of sovereignty among branches of the national government, and the close symbiosis between segments of the federal administration and Congressional committees all help to ensure that state power in the twentieth century United States is fragmented, dispersed, and everywhere permeated by organized societal interests. The national government, moreover, lacks such possible underpinnings of strong state power as a prestigious and status-conscious career civil service with predictable access to key executive posts; authoritative planning agencies; direct executive control over a national central bank; and public ownership of strategic parts of the economy.<sup>20</sup>

In her analysis of national policies, Skocpol reveals the weakness of both the class and nationalist-based explanations, since many social policies have contradictory consequences that cannot easily be reduced to one set of economic interests, and the logic-based explanation, as governments facing similar economic or political circumstances develop different policy

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<sup>18</sup> Stanley Katz and Barry Karl, “The American Private Philanthropic Foundation and the Public Sphere, 1890–1930,” *Minerva* 19 (Summer 1981): 238.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>20</sup> Theda Skocpol and John Campbell, *American Society and Politics: Institutional, Historical, and Theoretical Perspective* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1995), 95.

solutions. While she agrees that the role of interests and rationalist responses are relevant, they are insufficient in explaining the character of national policies.

By focusing on a single organization over several decades, the present study of the Council's history from 1919 to 1957 provides insight into historical issues and interpretive approaches. It tells the story of the Council and the humanist scholar activists who labored tirelessly for its success. In addition, it engages a debate over how to characterize public-private partnerships. The dissertation demonstrates that these partnerships are historically situated and change over time, which challenges the more a-historical approach articulated by critics and apologists of nongovernmental organizations. It reveals that public-private partnerships are influenced by political philosophy and by the relative strengths and weaknesses of the federal government itself (as suggested by Katz, Karl, and Skocpol) and that nongovernmental organizations serve as laboratories in the development of new ideas and policy precedents. These precedents often lack clear political affiliation or intention, and the gradual and contested process in which ideas intermingle and shift between the public-private sectors suggests that they are not easily reduced to political categories. The Council's postwar success and the simultaneous expansion of the federal government reveal that the landscape of nongovernmental organizations is as crowded as it is diverse.

## CHAPTER 1: CREATING THE COUNCIL

### Introduction

The Progressive Era represents a watershed period in the history of American reformism and the welfare state. The second industrial revolution created intolerable social and economic conditions and, in response to it, a wave of national social reform movements swept across the nation. Muckraking journalists exposed social, economic, and political injustices, while the working classes joined labor unions in droves, struggling to obtain pensions, minimum wage, and an eight-hour workday. Advocates of the settlement house movement publicized the dangers facing the immigrant communities in overcrowded and impoverished conditions, while women swelled the ranks of temperance and women's suffrage organizations, thereby expanding their arena of political activism. Progressive Era reform movements, in addition, combined technocratic expertise, celebrating the power of professional and disciplinary knowledge to solve social ills, with humanitarianism and political advocacy, thus emphasizing social responsibility and participation in governance. The inherent tension between political advocacy and objective knowledge was temporarily resolved in the late Progressive period with the emergence of empiricism, which embraced academic specialization and disciplinary standards, rejected politically-driven knowledge as biased and unscientific, and consolidated technocratic authority among academics, universities, and independent research organizations.<sup>1</sup> While citizen and

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<sup>1</sup> Guy Alchon, *The Invisible Hand of Planning: Capitalism, Social Science, and the State in the 1920s* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 112–6.

advocacy groups continued to lobby and play an important role in the development of social policy and democracy, professional and empirical groups promised disinterested analysis that elevated the status of academic experts and universities. By the 1920s, advocates of empiricism succeeded in partially shifting power from the more democratic social reform movements and consolidating it among technocrats in elite universities and private sector nongovernmental organizations.<sup>2</sup>

The American Council of Learned Societies was a product of the Progressive Era, both politically and intellectually. Established in 1919 as a self-styled democratic federation of professional associations, the ACLS sought to simultaneously expand the role of the humanities in governance and to contribute to the professionalization of knowledge through scientific research and strict adherence to disciplinary standards. During the World War I, the future leaders of this organization had created the National Board of Historical Sciences to leverage humanities expertise for wartime planning and had participated in the Inquiry, President Woodrow Wilson's postwar planning program. Through the creation of the ACLS, these humanists wanted to continue to extend the influence of the humanities, both domestically in the U.S. and abroad.

The Council's efforts in the early postwar period, however, were undermined by several factors. The general complacency of the 1920s and the dominance of the positivist paradigm made an internationalist humanities program an unlikely recipient of public and private funding. The humanities were inherently different from the social and natural sciences, which more neatly

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity: A Crisis in the Professionalization of American Social Science, 1865–1905* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1975); Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). Also, see James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New

converged with the growing emphasis on empiricism. While the former focused on cultural expressions and values, the latter promised a science of expert knowledge with the hope of creating a stable and equitable social, political, and economic environment. These intellectual differences prompted numerous questions that would challenge the Council in the following decades: How would the humanities succeed in a results-driven intellectual and political context? Were humanities scholars savvy and wily enough to operate outside of the narrow confines of the academy? What institutional allies could they develop?

The Council members' naïve conception of the relationship between the public and private sectors also undermined their own efforts, revealing the organization's internal political and intellectual contradictions. On the one hand, they hoped academic knowledge would inform and shape public policies and democracy; on the other hand, they rejected political pressures, nationalism, and propaganda. Their desire to shape the public sector inevitably chafed against their aspiration to remain above or separate from partisan politics. The First World War provided a forum for humanities scholars to collaborate on national policies and initiatives, but it also aggravated the tension between public and private goals, and foreshadowed contradictions that would haunt the Council in years to come. Moreover, the diverse and informal character of interwar public and private partnerships grew untenable, as federal initiatives expanded during the postwar period.

This chapter examines the evolution of intellectual and institutional relationships among activist humanities scholars in the 1910s through World War I and the early postwar period. It traces the Council's origins, details the ways it was similar to and different from other Progressive Era organizations, and analyzes its initial successes and failures. Members of the

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York: Free Press, 1991).

ACLS participated in the consolidation of technocratic authority in the hands of academics, universities, and independent research organizations, and they refashioned the discourse of pragmatism and positivism to meet their intellectual and program goals. The Council's political and intellectual philosophy was dialectical in the sense that it envisioned a uniquely American organizational type—one that was private, decentralized and voluntary—to facilitate a program of national humanities planning through which it explicitly sought to participate in public governance. The result was an uneasy compromise between the conflicting interests of the public and private sectors that significantly influenced the organization's future. Accordingly, the emergence of the ACLS provides a useful foil to examine the opportunities and limitations provided by progressivism and federalism at the turn of the century, and its early development foreshadows the intellectual, institutional, and political tensions that beset the organization for years to come.

### **Setting the Stage: The Intellectual and Social Origins of the Council**

The literature on American progressivism and positivism is exhaustive. For the purposes of this study it is important to focus specifically on the rise of technocratic, secular knowledge and its contribution to the politics of governance. The nation's tradition of political liberalism and limited federal government inhibited the development of state bureaucracies, even in the face of social dislocations wrought by the second industrial revolution and the First World War. The quintessential Progressive Era reform organization was the American Social Science Association (ASSA), which included teachers, doctors, and lawyers, but not professional social scientists. The ASSA collected information, classified data, and analyzed and interpreted facts for the purpose of social reform. By the late nineteenth century, however, reformism and social science had begun to diverge: the former continued to focus on political advocacy, whereas the latter

embraced academic professionalization and specialization.<sup>3</sup> This budding distinction between political advocacy and academic professionalization had come to full bloom by the 1920s, when technocratic experts began creating independent research organizations focused on developing so-called “scientific” knowledge. As John Higham has explained,

At the core of the social science movement of the 1920’s was a new ideal of organized, collaborative research. In the projects of the SSRC, the Brookings Institution, and similar agencies, the watchword was interdisciplinary cooperation, but only between social scientists. Through teamwork, interdisciplinary conferences, and the like, scholars solidified an image of themselves as social scientists and gave their loyalty to the dream of an integrated science of man.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, a new brand of nongovernmental organizations emerged to promote advocacy and reform, but not in the same way as the ASSA and other similar Progressive Era organizations had done. While the ASSA had not adhered to strict disciplinary standards, organizations like the ACLS sought a higher intellectual goal by creating objective, scientific humanities knowledge that could be used to remake the social and political environment.

The early twentieth century rise of large philanthropic foundations contributed to the creation of secular, objective, and expert knowledge along the lines formulated by the ACLS. While nineteenth century religious volunteerism had focused on helping the sick and the poor, the new foundations addressed large-scale systemic problems, such as global medical and health issues. Foundation support for the social sciences led to an expanded, more sophisticated

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Lacey and Mary Furner, “Social Investigation, Social Knowledge, and the State: An Introduction,” in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner (Cambridge, England: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28–9; Furner, *Advocacy and Objectivity*, 323; Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877–1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961); Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

<sup>4</sup> John Higham, “The Schism in American Scholarship,” *American Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (Oct. 1966): 14.

university system to replace the ad hoc coalition of religious activists, amateur academics, and other elites that had dominated intellectual and political institutions in the nineteenth century. Steeped in the rhetoric of intellectual objectivity and scholarly professional standards, the university came to represent a more stable authority for knowledge in a world undergoing dramatic changes.<sup>5</sup> Foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the General Education Board, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, all promoted scientific and socially relevant research of one kind or another. They developed secular and scientific knowledge through scholarships, university endowments, the establishment of research institutions (the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, for example), and support for academic reform associations, such as the American Economic Association. In so doing, they cultivated a strategic philanthropy by which philanthropic giving was used to develop scientific knowledge and expert solutions to long-term, large-scale problems. Moreover, unlike the ASSA, this objective, scientific research was not to be compromised by political advocacy and reform.

Progressivism and positivism also shaped the internationalism espoused by the Council's founding members, who contended that a more peaceful and stable world order could only be achieved through cooperative transnational efforts, whether economic, legal, or political. Akira Iriye defines internationalism as "an idea, a movement, or an institution that seeks to reformulate the nature of relations among nations through cross-national cooperation and interchange." More specifically, he defines cultural internationalism as the "fostering of international

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<sup>5</sup> See references in note 3 above and Alexandra Oleson and John Voss, eds., *The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860–1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

cooperation through cultural activities across national boundaries,” such as “the exchange of ideas and persons, through scholarly cooperation, or through efforts at facilitating cross-national understanding.”<sup>6</sup> Iriye further explains that “proponents [of internationalism] stressed the cultural, psychological, and intellectual underpinnings of the international order; that at bottom, peace and order must depend on a habit of mind on the part of individuals in all countries—a mindset that looked beyond security, legal, and even business issues and was willing to link national to world interests.”<sup>7</sup> Optimistic, rational, and forward-looking, these internationalists believed that cross-cultural understanding and intellectual exchange could provide the basis for a new world order.

Although internationalism came of age in the aftermath of World War I, it made initial inroads as early as the beginning of the century, when semi-secular ideas, which combined social science and Christian values embodied in organizations such as the Young Men’s Christian Association, replaced the nineteenth century missionary movement. Additionally, the rise of large philanthropic foundations, like the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), further accelerated this process, providing financial support to secular, nonpolitical initiatives like pan-Americanism.<sup>8</sup> The early development of cooperative networks of private citizens and associations that supported mutual understanding and peace eventually led to the interchange of students, professors, and specialists (such as artists, writers, and scientists) on an unprecedented

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University Press, 1979); Ross, *Origins*.

<sup>6</sup> Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>8</sup> Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1936–1948* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 1976), 43.

scale between 1919 and 1940. Social philosophers (John Dewey, for example) gave expression to this emerging secular internationalism by asserting that objective knowledge was the basis of a peaceful world order, and that seemingly different cultures could be bound together by common moral and social frameworks.

The Rockefeller Foundation shared the Carnegie philanthropies interest in nascent internationalism. Raymond Fosdick, a Rockefeller Foundation trustee and a close friend of John D. Rockefeller Jr., believed that efforts to promote peaceful cooperation were increasingly vital in the twentieth century as nations were forced into ever closer economic, military, and diplomatic contact.<sup>9</sup> Nor was this commitment to internationalism and the scientific method mere rhetoric. For example, in the 1910s, the Rockefeller Foundation established the Peking Union Medical College modeled on the University of Chicago. As Frank Ninkovich explains, the Rockefeller Foundation “sought to use highly concentrated means for the achievement of great ends. Their faith in the capacity of medicine as science to serve as the vehicle for a cultural revolution in China was rooted in a positivist tradition...” and assumed that science would stimulate cultural modernization. In other words, the Peking Union was intended to facilitate the spread of American cultural, as well as scientific, values to China. Ninkovich concludes that “the belief that cultural change would occur by slow diffusion of the scientific ethos to the tradition-bound masses was inarguably elitist, but the foundation hoped that, as with the progression from seedling to forest, the Peking Union Medical College’s effects would in time be widespread.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Raymond Fosdick, *The Story of the Rockefeller Foundation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952).

<sup>10</sup> Frank Ninkovich, “The Rockefeller Foundation, China, and Cultural Change,” *American Historical Review* 70, no. 4 (March 1984): 799–820. Also, see Mary Brown Bullock,

Like the internationalist community, the humanities were not immune to the national focus on positivism and professionalization. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the humanities symbolized tradition and elite culture, and were concerned Greek and Roman history, the Renaissance, ancient languages, and great literature. As Laurence Veysey explains in his influential 1979 article, "The Plural Organized Worlds of the Humanities," traditional humanists were generalists who placed "certain individuals, stretching from Plato to Emerson...on pedestals as the carriers of a single worthy civilized tradition. Their output, interpreted as embodying a timeless morality, came to be taught as a kind of substitute for the now partly discredited religious scriptures."<sup>11</sup> By the turn of the century, the intellectual and social status of these traditional humanists was increasingly challenged by the growing predominance of the positivist paradigm and by the improving accessibility (and hence democratization) of higher education. In response to this challenge, a small group of reforming humanists began to promote the professionalization of knowledge and intellectual specialization, pitting the nineteenth century generalists against a modernizing class of scholars who acquired expert knowledge in specific subject areas via the mastery of rigorous and disciplined research.

Historians were at the forefront of the professionalization of knowledge and constituted the Council's largest disciplinary contingent in the formative years of the organization. Advocates of the "new history" rejected traditional political and diplomatic history as too unscientific and called for an objective, interdisciplinary approach to the study of the past. Intellectual historian Peter Novick explains, in *That Noble Dream*, that "science...offered...not

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*American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Medical Union College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>11</sup> Laurence Veysey, "The Plural Organized Worlds of the Humanities," in Oleson and Voss, *Organization of Knowledge*, 52.

just a method...but above all a vision of a comprehensible world: a model of certitude, of unambiguous truth; knowledge that was definite; and independent of the values or intentions of the investigator.” According to the scientific paradigm, scrupulous research, adherence to the tenets of empiricism, and the repudiation of speculation would necessarily produce accurate, authoritative, and incontrovertible knowledge. For the scientifically-oriented historian, the ideal was to show the past as it had been, and not as one wanted it to be. Primary archival sources (the uncensored and unedited firsthand accountings of past events) provided the ideal foundation upon which to base such objective history. Novick contends that the historian’s task was recast as the “patient manufacture of four-square factualist bricks to be fitted together in the ultimate objective history... [This] offered an almost tangible image of steady, cumulative progress.”<sup>12</sup> Adopting the rhetoric of science, these new humanists intermingled the old humanism and the new scholarship to arrive at an uneasy compromise called “humanistic science.”<sup>13</sup>

The creators of the Council were typical of other Progressive Era activists to the extent that they were institution-building elites whose members were active in professional associations and embraced positivism as the key to reforming the public and private sectors. In the 1910s, these individuals developed intellectual and institutional experience, in both the public and private sectors, which would lead to the creation of the Council and shape its function and structure for the following decades. Two of the Council’s principal architects and champions were Franklin Jameson and Waldo Gifford Leland. Jameson was a model “new historian” in that

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<sup>12</sup> Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 135, 37, and 56.

<sup>13</sup> Higham, “Schism,” 14. Higham provides a high-level overview of the gradual separation and compartmentalization of the humanities and the social and natural sciences.

he advocated the pursuit of scientific knowledge, the building of professional associations, and the development of standards for academic research. He was the first person to receive a doctorate in history from Johns Hopkins University, which was the foremost Germanic-style liberal educational institution, it embraced the scientific paradigm, and required rigorous analysis of primary sources, and conformity to disciplinary standards. Whereas the traditional humanist had been a generalist knowledgeable about western civilization beginning in antiquity and developing in Europe and then America, modern humanists like Jameson conducted rigorous analysis of primary sources and mastered professional research methodologies. Jameson later taught history at the University of Chicago and at Brown University, where he met an undergraduate student named Waldo Leland, who would become a lifelong colleague and friend. Jameson was a founding member of the American Historical Association (AHA) in 1884, and he participated in the creation of the *American Historical Review*, which he is editor of from 1895 to 1928. He directed the AHA's Historical Manuscripts Commission and, with Leland's assistance, led the successful movement to establish a National Archives in Washington, D.C. As an advocate of the new scientific approach to history, Jameson also played a leading role in the development of indexes, guides, and other tools for scientific historical scholarship.<sup>14</sup>

Jameson, however, was concerned that extreme academic specialization—characteristic of the emerging professional disciplines—would ultimately isolate the study of history from a broader audience of foundation funders, educators, and the public at large. He believed that a national center for historical research based in Washington, D.C. would provide the historical discipline with an opportunity for national leadership and prevent intellectual isolation. The

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<sup>14</sup> Novick, *Noble Dream*; Elizabeth Zoe Vicary, "Leland, Waldo Gifford," in *American National Biography Online*, February 2000 [on-line]; available from

creation of the Carnegie Institution of Washington (CIW) in 1902 provided such an opportunity. The CIW established committees in the natural sciences, history, archaeology, economics, bibliography, and literature to promote research in the liberal arts and sciences. Jameson, as the director of the committee on history, developed a scientific, professional program.<sup>15</sup> Even though the CIW ultimately terminated its history program in the late 1920s in order to channel its energy into the natural sciences, for almost three decades it created valuable research tools and documentary publications including the following: Letters of Members of the Continental Congress; European Treaties; Proceedings and Debates; the Correspondence of Andrew Jackson; volumes illustrating the slave trade and judicial cases concerned with slavery; an Atlas of Historical Geography; and historical documents relating to the Southwest.<sup>16</sup>

Waldo Leland, Jameson's protégé, was another of the Council's principal architects. Leland received an undergraduate degree in sociology from Brown University in 1900 and a Masters degree from Harvard. Eventually he received honorary doctorates from Rochester, Northwestern, Colorado, and North Carolina Universities. While at Harvard, Professor Albert Bushnell Hart (at Jameson's suggestion) offered Leland the opportunity to assist Claude Van Tyne in compiling the *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington* under a grant from the CIW. While Leland's assistantship at the CIW was initially

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<http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00360.html>, Internet, accessed 3 March 2003.

<sup>15</sup> John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965). Chapter one focuses on the early history of the Carnegie Institution of Washington and John Franklin Jameson's role. Also, see Nathan Reingold, "National Science Policy in a Private Foundation: The Carnegie Institution of Washington," in Oleson and Voss, *Organization of Knowledge*, 313–41.

<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Donnan and Leo Stock, eds., *An Historian's World: Selections from the Correspondence of John Franklin Jameson* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956), 7. On the termination of the CIW history program, see Higham, *History*, 24–5.

supposed to last only six months, he eventually became a staff member of the department of historical research in 1903 and remained there until 1927. With Jameson's support, Leland directed the Carnegie Institution's Paris research office from 1907 until 1914, and again from 1922 until 1927, surveying the French government's archives for material of special interest to American historians.<sup>17</sup> Along with Jameson, moreover, Leland was also one of the principal advocates for the creation of the National Archives. As historian Rodney Ross explains,

[Leland] called attention to the value of America's governmental records; surveyed the deplorable conditions of their storage; compared the American situation to that in enlightened quarters in Europe; offered a remedy, both as to the type of building needed and as to the form and responsibilities of an agency that could best meet the nation's archival needs; addressed the subject of the destruction of relatively worthless records, thereby putting in a plug for records scheduling; and emphasized the necessity of adhering to the principle of *respect des fonds*.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout their careers, Jameson and Leland worked closely together in a number of academic and institutional settings in addition to the Carnegie Institution, including the AHA's administrative offices and committees, the National Bureau of Historical Services—a World War I organization that provided historical expertise for educational and patriotic purposes—and the ACLS. Leland was active in several internationalist associations as well. In 1910, for instance, he served as an American delegate to the International Congress of Archivists and Librarians, and he continued to attend archivist meetings regularly afterwards. As the executive director of the Council, he represented American scholarship abroad in the International Committee on Historical Sciences, the American National Committee of the League of Nations, and the United Nations' Education, Science, and Cultural Organization.

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<sup>17</sup> Rodney A. Ross, "Waldo Gifford Leland: Archivist by Association," *American Archivist* 46, no. 3 (1983): 266; Higham, *History*, 24–5.

<sup>18</sup> Ross, "Waldo Gifford Leland," 269.

Paul Reinsch, another early Council member, was also an advocate of the new history. Reinsch had been trained as an historian at the University of Wisconsin, which, like Johns Hopkins and Harvard, was one of a small coterie of scientifically-oriented, modern American universities. His mentors were Frederick Jackson Turner and Charles Haskins, both of whom were members of the Council in the 1920s. Politically, Reinsch was a progressive social reformer who envisioned a broader role for scientific government regulation in stabilizing the economy and distributing wealth.<sup>19</sup> He also embraced institution-building and professionalization and was a founding member of the American Political Science Association. Reinsch was an internationalist who criticized the provincialism and jingoism of American foreign policy.<sup>20</sup> He emphasized the importance of scientific knowledge and scholarly rigor in Americans' approach to the world and made the University of Wisconsin a center for Asian studies by organizing lecture series, expanding the University's library holdings, running classes, and serving as a mentor to graduate students, some of whom (such as, Stanley Hornbeck) came to play important roles in American Far East policy. In 1900 Reinsch published *World Politics at the End of the Nineteenth century as Influenced by the Oriental Situation*, which his biographer, Noel Pugach, deems "was more an analysis of the forces undergirding contemporary international relations than a narrative of recent events; its recurring theme was the importance of the Orient." Through his scholarship Reinsch expressed his "opposition to colonialism and his concurrent support for Open Door expansion; the dangers of national imperialism to world peace

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<sup>19</sup> Noel Pugach, *Paul S. Reinsch, Open Door Diplomat in Action* (Millwood, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1979), 41.

<sup>20</sup> Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 12. Also, see Rosanne Rocher, *The Founding of the AOS* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976).

and its threat to domestic institutions and internal reform; the impact of modernization on traditional societies and economically backward nations; and the interest in China and its future importance to world civilization.”<sup>21</sup> Reinsch expressed his internationalism not only intellectually, but institutionally as well. He was member of the Pan American Sanitary Union and the International Opium Commission, and he worked with Elihu Root and other members of the Eastern establishment on the formation of the American Society of International Law and the CEIP.<sup>22</sup>

A partial list of other early ACLS members and their respective scholarly affiliations includes: Charles Haskins and Franklin Jameson of the American Historical Association, both of whom were also members of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the National Board, and the Inquiry; Henry Gardner and Allyn Young, also participated in the Inquiry, Young was president of the American Statistical Association and the American Economic Association;<sup>23</sup> John Erskine, the architect of Columbia University’s Great Books core curriculum, of the Modern Language Association; Charles Ogden of the American Oriental Society; Frederick Jackson Turner of the American Antiquarian Society; and Charles Gulick of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

The creators of the Council were part of an emerging network of modernizing and forward-looking academics that connected humanists to the goal of improving society through rational knowledge and democratic action. They were at the forefront of the development of scientific standards for humanities research based on primary sources, and the creation of

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<sup>21</sup> Pugach, *Paul S. Reinsch*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>23</sup> Alchon, *Invisible Hand*, 54.

institutions, like the National Archives, that would sustain an intellectual environment for such scientific research. Although the ACLS shared some similarities with the first-wave of Progressive Era reform movements such as the ASSA, it was squarely rooted among second-wave organizations like the Brookings Institution and the SSRC, which emphasized academic discipline and objective research over political advocacy. Yet, the humanities were inherently different from the social sciences, which remained the focus of these other second-wave Progressive Era organizations. While scientific empirical study of the American Revolution and Constitution was intellectually in keeping with the goals of the social sciences, such knowledge would never serve the same explicitly utilitarian function as, for example, the analysis of social security or civil service reform. As a result, the unique character of the humanities inevitably chafed against the pragmatic goals of Progressive Era positivism.

By the 1910s, the stage was set for the creation of a forward-looking national federation devoted to the humanities. Academic humanists had begun to embrace positivism and become increasingly active in professional organizations that linked them to national public governance. It took the First World War, however, to consolidate the relationships among humanities advocates interested in combining scientific research with governance and policy. The war created a laboratory environment in which Leland, Jameson, and other future Council members established a network of academics that harnessed knowledge of the humanities and the social sciences for the purpose of educating the public and assisting policymakers. By creating the National Board for Historical Services and participating Woodrow Wilson's Executive Office committee known as the Inquiry, this small network of humanities scholars learned lessons for the future. The war clearly illustrated the scholars' inadequate training to deal with current policy issues, the federal government's lack of expertise in contemporary nonwestern studies,

and the public's dependence on the private sector for relevant knowledge and operational know-how. The war also revealed the tension between political (that is, nationalist and propagandistic) and nonpolitical (that is, objective and scientific) knowledge, foreshadowing the intellectual and institutional challenges that would soon face the Council. Thus, as is explored below, the First World War and the concomitant consolidation of technocratic authority laid the foundation for the Council and its subsequent development.

### **The First World War: Trial Run for Activist Humanities Scholars**

In April 1917, Jameson and Leland organized a conference of historians to discuss the public need for historical knowledge about the causes of the World War I and the state's wartime need for specialized academic knowledge. Frederick Jackson Turner and James Shotwell participated in the conference's organizing committee. The former was an important American historian and brainchild of the frontier thesis, while the latter was a highly respected professor at Columbia University, proponent of scientific inquiry and the new history, and a staunch Wilsonian internationalist. Shotwell worked for a time with the CEIP and lobbied for American entry into the League of Nations, the World Court, and the International Labor Organization.<sup>24</sup> The conference attendees created the National Board for Historical Services to meet the nation's intellectual and educational, rather than political or propagandistic, needs. The National Board was quintessentially American in that it was a voluntary, unofficial organization of individuals who sought to stimulate and coordinate intellectual activities in the private sector. It sought to maintain a "nonofficial character" and avoided institutional pronouncements and publications.

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<sup>24</sup> Harold Josephson, "Shotwell, James Thomson," in *American National Biography Online*, February 2000 [on-line]; available from <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00559.html>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2003.

Leland wrote William Standard of the Virginia Historical Society that the "...purpose of the Board was not to carry out any propaganda nor to try to direct public opinion in any given direction, but to try to supply the general public with that information of a historical nature which is the essential basis of intelligent opinion upon the various issues that present themselves at this time."<sup>25</sup> According to Leland, the National Board had several aims:

To provide a means for placing the historical scholarship of the country at the service of Government; to utilize historical scholarship for patriotic and educational ends, and to enable it to do its part in providing the general public with that fund of accurate knowledge which is an essential basis of intelligent opinion; and to secure the interests of history and historical students by promoting the intelligent collection and preservation of historical materials, and in other ways.<sup>26</sup>

With Jameson's approval, the National Board was housed in the Carnegie Institution in Washington, D.C., where Leland provided both administrative and intellectual support. The executive committee was a who's who of Progressive Era academics, with Leland and Turner as permanent members and Shotwell as chairman. The National Board's executive leadership included other prominent scholars and foundation officers as well. One such individual was Ewart Greene, a highly regarded scholar of East Asian history, the son of missionaries in Japan and the brother to Jerome Greene, one-time president of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Another was Dana Munro, a respected scholar of medieval history and a member of

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<sup>25</sup> Harold Josephson, "History for Victory: The National Board for Historical Service," *Mid-America* 5, no. 3 (1970), 211, quoting Waldo Leland to William Standard, 3 May 1917, National Board of Historical Service Manuscript Papers, Library of Congress [hereafter, LC], Washington, D.C.

<sup>26</sup> Waldo Leland, "The National Board for Historical Service," in *American Historical Association Activities During WW I* ed., Newton Mereness, *American Historical Association Annual Report* 1 (1919): 161-2.

Woodrow Wilson's Inquiry. Shotwell, Munro, and Greene would all serve as early Council members.<sup>27</sup>

In 1917 Leland distributed a letter to more than 150 historians and asking for their cooperation and consultation on the National Board, which was to function as a coordinating body "in the common cause [to win the war]." He identified numerous questions worthy of scholarly analysis, including: "What is the attitude of people, or of various classes of people, in our region toward the participation of the U.S. in the war? How can arguments or appeals [presenting the aims of the war] be most effectively presented, by books or pamphlets, through the metropolitan press or the local press...? What opportunities have you personally to procure the dissemination of appropriate material [that explains the war]?"<sup>28</sup>

The National Board created a three-tier program that focused on stimulating and professionalizing historical scholarship, shaping public opinion, and providing intellectual resources and guidance to the government. In keeping with the scientific approach to history, it created bibliographical aids for research and lists of journal articles relating to the war. Leland asserted that "members of the board assisted in preparing the bibliography...published by the committee on special training and education of the War Department...for use in the war-issues course of the Students' Army Training Corps..."<sup>29</sup> With a view to shape public opinion about the war, Leland encouraged historians and teachers to explain the war's causes and objectives to

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<sup>27</sup> George Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront: American Propagandists for the Great War* (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1970), 18–9; Josephson, "History for Victory," 209. For biographical information on the Greene family, see Warren I. Cohen, *The Chinese Connection: Roger S. Greene, Thomas W. Lamont, George E. Sokolsky and American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

<sup>28</sup> Leland, "National Board," 165.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

the public. He argued that “there has never been a period in American history when public opinion has needed such a broad foundation of unfamiliar fact. The crisis which we are now in, was brought upon the Nation by outside forces rather than by internal movements.” Leland further contended that “at no time in our history has the historian been so obviously called to the immediate service of the Nation; the formation of the National Board for Historical Service is an effort to provide a medium for the rendering of such service.” He concluded that historians and teachers should avail themselves of the local presses and other vehicles to disseminate information.<sup>30</sup>

The National Board also provided intellectual services to the federal government by operating the Enemy-Press Intelligence Service, an initiative which had first been suggested by President Woodrow Wilson. At the height of its activity, the National Board was translating thirty-four German and Austrian daily papers and about fifty periodicals, including carefully selected medical, agricultural, technical, scientific, political, and general journals. Summaries were typed in multiple and then distributed to the State Department, the Military Intelligence section of the General Staff, the Inquiry, and the Princeton University library (which was housing and preserving classified information).<sup>31</sup>

In addition, the National Board worked closely with the Committee on Public Information (CPI), a public sector propaganda effort aimed at generating support for the war. The National Board gave advice on proposed pamphlets, suggested writers, assisted in the work of research, and served as a distributor of the pamphlets to teachers and history students. Together, the Board and the CPI published more than thirty-three million pamphlets and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 171–2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 181–2.

distributed them to congressmen, the YMCA, chambers of commerce, Boy Scout troops, schoolteachers, state defense councils, political parties, and the Departments of State and Agriculture. Magazines reprinted many of these pamphlets, and newspapers even serialized some of them.<sup>32</sup>

Despite its rhetoric to the contrary, the National Board was steeped in the politics of knowledge. As George Blakey explains, Andrew McLaughlin, one of the leading historians participating in the National Board, presented prowar arguments in the casual yet confident manner of a lawyer convinced that his jury will pronounce the desired verdict, if he gives them the proper evidence. McLaughlin described German attacks as unjustified and unprovoked, and America as generous, diplomatic, righteous, and lacking any political interests.<sup>33</sup> Some National Board members objected to the blatantly political orientation of the pamphlets. For instance, Charles Haskins complained that McLaughlin's clear intent was to demonstrate the peaceful designs of the U.S. and the Germans' brutality and disregard for international law.<sup>34</sup>

Even Jameson attempted to use history to influence political viewpoints. Foreshadowing America's historic conflict with the Soviet Union, Jameson suggested in 1917 that an article be drafted comparing the Germany of 1817 with the Russia of 1917, arguing that Russia, in view of its recent Revolution, was on a historical path to the same destruction at which Germany had now arrived. In a letter to Leland, Jameson asserted that:

A hundred years ago, in 1817...we all thought of Germany as a country poor in material possessions and too unworldly to acquire them, but abounding in ideas, in sentiments of humanity..., and in cosmopolitanism. Germany was indeed regarded in somewhat the

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<sup>32</sup> Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 35; Leland, "National Board," 181.

<sup>33</sup> Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 38–40.

<sup>34</sup> Josephson, "History for Victory," 213–4.

same way as late as my boyhood and youth—a land of dreamy idealists... There is no need to point out the enormous contrast between all this and the Germany of the present day, its scholars, professors, and populace.

With a combination of condescension and foreboding, he added:

But is it not true that we look upon the Russians of 1917 much as our grandfathers looked at the Germans? ... [In Russia] we have a nation whose public opinion... is largely characterized by unworldly idealism, by high sentiments of generosity, by mysticism, by enthusiasm for humanity... Now what is to be the result? Russia will grow richer and more powerful. A hundred years from now she will be, not as now, the greatest aggregation of peasants in the world, but the greatest aggregation of industrial city dwellers... [The Russians will have] the same taste for money and material power with which the Germans are now so cursed.<sup>35</sup>

The National Board became further embroiled with politics through its collaboration with Woodrow Wilson's Inquiry, the Executive Office postwar planning group of more than one hundred academics charged with assignment of preparing an American postwar program.<sup>36</sup> The National Board created an Inquiry advisory committee that included Frederick Jackson Turner, William Dodd of the University of Chicago, and William Dunning of Columbia University and conducted politically relevant research projects, such as a compendium of the diplomatic histories of Europe, Asia, and Africa since 1870.<sup>37</sup> Other members who served jointly on the National Board and the Inquiry included Shotwell, who was the Inquiry's administrative officer; Charles Haskins, who directed research on the Western Front; and Dana Munro, who directed research on the Near East. Haskins and Shotwell, moreover, were two of the small group of

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<sup>35</sup> John Franklin Jameson to Waldo Leland, 17 July 1917, folder W. G. Leland, box 102, Jameson Papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, D.C. [hereafter, Jameson Papers, LC].

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Gelfand, *The Inquiry: American Preparations for Peace, 1917–1919* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1963), 45.

<sup>37</sup> Leland, "National Board," 170. Also, see Gelfand, *Inquiry*.

thirteen Inquiry members who attended the Paris Peace conference in 1919 and both were founding members of the Council.

The Inquiry suffered from similar intellectual limitations and contradictions as did the National Board. Lawrence Gelfand asserts,

Before the war, American universities had provincially disregarded scholarly consideration of the world beyond the Americas and Europe. Historians, economists, political scientists, and even geographers who possessed facility in Slavic, Asian or African languages or whose knowledge of Eastern Europe, Asia or Africa rose above the superficial level were absolute rarities. The study of international relations had been confined to diplomatic history and international law... America's leading universities were clearly not providing opportunities for systematic study of world affairs.<sup>38</sup>

As a result,

The majority of Inquiry workers were not in 1917 specialists or experts on their assigned topics. Experts were the exception rather than the rule. Most of the personnel had general knowledge of the geographical area, some had basic knowledge of the economic, social and political structure; a smaller percentage possessed some linguistic facility in the language of the area on which they were working.<sup>39</sup>

Academics trained in generalized disciplines rather than specialized subjects were largely unprepared to meet the challenge of postwar planning. For example, Dana Munro and Charles Haskins were trained in medieval history but were responsible for western Asia and northwest Europe, respectively. Haskins lamented his poor training and inability to handle many of the international and political problems presented to him. Gelfand contends that, ultimately, the Inquiry's organization was too ambitious and failed to take into account scholars' limited qualifications, the lack of adequate or current source materials, a sharply limited budget, and the

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<sup>38</sup> Gelfand, *Inquiry*, 35.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

extreme time pressure.<sup>40</sup> These factors manifested themselves in poorly articulated and contradictory recommendations.

The war demonstrated that academics were not adequately trained to deal with contemporary issues and that the distinction between political and nonpolitical knowledge was a slippery one, it also opened new opportunities. Jameson, Leland, and their academic colleagues succeeded in sharing scholarly interpretations, bibliographies, and translations with both the public and the federal government. Moreover, the war provided American humanists greater access to political institutions and events. As members of the Inquiry, Haskins and Shotwell accompanied President Woodrow Wilson to the Paris Peace conference, where he argued for an internationalist agenda that included support for democratic principles such as the right of all people to self-determination. Although the U.S. ultimately rejected Wilson and the internationalist agenda, scholarly conference attendees successfully built bridges with other internationalists. While in Paris, Haskins and Shotwell wrote Leland about the possibility of organizing American humanities to participate in a European-based scholarly association called the International Union of Academies (UAI). The French Academy of Belles Inscriptions and Belles Lettres and the American Academy of Moral and Political Sciences had conceived of the UAI and invited the principal humanities academies and learned societies in the Allied countries to meet in Paris in order to establish the association. The humanistic academies (or humanistic sections of general academies) of France, Great Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Greece, Poland, Russia, and Japan were all represented in the first meeting, and each country had two delegates and two votes in the general assembly.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 54 and 315.

The U.S., however, lacked a similar humanistic academy to participate in the UAI.<sup>41</sup> Leland suggested forming a federation of learned societies not represented in the National Research Council (NRC), which included the major scientific and technical societies as well as representatives of other research organizations, government scientific bureaus, and a few members at large.<sup>42</sup> The NRC, which surveyed the needs for comprehensive research programs and promoted individual and cooperative research in the physical sciences, had recently received a \$5 million grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Leland hoped to create something similar to the NRC for the humanities. As he explains in his oral history, “I suggested that we should try to form a national federation of our major national societies devoted to the social sciences and to the humanities...I spent the summer of 1919 working out a plan for the Council. I drew up a constitution and prepared for the conference, which was held in the rooms of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston.”<sup>43</sup>

Leland’s idea for a humanities institution reflected the priorities of the Progressive Era. To begin with, it was to be highly democratic and egalitarian. In a letter to Abraham Flexner of the Rockefeller Foundation, he described the ACLS as “a natural group of a dozen American organizations ...[which] are, themselves, the natural groupings of scholars in the various fields of the humanistic and social sciences. They have...the characteristics of American learned organizations—their membership comprises not only the professional scholars, but also the

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<sup>41</sup> Waldo Leland, “The Organization of the International Union of Academies and the American Council of Learned Societies,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 1 (Oct. 1920): 1–7.

<sup>42</sup> Frederic Ogg, *Research in the Humanistic and Social Sciences: Report of a Survey Conducted for the American Council of Learned Societies* (New York: Century, 1928), 168.

<sup>43</sup> *The Reminiscences of Waldo Gifford Leland* (24 May 1955), p. 47, in the Oral History Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, Columbia University Library, New York.

fringe of cultivated persons who may be said to constitute the general public of these fields of learned.” According to Leland, this structure had inherent advantages over its European counterpart: “indeed the ACLS has substantial advantages over an [European] academy, which, with its closed and limited membership, its assumption of authority, and its tendency to become a *petite chapelle*, seems to many if not to most American scholars ill-suited to American conditions of intellectual life.”<sup>44</sup> Unlike European academies, the Council sought to mitigate intellectual isolation and irrelevance by promoting collaboration and cooperation among academics, foundations, universities, and the government.

Second, by embracing a broad interpretation of the humanities and promising development of a *humanistic science*, the ACLS reflected the positivism of the Progressive Era. Jameson, among others, welcomed the participation of the American Economic Association and the American Political Science Association because he believed that the humanities faced intellectual and institutional challenges similar to the social sciences. In a 1922 letter to Abraham Flexner at the Rockefeller Foundation, Jameson asserted that individual humanities disciplines have “too exclusively devoted themselves each to its own field, with too little thought of the relations between researches in that field and researches in those which adjoin.” The humanities, he contended, should be rationally planned by academic managers capable of understanding the intellectual needs of the nation. “In short,” he concluded, the ACLS “could exercise those functions of a clearinghouse of humanistic research which, in the field of the physical sciences, form so useful a part of the functions of the NRC.”<sup>45</sup> Jameson proposed a

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<sup>44</sup> Waldo Leland to Abraham Flexner, 27 May 1926, folder 1007 W. G. Leland, box 107, Jameson Papers, LC.

<sup>45</sup> John Franklin Jameson to Abraham Flexner, 23 September 1922, folder 1922–1925, series 3, box 48, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Manuscript Collections, Rockefeller

similar argument to Wickliffe Rose, president of the General Educational Board and the International Education Board, and former president of the Rockefeller Foundation's International Health Division. During his tenure at the Rockefeller Foundation, Rose had led a successful global campaign against hookworm, yellow fever, and tuberculosis. Jameson relayed his conversation with Rose in a letter to Haskins, asserting that the American humanities were too segmented because the new professional humanist, in possession of increasingly specialized knowledge, was more isolated than the humanities generalist of the past. He complained that "our humanistic societies and our university departments have for a generation past conducted their activities of research in a manner too closely restrained to their respective fields, not often enough looking over the fence, or that at any rate humanistic research in America would be benefited by broader cooperation between its branches."<sup>46</sup>

At Leland and Jameson's suggestion, the American Historical Association and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences invited representatives from ten national societies in the social sciences and the humanities to meet in Boston. The representatives adopted a constitution, which they, in turn, recommended to their respective constituencies. Ultimately, it was accepted by the societies. According to its constitution, the ACLS was to be composed of two delegates from each of the national learned societies. The first elections were held in 1920, and, in February of that year, the initial meeting took place in New York City at the offices of the International Institution of Education.<sup>47</sup> The organization's constitution also defined three

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Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York [hereafter, RAC].

<sup>46</sup> John Franklin Jameson to Charles Haskins, 15 March 1923, folder vol. II correspondence with Jameson, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>47</sup> Higham, *History; Reminiscences of Waldo Leland*; Waldo Leland, "The American Council of Learned Societies and Its Activities in 1928," *Bulletin—ACLS* 9 (Dec. 1928): 7–50.

primary functions for the ACLS: (1) maintaining and strengthening relations between the humanities and the social sciences and promoting the interests of both of these constituent societies; (2) representing American scholarship in the UAI and other international organizations; and (3) fostering cooperation among societies and scholars in more than one field to mitigate further segmentation, specialization, and isolation.

By 1920, the Progressive Era had come to a close. Despite major intellectual and institutional changes that reflected the spread of positivism and professionalization, interwar Americans rejected Wilsonian optimism and the ideals of the Progressive movement, embracing instead a conservative consumer culture and a return to normalcy—expressed most clearly in the successive election of William Harding and Calvin Coolidge to the American presidency. Although the Republican-dominated federal government continued to work closely with private industry, it retreated from larger social and international responsibilities. How would the Council reconcile an internationalist humanities agenda with the national culture of positivism and emerging isolationism? Who would the Council's allies be? What kinds of compromises would the Council have to make? How successful would it be?

### **Building a Program from the Bottom Up**

The first seven years at the ACLS were devoted to building the organization, establishing priorities, and securing funds. Its initial program was small in scale, but it nonetheless reflected the intellectual and institutional commitments of modernizing humanists of the Progressive Era. The Council advanced the internationalist agenda by participating in the UAI, where it paid annual dues and contributed to program development and special projects. Leland wrote to Flexner that “the UAI...in the fields of the humanities...is thus the natural agency for initiating and conducting cooperative enterprises in which the learned bodies of various countries desire to

take part. It is not an artificial body, created out of *toutes pieces* to meet a hypothetical situation, but a natural grouping of existing organizations in order to meet definitely felt needs.”<sup>48</sup> Like the ACLS, the UAI hoped to promote mutual understanding and friendship among peoples of different nations through a rigorous program of international scholarship and scientific research. The UAI advanced the development of research tools, such as bibliographies, indexes, guides, and surveys, and promoted special projects like an international compendium of all existing ancient pottery vases in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Near East; a collection of materials relating to Indonesian customary law; and an authoritative dictionary of medieval Latin.<sup>49</sup> Leland contributed to the UAI in numerous ways, perhaps most importantly by leading the successful movement to have Germany and Austria included in its ranks.

The Council promoted the humanities and the interests of member societies by holding annual meetings with the constituent delegates, organizing press conferences to disseminate information about the humanities and learned societies, and operating special projects, like research into the reproduction of out-of-print material and sensible investment strategies for professional associations. It promoted professionalization in ways already accepted by the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the American Historical Association, such as developing specialized tools for research, providing fellowships, and operating cooperative investigations. Research tools included surveys and dictionaries, the most famous being the *Dictionary of American Biography*, which was modeled on the *British Dictionary of National Biography*.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Leland to Flexner, 27 May 1926.

<sup>49</sup> Leland, “American Council Activities 1928,” 20–6.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Council members bridged the divide between the humanities and the social and natural sciences. In response to a letter from Haskins, John Merriam, then president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, wrote “I am very greatly interested in your view of the organization of research in the humanities and its relation to what is being done in the field of the natural sciences. I realize that research in each of the departments...must be organized more or less as a unit; but I am hoping also that along with consideration of the specific fields we may be able to work out the interrelation of the investigations upon the different types of problems, with the ultimate aim of bringing into a certain unity all research or constructive work that goes forward by the application of the so-called scientific method.”<sup>51</sup> Haskins agreed, highlighting the Council’s interest in collaborating with the National Research Council, and Merriam responded “I would be greatly interested in cooperation between the American Council of Learned Societies and the National Research Council for consideration of questions that concern both groups... When the time comes for the consideration of the appointment of a joint committee to operate with the National Research Council I shall be glad to discuss the question with you and help in a cooperative arrangement for the advancement of this plan.”<sup>52</sup>

The ACLS’s efforts, however, were undermined by the intellectual dominance of the natural and social sciences and the creation of organizations like the SSRC, which was established in 1924 to serve the same coordinating function as the Council, but for the social sciences. In the *Invisible Hand of Planning*, Guy Alchon explains that the “SSRC was the brainchild of the University of Chicago political scientist Charles Merriam [brother of John

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<sup>51</sup> John Merriam to Charles Haskins, 3 May 1921, folder correspondence with J. C. Merriam, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>52</sup> John Merriam to Charles Haskins, 10 May 1921, folder correspondence with J. C. Merriam, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

Merriam at the CIW]... But also joining him as its leading lights were Wesley Mitchell and Beardsley Rumml, the latter functioning now as the director of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, an agency that between 1923 and 1930 would spend over forty million dollars to subsidize social science research. Like Merriam and Mtichell, Rumml was interested in both science-building and synthesis.” Beginning in 1928, the SSRC received significant financial support from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial.<sup>53</sup>

The ACLS believed the SSRC duplicated its efforts and was distressed when constituent social science societies—the American Economic Association and the American Sociological Association, for example—terminated their membership to collaborate exclusively within the social sciences. In 1926 Leland wrote Rumml, arguing that the Council and the SSRC should not encourage such jurisdictional distinctions and that the ACLS was seeking to break down the partitions between the various disciplines. Leland argued that “a new and broader outlook is being gained for the humanistic sciences, their scope is widened, more fundamental conceptions of research are being held, and new methods of research are being developed.”<sup>54</sup> Foundations, however, continued to support the SSRC, thereby contributing to intellectual specialization and segmentation.<sup>55</sup> In 1928 Leland tried to place the Council’s increasingly narrow parameters in a good light, asserting,

A logical result of [the creation of the SSRC]...was to enable the Council of Learned Societies to define more closely its own field of activity...to those devoted to the

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<sup>53</sup> Alchon, *Invisible Hand*, 116; Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 60.

<sup>54</sup> Waldo Leland to Beardsley Rumml, 7 April 1926, folder Reorganization of the Council 1926–27, box A6, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>55</sup> Leland, “American Council Activities in 1928,” 11.

advancement of the humanistic sciences. An understanding has therefore been reached, this past year, between the two Councils as to their respective functions and fields of interest. The Council of Learned Societies will...in general leave to the Social Science Research Council the planning of active investigations in the social sciences, and also the task of aiding individual projects of research in those fields. This does not mean that the two Councils are endeavoring to establish a line of demarcation between the humanistic and the social sciences, for to do so would be a retrograde movement, inconsistent with the scientific conception of the unity of knowledge. It means rather that the two bodies, in view of the immense territory that is to be cultivated, have agreed to concentrate on different areas within that territory, and to cooperate or act in consultation with each other in dealing with projects or interests that lie in both areas...<sup>56</sup>

Despite the Council's connections in the world of foundations, the dominance of the positivist and pragmatist philosophy undermined its efforts to secure funding. Leland wrote Haskins in May 1921 that "it seems to me our success in securing funds is going to depend to a large extent on whether we are able to select problems in research, which seem to have a direct bearing of a practical sort upon present day affairs." He complained that Americans' relentless concern with efficiencies left the humanities weak and vulnerable. He lamented,

I have been racking my brains for weeks in an effort to think of undertakings appropriate to the Council of Learned Societies, which might be characterized as having "practical" bearings upon present day problems. It seems difficult. But this is what I think we have got to do if we are to win any funds from trustees of endowments and foundations. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake does not as yet seem to have established in America its inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.<sup>57</sup>

John Merriam proved to be a major obstacle in winning funds from the Carnegie philanthropies. In February 1922, Jameson wrote Haskins "Merriam thinks that the ACLS does not take itself seriously enough (which is true, but I don't see how it can avoid a sense of futility just at present) and that what is necessary is to make serious, sustained, and long continued efforts, in which

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 11-2.

<sup>57</sup> Waldo Leland to Charles Haskins, 11 May 1921, folder correspondence with W. G. Leland, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

case support will come somehow some time.”<sup>58</sup> In April 1925, Leland wrote Haskins that he had failed to convince Merriam of the Council’s merits: [Merriam] “thinks the ACLS would have a better chance of securing support if it should address itself to some of the more important ‘problems’ in the humanistic fields. The preparation of aids to research, catalogues and manuscripts, dictionaries, etc., does not make much of an appeal. I am a little puzzled and somewhat irritated. I am afraid that we shall have to do some window dressing in order to put our projects across.”<sup>59</sup> Exasperated, Leland complained to Jameson in 1926 about the Carnegie philanthropies’ interest in funding only “constructive research,” asserting “How I have come to hate those words! If JCM [John Merriam] only knew it he has inspired me with a loathing for C.R. [constructive research] that I shall probably never recover from.”<sup>60</sup>

While futilely pursuing the Carnegie philanthropies, ACLS members also tried to woo funds from the various Rockefeller foundations. In September of 1922 Leland wrote Jameson about his meeting with Flexner, who “was very sympathetic regarding [the Council] and promised to talk over [its case] with those others who have the weightiest voices in the affairs of that [General Education] Board and the Rockefeller Foundation and the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Fund.”<sup>61</sup> In the late 1920s the Rockefeller Foundation’s approach to the humanities

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<sup>58</sup> John Franklin Jameson to Charles Haskins, 23 February 1922, folder correspondence with J. F. Jameson, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>59</sup> Waldo Leland to Charles Haskins, 4 April 1925, folder correspondence with W. G. Leland, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>60</sup> Waldo Leland to John Franklin Jameson, 9 August 1926, folder 1007 W. G. Leland, box 107, Jameson Papers, LC.

<sup>61</sup> John Franklin Jameson to Charles Haskins, 23 September 1922, folder correspondence with J. F. Jameson, box A1, ACLS Papers, LC. Jameson is summarizing Leland’s recent comments about his meeting.

began to change and Flexner became an advocate for financial support. Malcolm Richardson explains that “[i]n a memorandum to the General Education Board’s trustees in 1927, Flexner developed his conception of the situation in these words ‘For centuries the humanities had the whole field; latterly science and the professions have come into their own. The truth is not, however, that too much has been done for science and medicine, but meanwhile, during this period, the humanities have been to a certain extent overlooked.’”<sup>62</sup> Flexner argued that there was a shortage of scholars in the humanities and that “competent men could not be found to teach archaeology, ancient history, Sanskrit, the Byzantine studies.”<sup>63</sup> In the 1920s the General Education Board provided some funding for traditional humanities initiatives. This included \$200,000 toward the endowment of humanities departments; \$500,000 to the American School of Classical Studies in Athens; \$780,000 to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago to train archaeologists; and \$500,000 to Harvard for the Fogg Art Museum to train curators and art historians. In total, the General Education Board’s grants to Chicago’s Oriental Institute exceeded \$3.5 million.<sup>64</sup>

Despite their lack of financial success, Council members were optimistic about the future and voted to make Leland the organizational secretary on a halftime basis for 1926. In March 1925, Thomas Gilbert, secretary to president, John Merriam, at the Carnegie Institution,

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<sup>62</sup> Joel Colton and Malcolm Richardson, “The Humanities and ‘The Well-Being of Mankind’: A Half Century of the Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation,” unpublished manuscript (1985), see ch. 1, p. 14, quoting Abraham Flexner, “The Humanities,” 29 March 1927, General Education Board, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>63</sup> Raymond Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving: The Story of the General Education Board* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962) 233–5, quoting Edward Capps to Abraham Flexner, 21 November 1927, General Education Board, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>64</sup> Fosdick, *Adventure in Giving*, 234; *Story of the Rockefeller Foundation*, 238.

summarized a recent conversation with Leland. "As I see it," Gilbert recorded, "[Leland] would really prefer to carry on his historical studies with the Institution, particularly if there is possibility for preparation of a more constructive program in the future."<sup>65</sup> Although Leland considered the ACLS an "experiment" and expressed his concern about not being the right person to lead such an organization, he told Gilbert "I have asked Dr. Jameson...to see if it would be possible for me to have a leave of absence from the Institution until the end of 1928, at which time I should be in a much better position to make a final decision as to how to spend most usefully the remainder of my working years."<sup>66</sup> Also, he expressed his optimism to John Merriam, asserting "I confess that my hopes for the Council are very great. If I am able to secure for it the support and cooperation that I hope for I believe that the Council can play a most important part in the development of humanistic studies in the prosecution of fundamental research."<sup>67</sup>

On May 27, 1926, Leland sent Flexner an eight-page letter requesting \$25,000 annually for five years for administrative support and program expansion. He outlined the Council's mission and goals and highlighted its aim to promote collaboration among the humanities and the social sciences and to participate in internationalist activities. He included a budget proposal for five years, covering salaries for an executive secretary, assistant, stenographer, two assistants,

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas Gilbert, "Memorandum of Conversation with Mr. Leland," 6 March 1925, box Leland, Waldo Gifford Leland Papers, Manuscript Collections, Carnegie Institution of Washington Archives, Washington, D.C. [hereafter designated as Leland Papers, CIW Arch.]

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Gilbert, "Memorandum Regarding Organization and Future of Historical Research in the Carnegie Institution of Washington," 21 January 1927, box Leland, Leland Papers, CIW Arch.

<sup>67</sup> Waldo Leland to John Merriam, 10 January 1927, box Leland, Leland Papers, CIW Arch.

and expenses for rental office space, small publications, and participation in the UAI.<sup>68</sup> The General Education Board approved the five-year grant in November 1926. Leland wrote Jameson, “Naturally I am overjoyed at this great good fortune to the humanistic studies.”<sup>69</sup> The Executive Committee and the constituent societies elected Leland permanent secretary, the most senior position in the Council, and the executive offices were established in Washington, D.C., at 907 Fifteenth Street, N.W. In October 1941, the British Purchasing Commission leased the entire building. The Council then relocated to 1219 Sixteenth Street, N.W.<sup>70</sup>

General Education Board funding marked a turning point in the Council’s history, allowing it to make changes to both its administrative structure and its humanities initiatives. In December of 1926, Leland outlined his future priorities, asserting that “in the first place...what must be worked for above all else these five years is to place the Council in as strong a position, materially and morally, as possible. At the end of five years we must try to be assured of an independent future, or if that should be impossible we must have given such a demonstration of our value that there will [be] no further doubt about our securing adequate support from foundations.” Second, Leland wanted the ACLS to be the vital organ promoting the American humanities, and he hoped for funding commensurate with that awarded the natural and social sciences. Third, it was to “build up a fund for research which will place at our command resources comparable to those that are at the disposition of the physical sciences. Fourth, he explained, “an especial effort should be made to strengthening our constituent societies and to

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<sup>68</sup> Waldo Leland to Abraham Flexner, 27 May 1926.

<sup>69</sup> Waldo Leland to John Franklin Jameson, 23 November 1926, folder 1007 W. G. Leland, box 107, Jameson Papers, LC.

<sup>70</sup> ACLS, “Summary of Activities in 1941,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 35 (Oct. 1942): 14.

cementing them together.” Finally, Leland argued that attention must be directed to relations with the UAI and the building of practical, sustainable international relations based on the model of Pan-Americanism that was unfolding at the same time. Leland asserted “I believe that we can exert a profound and desirable influence upon foreign scholarship if we are able to take an active part in the world of the UAI and especially if we can lead it to take up projects in the modern field and in the historical and social sciences. We can use our influence discreetly to have the base of the UAI broadened in those countries where at present it consists only of the traditional academy, and in this way the UAI may be brought to be far more representative than it is at present of scholarship in general.”<sup>71</sup>

The ACLS modified and expanded its administrative structure, creating an advisory board with two functions: one to aid the executive and administrative committee in choosing projects, and the other to propose ways to advance the humanities systematically. The 1929 *Bulletin—ACLS* explains that “in selecting the members of the board special attention was paid not only to assuring a well rounded representation of the various humanistic fields, but also to scientific reputation, power of impartial criticism and judgment, and the qualities of insight, constructive, imagination, and common sense.”<sup>72</sup> The board consisted of nine members who, like the executive committee, were elected by Council members.<sup>73</sup>

Foundation funding also allowed the Council to elaborate its internationalist and humanistic agenda. Paul Reinsch attended the first meeting in 1920 as a representative of the

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<sup>71</sup> Waldo Leland to [?] Armstrong, 14 December 1926, folder 1007 W. G. Leland, box 107, Jameson Papers, LC.

<sup>72</sup> Leland, “American Council Activities 1928,” 9–10.

<sup>73</sup> Waldo Leland, “The American Council of Learned Societies and Its Activities in 1929: Report of the Permanent Secretary to the Council,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 12 (Dec. 1929): 11.

American Political Science Association and, later, as that association's delegate. At the first meeting, Reinsch suggested promoting Asian studies in American universities as an essential ingredient to increase Americans' understanding of the world, advance internationalism, and develop mutual understanding and peace. The Council's domestic program to advance the humanities and the internationalist agenda focused on creating knowledge about the nonwestern world, which was loosely defined as Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Prior to the 1930s, knowledge about Asia was dominated by an eclectic group of missionaries, entrepreneurial iconoclasts, philanthropists, and scholars interested primarily in Asian antiquity.<sup>74</sup> Organizations such as the American Oriental Society were principally concerned with the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, while nonprofessional organizations, such as the Institute of Pacific Relations, lacked scholarly focus and rigor. In order to create a modern humanities program with an area studies emphasis, the ACLS had to combine scholarly research with pragmatic knowledge. From their experience on the National Board and the Inquiry, Council members were acutely aware of the need for increased knowledge about the world both for policymaking and democracy.

In 1928, the ACLS organized a meeting on Chinese studies in the U.S. and attracted some of the scholarly giants of Asian studies. The meeting included Arthur Hummel of the American Oriental Society, curator of the Library of Congress Oriental Collection, the largest collection of Chinese works outside of China; Carl Bishop, associate curator of Oriental Art in the Freer Gallery; Benjamin March, curator of Far East Art in Detroit, Michigan; George Danton, professor and head of the department of German at Oberlin College; and Truman Michelson, of

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<sup>74</sup> Paul M. Evans, *John Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China* (New York: B. Blackwell Press, 1988), 59; John King Fairbank, *Chinabound: A Fifty-Year*

the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology. According to a special publication, meeting participants issued a memorandum which:

proposed a volume of about four or five hundred pages which would serve as (1) a manual for the student beginning the study of Sinology, (2) a reference work in which the more advanced sinologist could find a considered statement of the condition of and facilities for research in those fields with which he is not immediately familiar, and (3) a handbook of interest to the general public in familiarizing it with the importance, the stage of advancement, the needs, and the possibilities of modern sinological research.<sup>75</sup>

Participants debated the merits of the plan. Some complained that the suggested classification method was purely western and ignored certain fundamentals of Chinese society; others worried that the survey would provide an analysis, but not a picture of Chinese society; and still others complained that the encyclopedic nature of the plan militated against its success.

To evaluate the proposal and develop a strategy for a program in Far Eastern studies, the ACLS organized a conference on December 1, 1928, at the Harvard Club of New York City. It included sinologists, as well as officers of learned societies and professors of linguistics, history, and other subjects relevant to China. Like the Council's earlier academic initiatives, the conference on Far Eastern studies was marked by a desire to generate more immediately relevant, practical knowledge. At the outset of the conference, the attendees were reminded that,

It cannot be too strongly affirmed that this interest [in Asian studies] must not only afford satisfaction to an antiquarian curiosity, or indulge an appetite for the bizarre, or eventuate in a hodgepodge of chinoiseries such as distinguished the eighteenth century; it cannot but lead to a broadening and deepening of our philosophy; it cannot but contribute to that new synthesis for which the past hundred years of historical analysis has been laying the foundations.<sup>76</sup>

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*Memoir* (New York: Harper & Row, 1982).

<sup>75</sup> Mortimer Graves, "Promotion of Chinese Studies," *Bulletin—ACLS* 10 (Apr. 1929): 6.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-1.

The conference consensus was that some elements of the memorandum were viable while others were not. An encyclopedic manual of Chinese studies was impractical, but a survey of organizations and research facilities in Chinese studies, a directory of sinologists throughout the world, and a program to promote Chinese studies in universities through the creation of bibliographies and other research guides were useful and important. Also at this meeting, the Council established a standing committee on Chinese studies and nominated seven of those present to membership: Bethold Laufer, Arthur Hummel, Kenneth Latourette, Carl Bishop, Lucius Porter, Lewis Hodous, and L. C. Goodrich.

### **Conclusion**

By the close of the 1920s, Council members had achieved several noteworthy goals, the most important among them had been to secure foundation funding. This had been no easy task. The humanities were considered by many to be part of elite culture, and, therefore, a luxury rather than a necessity, whereas foundations primarily focused on “scientific philanthropy” to solve social problems through research and technical assistance. Despite this perception, the ACLS took critical steps in developing the broad contours of a modern, socially engaged, internationalist program that combined scholarly and pragmatic objectives. The Council broke with the past of the humanities by rejecting amateurism and the generalist approach, and adopting instead a professional one that combined a traditional focus on antiquity and high culture with a new interest in scientific research methodologies and socially relevant, nonpolitical knowledge.

Federalism, progressivism, and the First World War provided crucial ingredients in the Council’s gradual development. American federalism, and the tradition against strong national government, promised a role for nongovernmental organizations in civil society. Progressivism

spurred a wave of national reform movements that emphasized the importance of expertise in governance. Without bipartisan, objective, and rational knowledge, national policies would inevitably reflect politics and class rather than larger social interests. The consolidation of technocratic authority, which resulted from the logic of greater specialization for greater objectivity, concentrated authority in the hands of intellectual elites located in universities and independent research institutes rather than in the more democratic social reform movements. These politically savvy institution-building members of the elite aligned themselves with private wealth. Jameson and Leland adopted a narrow definition of politics as the single-minded pursuit of self-interest, and then cast themselves as disinterested experts promoting scientific, nonpolitical scholarship for the good of mankind. Finally, the war created a laboratory environment to develop new programs and piqued the interests of humanists searching for ways to contribute more directly to governance.

The experience of these activist academics, in the early years of the ACLS was not simply one of increasing success and expanding influence. The Council's approach to a new and more modern humanities program was at times ambivalent and contradictory. Although ACLS members emphasized their objectivity, intellectual credibility, and relevance for larger social and political issues, their wartime experience calls this into question. Their concerns were more scholarly than practical, and they had proclivity for politics, propaganda, and nationalism, and ultimately they were fragmented by competing intellectual commitments. On the one hand, the ACLS embraced Progressive Era positivism and professionalism and its activities reflected the interests of academics rather than those of policymakers or the public. On the other hand, the organization tailored its initiatives to meet the interests of donors, likened itself to the National Research Council, and promised foundations tangible, practical results in exchange for financial

support. The tension between scholarly and public sector interests would shape the Council's area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives in years to follow.

## CHAPTER 2: THE 1930s

### **Introduction**

The ACLS's early decision to provide leadership in area studies and cultural diplomacy was both risky and prescient. Idealistic isolationism took hold during the interwar years, as America sought to reestablish normalcy at home and abroad by embracing nonengagement and a simplistic system of minimal international cooperation. Moreover, the American tradition of limited government, together with the pressing needs of the Great Depression, focused the efforts of the federal government on economic recovery and social assistance, leaving academic institutions largely in private hands, and keeping foreign policy relatively passive and small-scale. The nightmare years of the 1930s, however, would ultimately destroy this naive complacency. Harbingers of the impending world crisis included a decade of global depression, the gradual breakdown of the Washington Conference, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian imperialism, and China's failure to establish economic and political stability. Whereas most Americans turned their backs on Asia and Europe as they stumbled toward crisis, Council members argued that increased American understanding of, and participation in, international affairs was essential for world peace. In the view of these forward-looking individuals, national and political crises arose from global cultural and intellectual shifts: only improved international understanding, transnational partnerships, and a new universalist ideology that recognized common interests among nations could potentially mitigate these conflicts. According to the

ACLS, global stability hinged upon deepening mutual understanding between Americans and people of other cultures.

The period from 1927 to 1941 marked an era of significant expansion and transformation for the Council. The organization built upon its first decade of experience by continuing to work closely with the Rockefeller and Carnegie philanthropies as well as elite academic institutions, expanding and solidifying a network of humanistic scholars interested in promoting culture and ideas. Moreover, the ACLS articulated in greater detail a new conception of the humanities, one rooted in the scientific, reformist, and democratic elements of the Progressive Era and more closely linked to the pragmatic policy goals of civil society. Despite its prescriptive internationalist aspirations, however, the Council remained highly academic, nonpolitical, and insular in the early 1930s, falling far short of its goal of transforming American and international understanding. Area studies expanded, but the field remained modest in scale and scholarly rather than strategic and policy-oriented. Cultural diplomacy expanded as well, as members participated in a wider network of internationalist associations, including the International Union of Academies (UAI), the League of Nations, and the International Committee on Historical Sciences. Unfortunately, these activities—focused more on the politics of cooperative meeting planning than on effective promotion of mutual understanding—had marginal impact with respect to strategic policy.

In the second half of the 1930s, however, area studies and cultural diplomacy diverged in terms of intellectual content and institutional relationships. Increased cultural and intellectual expansionism by the Axis powers at this time—particularly manifest in Axis infiltration into Latin America—prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to create the Division of Cultural Relations (hereafter, “the Division”) within the State Department and to implement the Good

Neighbor policy, which relied heavily on private sector cultural organizations and precedents as a vehicle for promoting friendship with Latin America. Although the Good Neighbor policy amounted to a relatively more activist foreign policy, it also reflected the dominant trends of isolationism, which discouraged U.S. entanglements abroad, and federalism, which emphasized limited government and an active role for nongovernmental organizations in policymaking and operations.

Thus, the Council's challenge during the interwar years had been to adapt the humanistic enterprise so that it met Progressive Era and social reform goals. This had been no easy task and had entailed redefining the humanities along more pragmatic lines, and developing area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives as the bridge linking academia to civil society and public policymaking. The ACLS's interwar legacy was contradictory and ambiguous, as it reflected both the relative strengths and weaknesses of the federal government and the Council members' competing commitments to scholarship and governance. In the case of area studies, scholars developed academic knowledge independently of the public sector and political pressures but remained isolated and insular. In the case of cultural diplomacy, however, the Council collaborated with the State Department but chafed against political pressures. An analysis of the ACLS's interwar programs provides insights into scholars' strategies for contributing to governance, the extent to which their academic training circumscribed and limited their strategic approaches, and, most importantly, the gradual and negotiated process by which new systems for developing, managing, and employing academic knowledge were created.

### **The Humanities and the “Intellectual Foundation of Social Change”**

The process of shifting the bases of the definition of the humanities—thereby expanding and modernizing it—from a traditional nineteenth century focus on antiquity and Western

civilization to a twentieth century emphasis on contemporary issues was gradual and demanded cross-institutional and cross-disciplinary alliances. From 1929 to 1934, the Rockefeller Foundation largely distributed funds based on the traditional definition of the humanities, providing support for Byzantine studies, Homeric studies, and the study of Anglo-Saxon poetry, and Roman history. The initial shift from the traditional program came in 1934 with the release of the *Report of the Committee on Appraisal and Plan*, which criticized the exclusive allocation of financial support to arcane academic scholarship without regard for immediate social, intellectual, and economic needs. The section of the *Report* concerning the humanities relied heavily on a memorandum written by Jerome Greene, the son of missionaries and the brother of committed internationalist Ewart Greene, one-time chairman of the National Board of Historical Service and a member of the Council's Committees on Far Eastern Studies. In the memorandum, Greene argued that an activist, and strategic humanities program should emphasize broad educational goals and contribute to popular interest in fine arts, literature, and foreign languages, serving educational as well as democratic purposes.<sup>1</sup>

The ACLS contributed to the process underway of redefining the humanities in numerous ways, but none was as significant as the hiring of Mortimer Graves, who quickly became the Council's principal advocate for Asian studies. Born in 1893, Graves served as an aviator in the First World War, after which he earned a Bachelor and Master degree from Harvard. Although he enrolled in graduate studies at the University of Pennsylvania in 1920, he never completed his doctorate.<sup>2</sup> Graves was a quintessential Progressive Era reformer. Like Leland, for instance, he

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Colton and Malcolm Richardson, "The Humanities and the 'Well-Being of Mankind': A Half-Century of the Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation (unpublished manuscript, 1985), ch. 2, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> [Unknown author], "Mortimer Graves, 94, WWI vet," *Washington Times*, 2 March

was an intellectual internationalist who viewed academic knowledge as a strategic tool for achieving world peace. He boasted of having taught himself five languages, including Russian and Chinese, and was later awarded honorary doctoral degrees from the Universities of Michigan and Pennsylvania for his contribution to the development of nonwestern studies and languages in the U.S. The *Washington Times* credited Graves with the idea of cultural attachés at American embassies, and identified him as the first American to bring Soviet research papers to the U.S. and translate them into English.<sup>3</sup> He helped participated in numerous nongovernmental organizations, including the American Oriental Society, the Washington Committee for Aid to China, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Middle East Institute, the Association of Asian Studies, and the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers.<sup>4</sup> In 1926 he helped establish the American Russian Institute (ARI), a nonpolitical organization that promoted the free and open exchange of ideas by providing translations of books and articles and other information to such people as journalists, educators, and activists.<sup>5</sup> The ARI showed films, organized lectures, and served as a general resource on Russian history, culture, and society.

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1987, sec. B, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The University of Michigan and the University of Pennsylvania confirmed honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degrees. The *Washington Times* Obituary asserts that he was credited with the idea of cultural attachés.

<sup>4</sup> Harvard University, *Harvard University Class of 1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 302.

<sup>5</sup> A. M. Sperber, *Murrow: His Life and Times* (New York: Freundlich Books, 1986), 47. Stephen Duggan was a member of the American Russian Institute, the Institute of Pacific Relations, the Council on Foreign Relations, and Director of the Institute of International Education, established in 1919 with the financial support of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Biographer A. M. Sperber explains that Duggan “studied educational systems around the world, advised the Soviet government on the administration of its workers’ colleges...[and was] founder of the departments of political science, education, and adult education...” at City College of New York.

When the Council secured administrative funding from the General Education Board in 1927, Leland recruited Graves to serve on the Executive Committee. Working together over two decades, from 1927 to 1947, the two men transformed the fledgling organization into one of the nation's premier scholarly associations.<sup>6</sup>

Graves criticized the traditional focus of the humanities on the preservation and transmission of western culture. In the 1930s, he complained that humanities scholars too often isolated themselves from current events, despite the education and training that uniquely equipped them to analyze broader international changes. He lamented that "scholars in the humanities...have not much concerned themselves with their social obligation. In general they have either assumed that their scholarship was its own justification or attempted to justify it by its effect upon the social and natural sciences, relinquishing thereby the preeminence in the intellectual structure which belongs by right to the humanities." He added, "in these days when social responsibilities are being taken more and more seriously we are called upon to give thought to our values. There is no reason why scholarship should absolve itself from this duty." According to Graves, humanists and "those who devote their lives to the study, the teaching, and the interpretation of the humanities should now enquire of themselves as to the present situation of their studies, their objectives, and their obligations."<sup>7</sup>

Graves attempted to reconcile the Rockefeller Foundation's emerging definition of the humanities with the Council's intensely academic one, arguing that the humanities, if properly utilized, could serve as similarly pragmatic ends as the natural and social sciences. The

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<sup>6</sup> Waldo Leland to Stephen Duggan, 25 January 1937, folder Institute of International Education, box B59, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>7</sup> Mortimer Graves, "The Place of International Understanding," 1936, folder 2336, box 195, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

humanities, Graves argued, were both an expression of, and a catalyst for, larger social and economic changes and must serve two functions. The first was to explain the roots of international conflict by causally linking intellectual shifts with social changes. Graves contended that social changes emerged not from competition over economic resources or from political differences, but, rather, from intellectual shifts in philosophy and ideology. In his 1938 essay, "A Symposium on the Intellectual Foundation of Social Change," Graves asserted that "the Humanities...concern themselves with human life at the intellectual level. They involve studies in the thought, philosophy, history, art, and literature of all civilizations, historical and contemporary." They find their relevance in their "ability to explain [political, social, and economic] phenomena as manifestations of intellectual process, and on the basis of such explanation to systematize the past and to predict future movement, as is the aim of any application of the scientific method."<sup>8</sup> Building on these ideas, he argued in "The American Understanding of the Orient" that the humanities were the collective "spiritual history and experience of mankind" and that this history manifests itself in "the guise of social, economic, and political phenomena."<sup>9</sup>

Graves attributed a sizable portion of the world's contemporary social conflict to the spread of the scientific paradigm, which he believed reflected an essentially Western humanities perspective. The "scientific method...has come of age...within the West European scale of values" and was therefore new to many parts of the world. The effects of the scientific revolution, he explained, "are discernible in political, economic, and social change; its

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<sup>8</sup> Mortimer Graves, "A Symposium on the Intellectual Foundation of Social Change," folder Inter-American Committee 1938, box B60, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>9</sup> Mortimer Graves, "American Understanding of the Orient," 1935, folder 2337, box 195, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

fundamental characteristics are more likely to reveal themselves in criticism of the dominant philosophy, in total reevaluation of the historical tradition, in experimentation in the fine arts, even in conscious reconstruction of language to meet the new needs—that is, in tremendous activity in just those fields which we call the humanities.”<sup>10</sup>

The second function of the humanities, according to Graves, was to educate the public and create a class of knowledgeable policy elites capable of navigating complicated international waters, especially those of East Asia. At the turn of the century, Japan, Russia, and the European powers were competing for access to China’s rich natural resources and control over its ports and infrastructure. This competition found expression in imperialist policies, secret treaties, and alliances among various factions struggling for political and economic control of China. The U.S. remained ambivalent about its role in East Asia, and debate among American interest groups and policymakers was heated. Some argued that American interests in East Asia were minimal and that the U.S. should avoid international entanglements. Others pointed out that China was quickly emerging as an important regional power. They argued that a free and modern China would benefit both the U.S. and the Chinese people, and they cautioned that East Asian instability could potentially explode into another world war, which it did ultimately when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in an effort to shore up its regional hegemony. Unfortunately, the U.S. appeased Japanese militarism during the interwar years, forsaking its commitment to the right of self-determination.

Graves and other members of the Council saw an important role for the humanities in preparing Americans for the new world they were entering. Global and technological changes were forcing Americans into closer commercial and cultural relations with the East, Graves

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

contended, and “if those relations were to be harmonious and intelligent [our] only hope [lies] in an enlightened public opinion.” Such enlightenment required a redistribution of “intellectual activity to a point where it represent[ed] something other than a historical bad accident.” Magazine and newspaper articles about the Far East—unlike objective, unbiased academic expertise—constituted merely “inspired handouts, irresponsible rumors, and bad translations from Oriental newspapers. Likewise, radio, cinema and theater were conditioned by most of the superstitions which hold in the case of the newspapers, principally that the people are interested only in the sensational.” Graves and other Council members believed that the humanities—long considered the province of elites and a badge of high culture—could provide Americans with the deep, rigorous, and scientifically sound knowledge necessary to understand (and ultimately navigate) the complex international environment.<sup>11</sup>

Higher education provided the ideal vehicle for developing knowledge in the next generation of leaders. Graves, in his 1935 essay entitled “The American Understanding of the Orient,” asserted that “education should be the process of learning to live in the world [and] educators should make an effort to foresee the kind of world for which they are educating.” He concluded that “some characteristics of the world of the next generation can be safely predicted even now. It will be scientific, it will be social, it will be spherical.”<sup>12</sup> Norman Brown, a Harvard professor of Asian studies, fellow internationalist, and Council member, agreed with Graves’s pragmatic approach. Brown asserted that “we must remember that the students now passing through our educational machinery will live their effective lives during the second half of the twentieth century, and it takes no gift of prophecy to predict that at that time the world will

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

include a vigorous India, possibly politically free, conceivably a dominant power in the Orient, and certainly intellectually vital and productive.” Brown asked “how can Americans who have never met India in their educational experience be expected to live intelligently in such a world? Are we to wait until some cataclysm brought about in large part by our own ignorance and misunderstanding [occurs]? Or are we to plan our intellectual life so as to foresee the needs of the future?”<sup>13</sup>

More pragmatic and policy-oriented than its nineteenth century predecessor, the Council’s new definition of the humanities reflected an analytical shift in focus away from antiquity to modern-day international affairs. This new definition, couched in the rhetoric of science and objectivity, resonated with the themes of the Progressive Era. It was both reform-oriented, promising to contribute to current social and political debates, and democratic, reaching out to universities and policymakers alike. After articulating this intellectual ideal, the next step was to create a concrete program to achieve its particular goals.

### **Combining the Old and the New: The Council’s Eclectic Humanities Initiatives**

Several ACLS projects during the 1930s fit squarely within the traditional definition of the humanities, such as the publication of dictionaries of Medieval Latin and Renaissance Studies and the corpus of vases from antiquity. Several of the Council’s committees, however, tried to negotiate between the traditional model and the newly emerging definition of the humanities, which was influenced by the social sciences. The activities of the Committee on Musicology, the Committee on Native American Languages, and the Linguistic Atlas of New

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<sup>13</sup> W. Norman Brown, “India and Humanistic Studies in America,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 28 (May 1939): 22.

England Committee reflect such attempts to straddle the two poles of tradition and innovation. These committees combined the methodologies of the humanities and social science to analyze and preserve the cultural traditions of living groups.

Established in 1929, the Committee on Musicology included Carl Engal of the Library of Congress as chairman, Richard Aldrich of the *New York Times*, and Otto Ortmann of the Peabody Conservatory of Music.<sup>14</sup> The Committee published surveys, created tools for research, and funded special projects, such as George Herzog's research on "primitive" and native groups and Melville Herskovits's transcription of West African music.<sup>15</sup> In 1939, the Committee worked with Harvard University to transcribe southern Slavic heroic folk poetry and music and, with Northwestern University, to transcribe native Haitian music.<sup>16</sup>

The Council's Committee on Research in Native American Languages was established in 1927 with a fifty thousand dollar grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Chaired by Franz Boas, the Committee included members such as Edward Sapir, a former student of Boas's, and Leonard Bloomfield from the University of Chicago. Arguing that Native American languages were in imminent danger of extinction, Council members spent over eighty thousand dollars between 1927 and 1937 on linguistic studies initiatives to describe social activities,

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<sup>14</sup> Waldo Leland, "The American Council of Learned Societies and Its Activities in 1929: Report of the Permanent Secretary to the Council," *Bulletin—ACLS* 12 (Dec. 1929): 30.

<sup>15</sup> See ACLS "Activities" reports and committee reports in the *Bulletin—ACLS* published in the 1930s.

<sup>16</sup> Donald Goodchild, "Committee on Musicology: Report of Activities, 1939," *Bulletin—ACLS* 31 (June 1940): 82.

record historical and legendary narratives, sermons, and cosmological accounts, and phonetically transcribe everyday speech of over seventy languages.<sup>17</sup>

The Linguistic Atlas of New England Committee also included Leonard Bloomfield, as well as Hans Kurath of Brown University and George Krapp of Columbia University. According to a Rockefeller Foundation grant report, the “general purpose of the plan was to gather such a mass of data throughout New England that scholars could define closely its cultural areas of pioneer settlement, the lines of migration westward, and the history of the total population.”<sup>18</sup> Between 1931 and 1937, the ACLS provided over eight thousand dollars to the Committee’s work on an atlas of New England. Moreover, in 1940 the Committee began work on a linguistic atlas of the U.S. The maps for the Middle Atlantic and the South Atlantic States were completed by 1944, but the project was eventually transferred to the Linguistic Society of America.<sup>19</sup>

Although these early initiatives were of indisputable intellectual merit and reflected the growing role of the social sciences in the humanities, they did not meet the pragmatic and strategic aims of the new definition of the humanities. Area studies and cultural diplomacy were meant to fulfill those aims. Area studies, a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of the

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<sup>17</sup> Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *The Politics of Knowledge: The Carnegie Corporation, Philanthropy, and Public Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 155. Waldo Leland, “The American Council of Learned Societies and Its Activities in 1928,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 9 (1929): 42; Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz, “The Committee on Research in Native American Languages,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 129, no. 2 (1985): 129-61; Franz Boas, “A Report of the Committee on Research in American Native Languages,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 29 (July 1939): 105–15.

<sup>18</sup> Rockefeller Foundation, “Grant Summary Report,” 15 September 1937, folder 2348, box 196, series 200, RG 1.1., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>19</sup> Hans Kurath, “Linguistic Atlas of the U.S.A.,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 40 (March 1947): 78.

nonwestern world, sought to provide a picture of a geographic region by integrating the study of the humanities and the social sciences. Cultural diplomacy sought to promote friendship and understanding among people of different nations. Leland argued that cultural diplomacy would “bring about an era of mutual understanding and cooperation, [and] solv[e] the countless problems arising out of relations of peoples among themselves.”<sup>20</sup> Area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives were designed to have scholarly and intellectual integrity but also to meet the social and political challenges of the time.

In the early 1930s, and despite the Council’s claims to the contrary, both area studies and cultural diplomacy appeared more traditionally academic than strategic. During the latter part of the decade, however, a gradual institutional divergence between area studies and cultural diplomacy became apparent as the federal government adopted cultural diplomacy as a tool for achieving foreign policy goals. While scholars today generally ignore the impact of the growth of the federal government on academic knowledge and nongovernmental organizations, an analysis of the Council’s area and cultural diplomacy initiatives highlight the unintended consequences of these public sector changes.

### The Origin of Area Studies

Numerous factors contributed to the emergence of area studies at universities and academic professionalization associations during the interwar years, including the gradual decline of the missionary movement, the secularization of knowledge, the rise of the university and academic expertise as a reliable source of objective knowledge, and the expanding role of

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<sup>20</sup> Waldo Leland, *The International Role of American Scholarship* (Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 1940), 6–7.

foundations.<sup>21</sup> Also significant was the notable absence of the federal government in national education. Although the Department of Education had been established in 1867, it initially only collected statistics and distributed information. Over time its activities gradually expanded to include engaging in cooperative initiatives with other federal agencies, conducting research and surveys, appraising educational conditions in the U.S., and administering federal aid programs. By the turn of the century, however, its activities were limited to making land grants so that states could use the proceeds from public land sales or the public land itself for educational purposes. Although after the First World War diverse nongovernmental organizations lobbied for federal support of vocational training and Americanization of immigrants, these efforts were largely to no avail.<sup>22</sup> One of the unintended consequences of the national government's absence in education was to allow universities and nongovernmental organizations to create initiatives and establish precedents in a vacuum. Thus, interwar internationalists and academics could assume a national educational leadership role in nonwestern studies in part because the federal government was not interested.

Paul Reinsch of the ACLS, for instance, suggested the importance of Asian studies as early as 1920 at the Council's first meeting. At the time, he was a member of the State Department and was deeply sympathetic to the China's desire to modernize and establish a

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<sup>21</sup> Mary Brown Bullock, *American Transplant: The Rockefeller Foundation and Peking Medical Union College* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); and Frank Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>22</sup> Hsien Lu, *Federal Role in Education: A Comprehensive Study of Federal Relations to Education in the United States—Their Past, Present and Future* (New York: American Press, 1968).

republican form of government. He urged President Woodrow Wilson to support China's progressive reform movement, to intervene against Japanese imperialism, and to protect the right of the people in the region to self-determination. Although Reinsch was unsuccessful in his efforts to shape U.S. policy, the Council, upon receiving funds from the General Education Board, did establish a committee on Chinese Studies. The Committee's first task was to evaluate the attitude of American colleges and universities toward the inclusion of Chinese studies in their curricula.

Some institutions responded enthusiastically. Clark University asserted, "we are now giving every year a year's course on the Far East, with especial emphasis on China." Mount Holyoke College, moreover, stated that its attitude toward Chinese studies "is very cordial." Most institutions, however, responded that a general lack of interest prohibited such courses. Indiana University, for example, asserted, "we do not have a sufficient number of Chinese students to warrant at the present time courses in Chinese studies." Brown University, though sympathetic to the notion, concluded that it had "no prospect at present" of including Chinese studies. The University of North Carolina stated there was no desire for the "inclusion of Chinese studies in the curriculum [because] there is no member of the History Department who is particularly interested in Chinese history." Finally, according to the University of Pittsburgh, "the general attitude toward the inclusion of Chinese studies is negative."<sup>23</sup>

Despite this general lack of enthusiasm, the ACLS discovered some emerging interest in Asian studies among academics. In 1928, for instance, Harvard established the Harvard-Yenching Institute to promote classical Chinese studies. John King Fairbank joined the ranks of

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<sup>23</sup> ACLS, "Chinese Studies in American Universities and Colleges: A Digest of Opinions of Individuals," 3 April 1929, folder Meeting August 1932, box B24, ACLS Papers, LC.

the Harvard faculty and, together with Edwin Reischauer and Stanley Hornbeck, struggled to create a more broadly integrated Asian studies program. Graves wrote Fairbank: "As I see it, we have in the study of China, Japan, India, the U.S.S.R., and the Arabic world to create a new (American) attitude, and probably new techniques; we cannot borrow either from academic learning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We cannot [learn about the societies] by burying ourselves in Paris, or London, or Washington, with a few books."<sup>24</sup>

Soon after the creation of the Chinese Studies Committee, the ACLS also established committees on Japanese studies, as well as Near Eastern, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Slavic studies. (Frequently, the Committees on Chinese and Japanese studies were collectively referred to as the Committees on Far Eastern Studies.) The aim of the Far Eastern Studies Committees was to "increase and improve American participation in the study" of the region. Initially, the Committees focused on creating chairs of sinology at American universities, organizing institutes of sinological research, establishing a journal of sinology, and administering fellowships and grants. Graves quickly abandoned this plan, complaining that "these proposals were all calculated to emphasize the separation of oriental studies from the general current of intellectual life." He further lamented that "we already had chairs in several universities, but they had never produced a single American sinologist; a great institute could hardly operate in a vacuum." Instead, the ACLS focused on "a long-term program designed to assure the incorporation of the study of the Orient into the American educational process on somewhat the same terms as the study of Western Europe." The approach was "not to commit itself to direct

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<sup>24</sup> Paul M. Evans, *John Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China* (New York: B. Blackwell Press, 1988), 64.

operation of any long-continuing program of promotion or research.” Rather, it considered “its function to be stimulation, coordination, the securing of financial help, and experimentation.”<sup>25</sup>

While Graves served as the chief administrative officer for the Committees on Far Eastern Studies, other members represented a wide range of American cultural and intellectual institutions. The Committee for Chinese Studies, for example, was chaired by Arthur Hummel, from 1929 to 1936, and included Carl Bishop from the Freer Gallery of Art, Lewis Hodous of the Kennedy School of Missions, and Kenneth Latourette, a classicist from Yale. The Committee for Japanese Studies was chaired by Landon Warner, a classicist from Harvard, and included Serge Elisseeff from the Harvard–Yenching Institute as well as Ewart and Jerome Greene, both of whom had ties to Rockefeller foundation and the National Board for Historical Service. This interdisciplinary, multi-institutional partnership to promote Far Eastern Studies was typical of the area studies approach. Moreover, although the humanities dominated area studies during these early years, the social sciences would come to play a more significant role as the field expanded after the Second World War and through the 1960s.

The Council’s area studies program, which was focused on expanding universities’ intellectual content to serve more strategic purposes, had four primary goals: first, to increase and improve teaching personnel; second, to create research tools (dictionaries and translations); third, to integrate trained personnel into American colleges and universities; and fourth, to serve a variety of peripheral coordinating functions, such as distributing information about events in the field, maintaining relations with foreign cultural institutions and scholars, and providing

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<sup>25</sup> Edith Ware, *The Study of International Relations in the United States, Survey for 1937* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 252. Also, see Mortimer Graves, “Confidential Report of the Executive Office of the ACLS to the Members of the Committees on Far Eastern Studies,” 8 April 1936, folder Far Eastern Studies, box B43, ACLS Papers, LC.

support for publications and the expansion of archival and library collections. To meet its first goal, the Council aimed to improve teaching on the Far East through a system of grants and summer seminars. In 1930 the Rockefeller Foundation provided forty thousand dollars for grants and, in 1931, another fifty thousand dollars. With these funds, the ACLS awarded post-doctoral fellowships in the humanities, averaging three thousand dollars each, similar to those already offered by the Social Science Research Council and by the National Research Council. The Council asserted that the fellowships were “intended to encourage research on the part of scholars who have the degree of Ph.D. or its equivalent in training and experience, [and] who are not over thirty-five.”<sup>26</sup> Thus, whereas in 1929 the total budget for fellowships amounted to five thousand dollars and only one type of grant award was offered, in 1930 the budget had grown to sixty thousand dollars, and three different types of aid were offered: Small Grants-in-Aid, Large Grants-in-Aid and Fellowships.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Leland, “ACLS Activities in 1929,” 24–5.

<sup>27</sup> Donald Goodchild, “Report on the Committee for Fellowships and Grants for 1930,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 15 (May 1931): 91–8. Although the number and amounts of grants to the ACLS were rising, the *Bulletin—ACLS* and the archival records do not indicate how these funds were distributed among the different committees. For instance, from June 1932 to June 1936, the Rockefeller Foundation provided \$210,000 for grants in aid to the Council. However, there is no indication how much of this reached the Committee on Far Eastern Studies. In addition, even when the record is more specific, it is difficult to determine the amount of a committee's funding. The information from 1932 to 1936 came from several sources. In 1931 the Rockefeller Foundation provided \$45,000 a year for two years for fellowships; and \$20,000 a year for two years for grants in aid. In 1933, the Rockefeller Foundation appropriated \$20,000 a year for two years, thus providing for aid until June 1936. In April 1935 the Rockefeller Foundation appropriated \$20,000 for July 1936 to 1937. See, folder 2300, box 191, ACLS Papers, LC. In 1936 the Rockefeller Foundation appropriated \$60,000 for fellowships and committee expenses over a two-year period, of which \$15,000 per year was earmarked for Far Eastern Studies. It is not evident whether \$15,000 represents the total budget of the committee or just the Rockefeller Foundation contribution. In 1942, David Stevens requested the Council provide the Foundation with the exact amount of aid provided to students of Far Eastern Studies. Graves responded that the Council records were ambiguous, but a rough estimation was possible. He asserted that \$7,500 in grants in aid was distributed to ten people, and that \$38,214 in fellowships (which

These grants provided financial support to several scholars who later came to play active roles in government, universities, and professional societies. Herrlee Creel, for example, received grants in 1930 and 1932 for the study of early Chinese culture. Creel remained active in the Far Eastern Studies Committee and later served in the Military Intelligence Service from 1942 to 1945. Creel also became a professor at the University of Chicago and President of the American Oriental Society, and he was one of the early members of the Far Eastern Association. Hugh Borton also received ACLS grants in 1932 and 1933. He subsequently went on to become secretary of the Committee on Japanese Studies in 1941, a professor at Columbia University from 1937 to 1942, and a specialist on Japan at the State Department from 1942 to 1946. The grant program prompted Graves to write that “all in all the Council and the Committees have been of assistance to, and in return have been able to keep their fingers on, a considerable number of younger scholars.”<sup>28</sup>

The Council also provided support and scholarships for summer seminars on Far Eastern studies to promote education, research, and language instruction. Graves complained that “Far Eastern studies have to be taught and are being taught in many American institutions of learning...by teachers who would be the first to admit that they are inadequately equipped for

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began in 1930) were distributed to 14 people. Approximately \$11,000 was appropriated for committee projects and \$3,000 for conferences. (For the 1936 summary from Mortimer Graves to David Stevens, folder 2368, box 197, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.)

<sup>28</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies: Report of Activities, 1933,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 22 (Oct. 1934): 70.

such teaching.”<sup>29</sup> Summer institutes were held at Harvard University’s Harvard–Yenching Institute, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Michigan.<sup>30</sup>

The second goal of the Council’s area studies program was to create the research tools necessary for scholarship, such as surveys, bibliographies, and translations. Graves contended that “effective teaching requires...adequate implements in the shape of dictionaries, manuals, corpora, translations, etc., those repositories of information which place at the finger tips of teacher, student, and research-worker the knowledge gathered by generations of scholars.”<sup>31</sup> To this end, Charles Gardner at Harvard issued in 1930 a *Survey of Materials and Facilities for Chinese Studies* and began work on *A Union List of Selected Chinese Books in American Libraries* and *A Union List of Selected Western Books on China in American Libraries*. Also that same year, the Council published the *First Annual Bulletin on the Progress of Chinese in the U.S.* In 1931, the Council established an annual bibliography of important books, articles, and works in the field and started publishing monographs, such as Benjamin March’s *Some Technical Terms in Chinese Painting*, L. C. Goodrich’s *Literary Inquisition of Ch’ien-Lung*, and Herlee Creel’s *Studies in Early Chinese Culture*. Moreover, beginning in 1935, Earl Pritchard of the State College of Washington began to compile bi-monthly bibliographical bulletins of current articles on the Far East.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 245.

<sup>30</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies: Report of Activities, 1938,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 29 (July 1939): 48. For the activities of particular Committee members, review folders in box 190, ACLS Papers, RAC.

<sup>31</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 26 (June 1937): 61–2.

<sup>32</sup> For information on tools for research and publications, see the committee reports in the *Bulletin—ACLS* in the 1930s, especially 18 (Oct. 1932); 22 (Oct. 1934); 25 (July 1936); 26 (June

In 1937 the Committee produced the first issue of *Notes on Far Eastern Studies in America*. This journal provided a status report and forum for pedagogical discussion relating to the Far East.<sup>33</sup> John King Fairbank had written Graves in support of creating *Notes*, asserting that the “plan to launch a newsletter that would connect the dozen or so Americans who were active in research and training on the modern Far East” was extremely important.<sup>34</sup> *Notes* created a forum for debate about the development of Far Eastern studies. Fairbank, for instance, argued in the pages of this publication with colleagues about the best approach to embedding and distributing knowledge in the university. Fairbank noted that “our present courses on the modern Far East, emphasizing diplomatic relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are totally inadequate and unsuited to use as introductory courses” and contended that “any course designed to attract students into the Far Eastern field must be...popular...[and] suited to the needs of the average nonspecialist student...The introductory course must consequently be aimed at the average American undergraduate.”<sup>35</sup> In the fall of 1940, *Notes* was replaced by a new journal called the *Far Eastern Quarterly*, which was devoted to the study of China and Japan and their dependencies: Siberia, the Indo-Chinese peninsula, and the East Indies. The *Quarterly's* editorial team was directed by Hugh Borton and Cyrus Peake at Columbia University and Earl Pritchard at Wayne State.

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1937); and 27 (Nov. 1938).

<sup>33</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committee on Chinese and Japanese Studies: Report of Activities, 1937,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 27 (Nov. 1938): 48–52.

<sup>34</sup> Evans, *John Fairbank*, 64.

<sup>35</sup> ACLS, *Notes on Far Eastern Studies in America* (Washington, D.C.: ACLS Committees on Chinese and Japanese Studies, 1938): 1–2.

Translations constituted another important research tool supported by the Council as part of its area studies program. As Graves asserted in a 1936 letter to David Stevens, Director of the Humanities Division of the Rockefeller Foundation, we need to “bend all our energies to the understanding of what is going on in the Oriental mind today. We have to study China with the Chinese, to participate in, that is, the revelations which they are making of themselves.”<sup>36</sup>

Accordingly, in 1938 the Committee on Japanese Studies began two projects: a summary and analytical index of Japanese works on Buddhist iconography and a romanized index to a historical atlas of Japan.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, in December 1937 the Rockefeller Foundation appropriated sixty thousand dollars to the ACLS to work with the Library of Congress with a view to catalogue American collections of Chinese and Japanese books in a five-year period.<sup>38</sup>

With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation awarded in 1934, the Committee had already established a Center for Far Eastern Studies at the Library of Congress, which supported scholarly training, created tools for research, and distributed information to the wider community of Far Eastern specialists. The Center’s first director was Arthur Hummel, former chair of the Council's Committee on Chinese Studies, and its first enterprise was *Contributions Toward a Biographical Dictionary of the Ch'ing Dynasty*. Several young scholars associated with the ACLS worked on the project, including Earl Swisher (then at the University of Colorado) and George Kennedy (then at Yale University). Graves boasted in 1937 that “nearly seven hundred

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<sup>36</sup> Graves to Stevens, 1936.

<sup>37</sup> Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies, 1938,” 49. Also, see Committees on Far Eastern Studies reports in the 1930s, which provide coverage of publications and other activities.

<sup>38</sup> RF, “Grant Summary of Chinese and Japanese Catalogue, 1937–1941 Project,” 1 December 1937, folder 2277, box 190, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

biographies have been written...It is hoped that the completed work will include fifteen hundred or two thousand entries, made possible by the collaboration of a hundred or more scholars throughout the world.”<sup>39</sup>

The third goal of the Council’s area studies program was to place more trained personnel into American colleges. Graves hoped that nonwestern studies would be incorporated into the fabric of educational life and argued that the placement of well-trained American scholars in posts where they could influence the development of oriental studies was essential to this end. He asserted that “the Committees [on Far Eastern studies] feel that the future growth of Oriental studies cannot be brought about by providing a few American scholars able to untangle the intricacies of ancient Chinese texts, but depends upon the success of an integrated program looking toward their firm establishment in all branches of American scholarship.”<sup>40</sup> In 1935, four new posts in Far Eastern studies were created at the University of Colorado, Yale, Princeton, and Chicago; they were filled by young American scholars closely connected with the work of the Committees.<sup>41</sup> In October 1937, moreover, the Rockefeller Foundation gave the Council ten thousand dollars to help place personnel in universities, colleges, libraries, and museums. Subsequently, the ACLS claimed credit for securing the appointment of Professor Woodbridge Bingham to a post in the Department of History at the University of California. In 1938, Graves asserted that the Committee was “instrumental in securing the appointment of Knight Biggerstaff to a post in Far Eastern history at Cornell University, of Derk Bodde as

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<sup>39</sup> Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 247.

<sup>40</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies: Report of Activities, 1934,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 23 (June 1935): 77.

<sup>41</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies: Report of Activities, 1935,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 25 (July 1936): 72.

assistant professor of Chinese at the University of Pennsylvania, and H. H. Dubs as acting professor of philosophy at Duke University. These posts were all new creations and, as such, they bear witness to the gradual expansion of American scholarly interest in Eastern Asia.”<sup>42</sup>

The fourth goal of the Council’s area studies program was to support a range of professionalizing activities to expand and consolidate the network of Far Eastern scholars. For instance, the ACLS commissioned Lewis Hodous’s *Careers for Students of Chinese Language and Civilization* and developed collaborative relationships with other nongovernmental organizations. As Graves explained in 1937, the ACLS “has endeavored to establish such contacts, acting through the universities and through groups such as the Academia Sinica, the Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, the Instiitut Vostokovedeniya, and the Vladivostok Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.”<sup>43</sup> Finally, in 1928, the ACLS also endorsed a proposal of the American Oriental Society to establish in India an American School of Indo-Iranian Research.<sup>44</sup>

This four-pronged effort to support the development of Far Eastern studies laid the groundwork for what would later be called area studies, a nationwide interdisciplinary, language-intensive approach to the development of academic expertise on the nonwestern world.

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<sup>42</sup> Waldo Leland to David Stevens, 27 September 1937, folder 2289, box 191, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. For information on the Woodbridge appointment see *Bulletin—ACLS* 27 (Nov. 1938): 13. For the 1938 Graves quotation, see Graves, “Committees on Far Eastern Studies, 1938,” 48.

<sup>43</sup> Ware, *Study of International Relations*, 249–50.

<sup>44</sup> Leland, “ACLS Activities, 1928,” 44. In 1930, it created a standing committee called the American School of Indic and Iranian Studies. See Waldo Leland, “Summary of Activities in 1930,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 15 (May 1931): 22. In 1932, it appropriated \$5,000 to the Committee as the first half of an eventual contribution of \$10,000 for the establishment of an American school in Benares. See ACLS, “Summary of Activities in 1932,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 20 (Dec. 1933): 19. By 1933 not enough money had been secured to open a school, so the Committee used its small budget to organize the literature in the field.

Area studies reflected Progressive Era characteristics, in that it looked optimistically to the future in the hope that academic knowledge would enhance democratic policymaking and contribute to civil society. In other words, Americans knowledgeable about the Far East would hopefully enter into more rational, thoughtful, and productive international relationships.

The Council's area studies program was at once more and less than its rhetoric purported to be. It was more in the sense that it participated in the gradual development of the modern institutional ecology of knowledge creation that would emerge in full form in the postwar period when the public sector collaborated with foundations and scholarly professional associations on a more permanent basis and on a wider scale. Whereas, by the 1930s, the federal government was already partnering with organizations in the natural and social sciences, it was not until the Second World War and the Cold War, however, that the humanities would emerge as a strategic intellectual resource. The developing system of public and private partnerships permitted a wide circle of experts to directly or indirectly contribute to creating new knowledge and policies, and it allowed the state to take on new responsibilities while remaining relatively small (especially compared to Western European nations at the same time). The ACLS and its area studies program highlight the incremental process by which intellectual ideas and private institutions become linked to civil society and governance.

At the same time, however, the Council and its area studies program were less than they purported to be. The rhetoric of the foundations and of the ACLS was popular and democratic but did not match the reality of program operations in which intellectual and financial support was provided to established scholars at elite universities. The *Annual Bulletin on the Progress of Chinese in the U.S.*, *Studies in Early Chinese Culture*, and *Survey of Materials and Facilities for Chinese Studies* were not geared toward a general nor even a college, audience, but rather at

intellectual elites. Moreover, while the rhetoric of the Council emphasized strategic knowledge, the area studies program reflected scholarly priorities. The 1930s may well have been one of the worst times in American history to abandon popular and strategic knowledge of the Far East. After all, the Japanese government, fearful of Soviet designs on Manchuria and Chinese nationalist efforts at independence, intensified its imperialist agenda in the course of the decade. China's small community of allies in the U.S. and Europe failed to recognize the perils of Japanese expansionism or provide financial or intellectual capital for modernization and democratization. Wary of foreign entanglements, American isolationists prohibited U.S. involvement abroad, leaving East Asia to become a cauldron of smoldering animosities that would eventually engulf it in another world war.

The archival records do not show Council members' debating the merits of American East Asian policy or their alarm over the growing international crisis. Much to the contrary, in the 1930s Graves appeared enthusiastic about the ACLS's intellectual contributions and the future of the organization. The least likely explanation for this reticence is that members were either apathetic or unaware of the growing international crisis and cared only for academic issues. Another explanation is that the ACLS focused on the long-term goal of creating an intellectual environment in which informed national discussions could take place, thus leaving the battle over current policy issues to others. Council members were not focused on immediate political issues but looking farther down the road at creating a new generation of citizens who, as they passed through the American educational system, would gain a deeper knowledge of the international environment. While Reinsch lobbied extensively for a policy of active U.S. engagement in East Asia, he did so outside of his role in the ACLS and as a member of the State Department. In retrospect, and given the global context, perhaps the Council's aims seem overly

modest, if not irrelevant. Such an indictment, however, is too severe, especially given that much of the U.S. was isolationist and in collective denial over America's impending collision with the Axis powers. The Council functioned as a forum to deal with long-term intellectual issues and not current political ones, and, as such, the commitment to scientific knowledge, characteristic of Progressive Era thinking.

#### Cultural Diplomacy and Internationalist Activities

In addition to the development of area studies, the Council's strategic intellectual efforts during the interwar years also included cultural diplomacy initiatives. Leland, on behalf of the ACLS, participated in the International Committee on Historical Sciences, the League of Nations, and the UAI in an attempt to realize its liberal democratic vision. These internationalist activities reflected the Wilsonian philosophy that relations among nations must be cultivated among peoples rather than just governments and that only through mutual cultural understanding and the free exchange of ideas can lasting peace be achieved. Both area studies and cultural diplomacy emerged from the private sector world of foundations and professional associations. Moreover, although Council members aspired for these efforts to contribute to public governance, area studies and cultural diplomacy each fell short of those strategic aspirations, at least initially. As discussed earlier, area studies focused exclusively on academic issues rather than contemporary social and political problems. Cultural diplomacy too remained largely isolated from the controversial matters that shaped the political arena, preferring peripheral details over the substance of cultural understanding.

By the late 1930s, however, the histories of area studies and cultural diplomacy diverged. Growing Axis infiltration into Latin America prompted President Roosevelt to create the Division of Cultural Relations within the State Department and to expand other public sector

activities in cultural diplomacy. In deference to the federalist political philosophy (and to stave off criticism from isolationists), the Division relied heavily on private sector programs and precedents, bringing the Council in closer proximity to the public sector. The transformation of cultural diplomacy during the 1930s tells the story of a small group of internationalists who rejected the isolationism of the interwar years and idealistically pursued a program of cross-cultural cooperation and mutual understanding. In the course of this pursuit, these forward-looking individuals were forced to confront the inherent tensions between the academic programs of the 1920s and the more politicized initiatives developing during the 1930s. The Council's cultural diplomacy initiative also highlights the gradual process by which private nongovernmental organizations became tied to the public sector. Rather than emerging from an inherent commonality of interests between the public and private sectors or because of a conspiracy to assert hegemony, public-private partnerships developed slowly, haphazardly, and through a process of conflict, negotiation, and compromise.

The International Committee of Historical Sciences (referred to as the ICHS or the International Committee hereafter) was among the internationalist organizations in which the ACLS participated during the 1920s and 1930s. The ICHS federation was established by the attendees of an international meeting of historians called by Belgian scholars in 1923. One of the first victims of World War I, Belgium represented an important symbol of resistance and hope during the early interwar period. Influenced by the politics of progressivism and federalism that had recently swept across America, the International Committee espoused with similar optimism the virtues of democracy, reform, objectivity. Wary of nationalism and traditional politics, moreover, internationalists rooted the ICHS in the private sector in the hope that mutual understanding among citizens and scholars would mitigate future conflicts. Noted Belgian

scholar Henri Peirenne, who had been a German prisoner during the World War I and played a major role in the reconstruction of postwar Belgian intellectual life, served as president of both the UAI and the International Committee.<sup>45</sup> Despite his traumatic wartime experiences, or perhaps because of them, Peirenne was a committed internationalist who comingled the rhetoric of science and reformism. In his opening remarks at the first meeting of the International Committee, Peirenne articulated the simultaneous burden and opportunity of the modern historian:

The historian must strive...to be objective, he has not the right to consider only his own party, his own religion, his own country, above all he must endeavor to be critical and impartial. The catastrophe of the most recent years should serve the historian as a great seismic disturbance serves the geologist; it has laid before him problems heretofore unforeseen, it has presented facts which refute well-established theories...<sup>46</sup>

American internationalists contributed to the ICHS from its inception. Through his relationships with the Council, the American Historical Association, and numerous foundations, Leland was able to provide critical support to the fledgling organization. He established the American Committee of the ICHS, for which he served as the treasurer for eight years, and negotiated grants from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial to be funneled to the International Committee through the American Historical Association. Leland himself, in fact, confidently asserted that “it is not too much to say that without the initiative, interest, and support of the [American Historical] Association, the International Committee would not have been organized, or, if organized, it could have maintained itself only with the greatest

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<sup>45</sup> Halvdan Koht, *The Origin and Beginnings of the International Committee of Historical Sciences* (Lausanne: International Committee of Historical Sciences, 1962); Waldo Leland, “Henri Peirenne, 1860–1935,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 25 (July 1936): 59–61.

<sup>46</sup> Waldo Leland, “The International Congress of Historical Sciences, Held at Brussels,” *American Historical Review* 28, no. 4 (July 1923): 644.

difficulty.”<sup>47</sup> Indeed, that the legal headquarters of the International Committee was located in Washington, D.C. itself reflects the importance of the American constituency.<sup>48</sup>

In the early years of the ICHS, Leland focused on two problems: the lack of continuity between yearly congresses and the exclusion of representatives from the Allied nations.<sup>49</sup> Although nineteen countries and more than seven hundred participants attended the initial 1923 meeting, German, Austrian, and Russian historians had not been invited. American internationalists considered this exclusion a violation of the very internationalist philosophy upon which the federation was founded. As Leland explained, “a congress organized on any other basis [than complete inclusion] might serve to perpetuate the division among historians which had been made inevitable by the disaster of 1914.”<sup>50</sup> James Shotwell, the U.S. representative, suggested the creation of an executive “bureau” to decide such controversial matters as where to hold meetings and whom to invite. The bureau included the Belgian executive committee as well as Shotwell and representatives from Great Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Poland. Making the International Committee a permanent and truly international organization, however, would prove to be no simple task.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Waldo Leland to AHA Executive Council, 6 December 1938, folder International Committee of Historical Sciences, box 110, American Historical Association Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter designated AHA Papers, LC).

<sup>48</sup> Leland, “ACLS Activities, 1928,” 15.

<sup>49</sup> Elizabeth Zoe Vicary, “Leland, Waldo Gifford,” in *American National Biography Online*, February 2000 [on-line]; available from <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00360.html>; Internet, accessed 3 March 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Leland, “International Congress,” 639.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 639–55.

Leland took Shotwell's place at the executive bureau meetings held in Brussels on May 15, 1924 and on May 14, 1925, where he attempted to have the organization live up to its internationalist ideals by securing Germany's participation. The Germans and their former European enemies, however, were not eager to cooperate and Leland revealed himself to be less than eager to plead for their cooperation. Indeed he bristled at the suggestion that German academies would only have to "intimate to the American Council of Learned Societies, or to the British Academy, or to almost any of the members academies...that they would be willing to be proposed for membership [and] the matter would quickly be settled in the best way." Leland in fact pridefully asserted to fellow Council member Franz Boas that the International Committee would not "beg the German Academies to become members, any more than it begs the academies of any other country to join it."<sup>52</sup>

Despite these bold comments, Leland and Shotwell secured a grant for the International Committee from the Rockefeller Foundation, with the promise that the organization would be as "representative *as possible* of all countries" and not perpetuate destructive nationalist divisions. Leland explained to Boas that, as the secretary of the International Committee, "I am anxious that all countries shall take part of an equal footing and from the beginning, in the organization of the permanent committee."<sup>53</sup> He complained that "the money for the committee has been secured in America on the understanding that the organization shall from the start be completely international and I should be unwilling to proceed on any other basis."<sup>54</sup> In August 1925, Leland

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<sup>52</sup> Waldo Leland to Franz Boas, 1 October 1925, folder International Committee of Historical Sciences, box B60, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

expressed similar sentiments to Professor Dembinski, the Polish scholar and delegate from the University of Warsaw: "American scholars all feel that it is important that the permanent committee should from the very beginning be organized on a completely international basis; that is, that the Austrian and German historians should be represented at the meeting which it is proposed to hold next April [1926]." He further explained, "I realize of course that the matter is in some respects a delicate one, but it would have been quite impossible for us to secure money in America for the work of the International Committee if we had not given assurances that all countries should be represented on the committee."<sup>55</sup>

Leland also worked hard to ensure that the 1926 meeting was nonpolitical and promoted mutual understanding and cultural exchange. To this end, he tried to persuade delegates to avoid nationalistic rhetoric. For instance, he suggested to one scholar with eastern European ties that when "talking with German scholars it may be well also to express the opinion that if the committee is to maintain that harmony which is essential to its effectiveness, it will be necessary for some time to come to keep away from controversial matters. Nothing could produce a worse effect or more surely wreck the prospects of the committee than for the delegates of any country to indulge in nationalistic propaganda."<sup>56</sup> Leland continually urged participants to exercise diplomacy in an effort to build understanding. In June 1925, he wrote the Austrian academic, Alfons Dopsch:

We wish of course that the German historians should choose their delegates as freely as...any other country; at the same time it is highly desirable that the delegates chosen by France, Belgium, and Germany should be scholars possessed of a liberal and conciliatory

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<sup>55</sup> Waldo Leland to Professor Dembinski, 5 August 1925, folder International Committee of Historical Sciences, box B60, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>56</sup> Waldo Leland to Professor Golder, 17 August 1925, folder International Committee of Historical Sciences, box B60, ACLS Papers, LC.

disposition...If you yourself should be able to use any influence to secure the appointment of German delegates who will be ready to meet their Belgian and French colleagues in a conciliatory spirit, it would of course render them a great service...I am exceedingly anxious that this first attempt to bring the historians of all countries together on equal footing shall be successful. It will be an excellent example to the scientists and will advance the intellectual interests of the world.<sup>57</sup>

Leland worried about the Russians, also. In 1925, he wrote another colleague that “in talking with Russian historians...it will be well to explain rather fully the origin and purpose of the International Committee, the necessity of admitting to it only scholars whose purposes are purely scientific and whose point of view is objective, and the desire of American historians, as well as historians in other countries, to bring about a complete reunion of the historical scholars of the world.” Leland wanted an assurance that the “Russian representatives can be trusted to refrain from propaganda.”<sup>58</sup>

The location of the April 1926 meeting was also a sensitive issue. Having received numerous invitations to host the meeting, Leland complained that “it seems to me that in Warsaw political conditions are distinctly unfavorable. It is doubtful if German scholars would attend in any number. Oslo presents many advantages from a political point of view, but it seems to encounter determined opposition from the French scholars. If the Congress were held at Athens it would have to be held in the spring, whereas the Americans very much hope that the Congress will be held in the summer.” Leland concluded “I think therefore that a compromise is going to be necessary and that probably Geneva offers the best compromise that can be effected.”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Waldo Leland to Professor Alfons Dopsch, 25 June 1925, folder International Committee of Historical Sciences, box B60, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>58</sup> Leland to Golder, 17 August 1925.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

Leland successfully navigated precarious international waters and was able to secure wide participation despite the fact that many delegates shared deep animosities toward one another. The 1926 meeting in Geneva established the International Committee of Historical Sciences permanently. Leland represented the U.S., and other participating nations included Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland. The participants approved Leland's draft constitutional statutes and Jameson's recommendation to establish a committee on bibliography. The International Committee subsequently met in Oslo in 1928, Warsaw in 1933, and Zurich in 1938 and, during its first decade, produced two publications: the *International Bibliography of Historical Sciences* and the *Bulletin of the International Committee*.

The International Committee succeeded in fostering collaboration and dialogue among scholars, but its overall effectiveness was compromised by its commitment to academia and a naïve faith in the power of nonpolitical activities. As was the case with area studies, the ICHS found it difficult to reconcile academic internationalism with pragmatic programs for maintaining peace. The internal logic of academe—and the ICHS—tended toward specialization rather than synthesis and consolidation. For instance, the International Committee's conferences were organized according to the traditional historical eras—ancient, medieval, and modern history—and numerous meetings and committee sessions were held simultaneously. One delegate to the 1933 conference in Warsaw complained “the week was filled with meetings of sections, fifteen permanent, and thirteen special, sections. Each section held a number of meetings...more than a hundred in six days. It was overpowering; worse than a three-ring circus!” According to him, “the congress certainly reflects faithfully the present state of

historical research; it has become atomized. *Atomized at a time when humanity is perishing for a vision of history as a whole, which the historian alone can give.*"<sup>60</sup> Although such specialization reflected the internal logic of the academy, it undermined the larger aim of promoting cultural understanding.

Internationalists were also undermined by ambivalence about their role in the public sector and their failure to recognize the limitations of a narrow scholarly approach, attempting to reject politics yet contribute to public governance. Leland's remarks to the American Historical Association in 1938 illustrate how internationalists clung idealistically, and in futility, to the hope that intellectuals working collaboratively on academic initiatives could contribute to peace and understanding. He asserted that "during the period of extreme difficulty through which the world is passing, it will be only through the exercise of patience and forbearance, the avoidance of emotional explosions, and the achievement of mutual understanding [that peace can be restored]." He argued that "we must not forget that throughout the world, scholars, whatever their political views may be, are mostly men of good will, such as we like to think that we ourselves are, and we must not hold them responsible for situations and conditions over which they have little or no influence. More than most, American scholars have a grave responsibility in these times to help maintain the intellectual balance of the world."<sup>61</sup>

Leland's remarks are pregnant with meaning. First, they reveal an inability to comprehend the full magnitude of the unfolding world tragedy. It would take much more than patience and understanding to survive the period of extreme difficulty that gripped the world and

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<sup>60</sup> Fred Morrow Fling, "Seventh International Congress of Historical Sciences, Warsaw, August 21–28, 1933," *American Historical Review* 39, no. 2 (Jan. 1934): 271.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*; Leland to the AHA Executive Council, 6 December 1938.

would soon result in catastrophic loss of life. Moreover, Leland's remarks also suggest a romanticization of scholars' role as outsiders to the political process who can, through objective scholarship, undermine nationalism and promote democracy. Leland ignored the fact that historians and scholars are sometimes complicit in the crimes of their time. Finally, Leland's views, in retrospect, appear naïve, arrogant, and possibly even nationalistic, as they imply that American scholars had a divine role to play in challenging the forces of ignorance and leading the world into the modern era.

The Council's experience with the League of Nations' Committee on International Intellectual Cooperation (CIC) was similar to that of the ICHS. The International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation based in Paris and the International Educational and Cinematographic Institute based in Rome provided the League's Committee with institutional and financial support. In the 1930s the League's Committee developed special divisions, such as the Committee on Arts and Letters, the Advisory Committee on League of Nations Teaching, and the Committee on Higher Education.<sup>62</sup> Although the U.S. was never an official member of the League of Nations, American cultural organizations participated informally through a privately operated American National Committee. Under the chairmanship of James Shotwell in 1931, membership in the American National Committee was expanded to include two broad, overlapping categories of representatives. The first consisted of foundation officers, such as Elihu Root and James Shotwell, both involved in the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, John Merriam, president of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, and Henry Allen Moe of the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. The second category of members included senior

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<sup>62</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 19–20; Harriet Eager Davis, *Pioneers in World Order: An American Appraisal of the League of Nations* (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press,

managers of professional and scholarly associations such as Leland; Stephen Duggan, director of the International Institute of Education; George Zook, president of the American Council on Education; Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins and chairman of the Research Committee of the Council on Foreign Relations and director of the American Geographical Society; Frederick Field and Edward Carter of the Institute of Pacific Affairs; Wesley Mitchell of the University of Chicago; and Beardsley Ruml, dean of the Social Science Division, University of Chicago.<sup>63</sup>

As with the ICHS, the League Committee was hesitant to confront fundamental political issues of the time, such as the rise of totalitarianism, authoritarianism, and fascism. For instance, in 1942, the U.S. Committee on Intellectual Cooperation (which unofficially represented the Americans in the League) met in Havana, Cuba along with delegates from other Caribbean and Latin American countries. Cuban officials under the notoriously corrupt and repressive Batista regime enthusiastically endorsed the goals of cultural diplomacy, including freedom of speech and expression, mutual understanding, and toleration. Ironically, American delegates and others did not address, at the conference or through private correspondence, the problem of Cuban authoritarianism and its challenge to the principles of freedom expressed in internationalism.<sup>64</sup>

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1970), 240–9.

<sup>63</sup> For a list of the Members of the National Committee of the United States of America on International Intellectual Cooperation, 1936–1941, see boxes B61 and B62, ACLS Papers, LC; Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 19–20; Harold Josephson, *James T. Shotwell and the Rise of Internationalism in America* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1975): 34, 190–3; and *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Annual Reports* (1928): 10.

<sup>64</sup> See ACLS documents relating to the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation, folder CIC—Havana Conference, box B61, ACLS Papers, LC.

While the informal and timid system of private cultural diplomacy in the 1930s did little to mitigate developing international tensions, the impact of global depression and the rise of European nationalism and imperialism would eventually lead to the gradual reshaping of American public policies. Beginning in the mid-1930s, Germany made inroads into Latin America, obstructing free trade and commerce by purchasing large amounts of Latin American commodities in blocked currency, thus ensuring that these funds could only be spent in Germany.<sup>65</sup> As Irwin Gellman explains in his study of *Good Neighbor Diplomacy*:

Before the depression Germany had negligible commercial dealings with Latin America. From 1936 to 1939 Reich exports jumped to over 14 percent of Latin America's total, and imports from Latin America climbed to slightly over 7 percent. The European war effectively stopped this commercial traffic because of the British naval blockade, but this did not halt Nazi promises of huge commodity deals between Europe and the Americas after the fighting ended.<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, in the late 1930s the Axis sent cultural attachés to Latin America to promote German, Italian, and Japanese cultures, aesthetics, and politics. In 1941 it was estimated that the total number of Axis-sponsored schools in Latin America was 862, of which 670 were German, 58 Italian, and 134 Japanese.<sup>67</sup> Libraries in Latin America had more German than American publications. In addition, German professors lectured in Latin American universities, and the German government provided fellowships for Latin American students to study in Germany.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> U.S. Office of Inter-American Affairs, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), 3. Also see Irwin Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933–1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 106.

<sup>66</sup> Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy*, 106–7.

<sup>67</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 47.

<sup>68</sup> Charles A. Thomson and Walter H. C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Bloomington, Ind.: University Indiana Press, 1963), 35.

Prior to the 1930s, the U.S. had largely ignored the rise of Pan-Americanism, a turn of the century movement formed to promote understanding and cooperation among the American republics. Pan Americanism started in 1889, when the International Union of American Republics was established to foster peace and commerce, and it expanded in 1910 with the creation of the Pan-American Union (PAU), which promoted intellectual, cultural, and commercial cooperation among the nations of the Western Hemisphere. In 1924 the PAU established the Division of Intellectual Cooperation, which promoted education, science, literature, and the arts, as well as Spanish and Portuguese languages and literature.<sup>69</sup> Although the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and other foundations provided some support to these activities, the U.S. government remained largely uninterested.

Thus, up until the mid-1930s, area studies and cultural diplomacy were developing along similar intellectual and institutional lines. Both were dominated by academic internationalists who operated outside of the public sector and reflected scholarly rather than strategic interests. The immediate problem of Axis inroads into Latin America, however, led to a change in U.S. foreign policy and a new public-sector interest in using cultural diplomacy. This change in policy created a chasm which, from that point on, separated the histories of area studies and cultural diplomacy; the former remained isolated in the academic community, while the latter became tied to the public sector. In addition, the new policy direction reflects a uniquely American type of public sector expansionism. American isolationism and federalism prohibited aggressive foreign policy. As a result, President Roosevelt developed the Good Neighbor policy,

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<sup>69</sup> Isaac Kandell, *United States Activities in International Cultural Relations* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1945), 82–94.

which fostered the expansion of imports and exports and the adoption of core elements of the internationalist philosophy. For instance, the U.S. sponsored a series of multilateral conferences and initiatives that, in the aggregate, served as a compromise between, on the one hand, the internationalists, who advocated an idealistic, activist, and nonpolitical foreign policy steeped in the rhetoric of friendship, and, on the other, the isolationists, who advocated a conservative foreign policy focused on nonengagement and nonparticipation. In addition, the U.S. participated in the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace held in 1936 in Buenos Aires, and signed the Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations, an agreement designed to provide for the exchange of two graduate students annually and one or more professors every two years between the U.S. and each of the signatory governments. By the close of 1943, the Convention had been ratified by sixteen nations. Exchanges began in 1939, and, by the end of 1943, the U.S. had received sixty-three foreign students and sent twenty-nine American students abroad. Finally, the State Department hosted the Eighth American Scientific Congress in Washington in May 1940.<sup>70</sup>

In light of the cultural and intellectual expansionism of the Axis powers, Roosevelt also increased the U.S.'s role in Latin America by advocating hemispheric cooperation and relying on private internationalist institutions. This public-private strategy was institutionalized in 1938 with the establishment of the Division of Cultural Relations at the State Department, which coordinated and combined public and private efforts to promote friendship and mutual understanding abroad. The Division served as a national coordinating body so the Council and other private cultural institutions would be more effective. Division architects and members of the private internationalist community distinguished between public and private efforts, the

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 84.

former representing politics, policy, and power and the latter representing free and open interchange.<sup>71</sup> Frank Ninkovich explains in the *Diplomacy of Ideas* that at the meeting of the major private cultural organizations held on May 23, 1938, at which the State Department announced plans to establish the Division of Cultural Relations, “it was immediately made clear that the government was contemplating no radical departures from tradition. On the contrary, Sumner Welles stressed his conviction that the State Department could do little more than fulfill the terms of the Buenos Aires convention; the brunt of the cultural burden would continue to be borne by the private sector.”<sup>72</sup>

The distinction between the public and private spheres was ambiguous but important. On the one hand, private efforts had a sufficient amount in common with public goals that both groups of participants were eager to collaborate with each other. On the other hand, the public and private sectors had different priorities, and these differences were manifest in their respective initiatives. For instance, public policy advocates focused on short-term, attainable goals that benefited the U.S., whereas private internationalists favored a broader, long-term approach that emphasized development and modernization. Like Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor policy itself, the Division reflected a compromise between internationalism and isolationism. As a part of the State Department, it provided national leadership and coordination; yet, private internationalist associations were to play a dominant role in program development and operation, in order to minimize the growth of government bureaucracy and expenditures. The reliance on private internationalist organizations allowed Roosevelt to stave off both the isolationists who were

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<sup>71</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 27.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

critical of an activist foreign policy, as well as internationalists fearful of a public sector role in cultural diplomacy.

Because of his prominence in the internationalist community, Leland was invited to be a member of the General Advisory Committee (discussion below) which defined the Division's programs. He brought to the State Department the collective history and wisdom of the scholarly and internationalist communities to which he had dedicated his professional life, along with the view that cultural relations were related to, but remained independent of, social and economic issues.

The Division was the first internationalist cultural agency of the U.S. government, and it symbolized the emergence of a new national awareness of the potential role of culture in the U.S.'s international relations. Initially it limited its activities geographically to Latin America, but, in 1942, it expanded its scope to include the Far East and eastern Europe. In terms of its program development and operation, it consciously modeled itself on private internationalist institutions in two ways. First, it adopted the rhetoric of mutual understanding—at the expense of politics and policy—and long-term benefits—at the expense of short-term goals. In a report to the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, the Division explained that its activities were “based upon the principle that sound and enduring international cooperation, economic as well as political, must be developed on a broad foundation of understanding between peoples.” Despite the rhetoric of mutual understanding, the Division was primarily interested in implementing a broad nationalist agenda that would inspire Latin Americans' loyalty to the U.S. The report to the House of Representatives explained that “under the long-range program our Government is endeavoring to bring about a better understanding on the part of the Latin American countries of *our* way of life, *our* traditions, *our* science, *our* culture, and

so forth, and equally as important to afford opportunities for us to know more about these same factors that exist in the national life of the various Latin American countries.”<sup>73</sup> The assertion that it was “equally as important” for the U.S. to know Latin America appears to have been an incidental afterthought at best.

The second way in which the Division modeled itself on private internationalist institutions was by positioning itself to serve private efforts in cultural relations in a junior role. While the public sector (the Division) would help coordinate initiatives, private organizations would bear the burden of policy, operations, and funding. The primacy of the private sector was institutionalized in the form of a General Advisory Committee, which was composed of distinguished leaders in the cultural community and charged with guiding and directing the Division’s program. Members were selected by Secretary of State Cordell Hull and included Leland, Stephen Duggan of the International Institute of Education, Carl Milam of the American Library Association, and John Studebaker, the Commissioner of Education. The first chair of the Division was Ben Cherrington, director of the Foundation for the Advancement of the Social Sciences at the University of Denver, which focused on international education and sought to improve international relations by organizing conferences, seminars, and courses on foreign relations. Cherrington resigned after the first year but continued as a member of the General Advisory Committee, and Charles Thomson took over as chair for the duration of the war. While Thomson was an academic with expertise in Latin America, he was affiliated with the Foreign Policy Association and steeped in pragmatic policymaking.

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<sup>73</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations.” January 1942, folder State Cultural Cooperation, box B94, ACLS Papers, LC.

The Division's program and budget were minimal in 1939 and 1940, consisting of seventy five thousand dollars for academic exchanges.<sup>74</sup> During these initial two years, the Division focused on building collaborations domestically and coordinating a nationwide effort to promote friendship and understanding abroad. In an effort to generate national support, it held a series of four two-day conferences on inter-American relations in Washington, D.C. on October and November 1939. Education, art, music, publications, and libraries, among other fields, were represented, and approximately one thousand educators and cultural leaders from the entire country attended. In his institutional history of the Division, Manuel Espinosa explains that the conferences "spurred a vigorous nationwide, multi-related partnership with the private sector through which major aspects of the future program were to be built, and set in motion a number of specific program activities." In reviewing the diverse participants, Espinosa observes, that "it would be difficult to recall in any recent period a more representative gathering of nationally recognized leaders in their respective fields. The largest of the series was the one in November devoted to inter-American relations in the field of education. It brought together more than 600 college and university presidents, administrative officers, and other educational leaders from 46 states. They included the nation's leaders in education, publishing, the medical professions, and a number of specialized fields of training."<sup>75</sup>

The conference accomplished several goals. For instance, the Division developed a two-tiered program to promote mutual understanding among the peoples of the U.S. and Latin America. On one level, the program promoted U.S. culture in Latin America by providing

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<sup>74</sup> Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy*, 146.

<sup>75</sup> Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1936-1948* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 1976), 143-4.

financial support for academic exchanges (for professors, students, and cultural and artistic leaders), cultural institutes, American schools, the translation of books from English into Spanish and Portuguese, the expansion of library services and of the collections of American literature, and the export of American movies and radio. On another level, the program aimed to increase knowledge about Latin America domestically through assistance to Latin American studies and the study of Spanish and Portuguese languages. This second component was clearly not considered as important as the first.

The conference also strengthened the Division's relationship with a broad network of cultural institutions interested in collaborative efforts to promote mutual understanding with Latin America. Attendees generated a list of recommended projects, some of which were pursued immediately. For example, museum directors, artists, and art critics agreed to assist in the exchange of art exhibitions between the U.S. and Latin America.<sup>76</sup> The Division delegated some programmatic responsibilities to private organizations. For instance, the Institute of International Education was given the responsibility of operating the academic exchange program, and the Council was given responsibility "for stimulating more adequate educational facilities for Latin American Studies in colleges and universities."<sup>77</sup> With the financial support of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Council's Committee on Latin American Studies organized a conference called the "Institute of Latin American studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor," which focused on the health and state of the field. In 1940, the Foundation provided grants so Council members could attend the Eighth American Scientific Congress and create the

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., chapter 7; the delegation of Latin American studies is documented in the U.S. Department of State, "Minutes of the General Advisory Committee Meeting, April 4-5, 1940," folder State General Advisory Minutes, box B94, ACLS Papers, LC.

*Brazilian Handbook* and the *Latin American Handbook*.<sup>78</sup> The operational pattern that emerged was that the Division (public sector) would serve as a national coordinating body that facilitated collaborative cultural relations. This included stimulating private sector cultural activity and initiating contacts in Latin America through the embassies and the Foreign Service. Through the 1939 conference, the Division began implementing its vision of a privately administered movement to promote both U.S. culture abroad and Latin American culture domestically.<sup>79</sup>

The Second World War crisis intensified collaborations between the ACLS, the foundations, and the federal government. The Rockefeller Foundation provided additional funding so the Council could add William Berrien to the executive staff where he would serve as an adviser in Latin American studies. Berrien was an associate professor of Spanish at Northwestern University and one of the leading North American scholars in Spanish and Brazilian literature and Latin American music. Leland continued to serve on the State Department's General Advisory Board, and be a member of the standing committee established under the Convention of Buenos Aires for inter-American exchange of students and professors, and, as of 1941, he joined the organizing committee of the Eighth American Scientific Congress. Leland was also vice chairman of the Science Committee of the National Resources Planning Board, a member of the National Park Service advisory board, and on the advisory committee of the WPA Historic Records Survey.<sup>80</sup> The 1941 *Bulletin—ACLS* explained:

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<sup>78</sup> RF, "Grant Approval for Scientific Conference, 8 May 1940," folder 2270, box 189, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. For information on the *Brazilian Handbook*, see folders 2274–2276, box 190 and for information on the *Latin American Handbook*, see folders 2339–2346, box 195.

<sup>79</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 35–60.

<sup>80</sup> ACLS, "Summary of Activities in 1940," *Bulletin—ACLS* 33 (Oct. 1941): 18–9.

The members, committees, an executive staff of the Council have been drawn into increasingly close cooperation with certain agencies of the Federal Government, especially with those charged with the promotion of Inter-American cultural relations. To a greater extent than ever before the Council has been called upon by Foundations for advice and collaboration, and has served as fiscal and administrative agent for various projects in which they are interested. The committees and executive staff have also been able to be of service in meeting some of the problems growing out of the greatly increased influx of refugee scholars into the United States...In the last report of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Council holds tenth place (for the amount received) among the organizations that the Corporation has aided, and is one of a very small number of such organizations that the Corporation has aided...[over several years.]<sup>81</sup>

## Conclusion

The history of the ACLS during the 1930s was bound up with that of the tragic stories of the twentieth century: the increasing militarization of the world and America's response to it. Americans entered the 1930s as isolationists, concerned more with stimulating economic recovery and avoiding foreign entanglements than with leading an effort for international stability and cooperation. Isolationism prevented the U.S. from fully engaging the problems of European economic weaknesses, the rearming of Germany, and increasing tensions between China and Japan. While the disengagement of the U.S. may have allowed global tensions to escalate, it had the unintended consequence of permitting academic internationalists to build their organizations and hone their agendas without the influence of outside political pressures. The Council raised funds, created new initiatives, and articulated in greater detail its modern definition of the humanities. For better or worse, its initiatives reflected long-term, internationalist, and scholarly interests, not political ones.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 15.

Public and private partnerships, at least in the humanities, were not the result of a natural symmetry of interests or a conspiracy but emerged out of a combination of historically specific factors. Area studies, on the one hand, developed in the scholarly community, because the federal government lacked interest and experience in cultivating academic expertise and adopted a passive foreign policy of nonengagement. Cultural diplomacy, on the other hand, was quickly tied to the State Department, which was responsible for representing the U.S. abroad. In addition, German encroachments into Latin America, the desire of academic internationalists to expand their sphere of influence, and public opinion hostile to U.S. adventures abroad together made public and private partnerships in cultural diplomacy feasible in the latter half of the decade.

The Second World War was a decisive historical moment for the Council and its humanities program. It increased public and private collaborative partnerships and foreshadowed the development, in the postwar period, of a new and more complex institutional ecology for creating knowledge and public policies. Wartime planning hinged on how the public sector would gain access strategically important intellectual and humanities knowledge. Who would define the character of intellectual initiatives? Would the interests of the public and private sectors be the same? If not, why? The ACLS serves as a useful foil for exploring the gradual transformation of public and private partnerships in the twentieth century and some of the inherent tensions and contradictions in the process of American policymaking.

## CHAPTER 3: THE SECOND WORLD WAR

### Introduction

The Second World War constituted a watershed historical event, not only because of the unprecedented scale of the human tragedy it caused, but also because it ushered in a new era in the history of America, and indeed the world—the Cold War. World War II separated an era of American isolationism from an era of American political internationalism, characterized by both burgeoning responsibilities of the public sector and the widespread proliferation of nongovernmental organizations involved with governance at the national level. The effect on American society of wartime mobilization was contradictory in that it simultaneously reshaped but also reinforced traditional economic and social relations. With respect to the economy, for instance, new wartime initiatives included inflation and price controls, limitations on civilian consumption, and the conversion of civilian industries into producers of wartime goods. However, by creating organizations like the War Resources Board that included senior members from both the government and private enterprise, President Franklin Roosevelt balanced voluntarism and compulsion to preserve ideological and structural elements of traditional American capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the war had a contradictory impact on social relations. As Margaret Rossiter explains, wartime mobilization created new professional opportunities for women scientists and academics, yet these opportunities were undermined by the reality that women were denied salary raises, forced into entry level positions, and confronted with hostile

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Vatter, *The U.S. Economy in World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Richard Polenberg, *War and Society: The United States, 1941–1945* (Philadelphia:

male employers.<sup>2</sup> Although wartime mobilization reflected old as well as new forms of economic and social relations, it laid the groundwork for significant postwar changes. The federal government and the private sector emerged from the war as activist partners in the development of economic policy, while women made significant inroads into the scientific community. This tension between continuity and change, moreover, permeated other wartime developments as well.

When the Japanese launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. found itself woefully unprepared, not only in terms of military strength, but also in terms of the intellectual and cultural knowledge vital to a successful wartime strategy. The war thus demonstrated what Council leaders had known for two decades: the nation faced a severe shortage of intellectual, cultural, and humanities expertise, and this lack of knowledge had significant domestic and national security implications. Wartime mobilization thereby evoked an intellectual crisis as to how the U.S. could achieve a wide variety of foreign and domestic policy-related goals in the context of global war. How would the state employ cultural, humanities, and intellectual expertise when it had never done so before? Specifically, how could the U.S. generate the linguistic and regional knowledge necessary to successfully wage simultaneous campaigns in Europe and the Pacific? Furthermore, how would the U.S. maintain congenial relations in its own backyard in the face of growing Axis influence in Latin America?

The Second World War set the stage for a new phase of growth in U.S. government operations. This growth, however, was not achieved by the simple expansion of public

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J. B. Lippincott, 1972).

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Before Affirmative Action, 1940–1972* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

operations, but it was shaped by uniquely American historical, political, and social circumstances, including a federalist tradition favoring a small state and decentralized planning, as well as philanthropic efforts that served as models for public sector initiatives. The Council's activities in area studies and cultural diplomacy present a useful prism through which to explore the character, dilemmas, and legacies of wartime mobilization. Building on their prewar program initiatives, Council members contributed to governance and wartime preparedness by operating language instruction programs, advising the Army Specialized Training Program, expanding cultural diplomacy efforts, and planning for the postwar period. This participation, however, raised complicated intellectual and political questions, namely: How would the progressive ideal of disinterested expertise and internationalism fare in the context of wartime and intensified partnerships between the public and private sectors? Could the ACLS successfully meet both intellectual and wartime goals? Would achieving them compromise scholarly endeavors?

In the case of area studies, the Council retained a high-level of programmatic autonomy because of the public sector's historically weak role in the humanities and education. Moreover, area studies initiatives successfully combined short- and long-term goals in ways that were compatible with prewar goals. In the case of cultural diplomacy, however, the federal government built on its intellectual and administrative experience in ways that consistently undermined traditional internationalists. Advocates of a political approach to cultural diplomacy rejected the ideal of disinterested expertise and, instead, often interchanged diplomacy with propaganda. Analysis of the different intellectual and institutional experiences of area studies and cultural diplomacy demonstrates the complexity of the evolving relationship between the public and private sectors. While political imperatives shaped these wartime initiatives, as the

left has argued, prewar precedents and the structure of the federal government were also significant factors. In addition, Council members' commitment to the Progressive Era ideal of disinterested expertise and the sanctity of academic independence placed them on a collision course with proponents of a more political approach to using relevant knowledge. Council members struggled to protect their institutional and intellectual autonomy, challenging nationalist aims at every turn and calling into question the claims of some scholars that public and private interests are symmetrical and nationalistic.

### **The Second World War and the Council's Area Studies Initiatives**

The importance of American relations with the Far East reached new heights as Europe erupted into war and Japanese expansionism led to an alliance with the Axis powers. Wartime mobilization required, on the one hand, developing an overseas strategy and, on the other, providing the American military with the language skills and knowledge base necessary to wage a Pacific war. To achieve the first goal, the State Department, War Department, and special agencies, such as the Office of Strategic Initiatives, brought together academic and nonacademic specialists with long-term experience in Asia. Interestingly, the dominant internal cleavages regarding U.S. policy in the Far East were not between academics and nonacademics, but rather between senior political staffers, who advocated a "Europe-first" strategy that emphasized reinforcing British wartime strength and combating Nazi expansionism, and field experts, who recognized that China's corrupt and incompetent Nationalist party would fail to repel Japanese aggression or unite and modernize China. These experts included senior Army officials, such as General Joseph Stilwell, and State Department officials, such as John Carter Vincent, all of whom criticized U.S. policy which, they believed, essentially abandoned China, and argued that

the U.S. should ally itself with Mao's Communist forces, which supported limited democratic principles, had the support of the Chinese people, and possessed a well-trained and disciplined army.<sup>3</sup>

The Council's network of personnel proved valuable as increasing numbers of academic experts entered public service. For instance, the ACLS contributed to the creation of the Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel, a project jointly sponsored by the U.S. Civil Service Commission and the National Resources Planning Board.<sup>4</sup> In addition, members of the Council's Far Eastern Studies Committee participated in numerous wartime agencies. For example, Professors Hugh Borton and Knight Biggerstaff joined the Department of State, Earl Swisher joined the U.S. Marine Corps, and Charles Fahs joined the Office of Strategic Services.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, Mortimer Graves's friend John King Fairbank, who participated in the Council's area studies programs, also entered public service. During the war, he worked in the Office of War Information and the Far East section of the Office of Strategic Services, and he served as the official representative of the Library of Congress, collecting Chinese and Japanese materials. Like Stilwell and Vincent, Fairbank was highly critical of the Europe-first strategy and of Chiang Kai-Shek, but sympathetic toward Chinese intellectuals and academics (many of whom had been

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<sup>3</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); "The China Lobby," in *Encyclopedia of American Foreign Policy: Studies in the Principal Movements and Ideas*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander DeConde (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1978): 104–110; Barbara W. Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911–1945* (New York: Grove Press, 1971); Gary May, *China Scapegoat: The Diplomatic Order of John Carter Vincent* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1979); Herbert Feis, *The China Tangle: The American Effort in China from Pearl Harbor to the Marshall Mission* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

<sup>4</sup> ACLS, "General Activities, 1940," *Bulletin—ACLS* 33 (Oct. 1941), 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Bulletin—ACLS* 31 (June 1940) and 36 (Dec. 1944).

educated in the west and hoped to create a modern, stable democratic system) and toward the Communist forces under Mao.<sup>6</sup> Yet, while the ACLS actively promoted Asian studies, it remained largely removed from the politics of developing a wartime strategy. Rather, its primary contribution came more in its politically disinterested role in generating regional knowledge and developing the language skills necessary for wartime mobilization.

Once the Japanese joined the Axis alliance, the American military needed to prepare for a Pacific war. The U.S., however, lacked the requisite knowledge of Asian cultures, history, and languages necessary for gathering intelligence, translating captured documents, interpreting intercepted war messages, broadcasting in Asia, and interrogating prisoners of war. Moreover, because it was believed that the Army and Navy would eventually have jurisdiction over territories in the Pacific, U.S. personnel would be responsible for helping to establish military rule in occupied enemy territory and for upholding the rule of law in liberated nations. Military personnel with knowledge of local customs, history, geography, and politics would be significantly better equipped to maintain order than those without such skills. Yet, despite the importance of these responsibilities, the U.S. government did not establish a comprehensive, systematic program to organize, recruit, and train Americans in area studies and the “esoteric languages” until 1943. In the meantime, though, the war pressed onward.

The ACLS was uniquely qualified to play a leadership role in area studies and language development for several reasons. First, wartime mobilization required a technical and professional approach to language instruction and an increase in the number of area specialists. While the Far East Division of the State Department was staffed with professionally trained

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<sup>6</sup> Paul M. Evans, *John Fairbank and the American Understanding of Modern China* (New York: B. Blackwell Press, 1988).

academic bureaucrats, some of whom had received ACLS grants and fellowships, the wartime federal government required, on a scale thus far unprecedented, a mechanism, or workflow, for imparting technical and intellectual expertise to the military. With little experience large-scale language training, the government was inevitably forced to outsource this activity to qualified nongovernmental organizations, like the Council.

Second, the ACLS had over a decade of experience organizing and providing intellectual and financial support for the development of disinterested expertise of the nonwestern world. The intellectual and institutional seeds for the field of area studies had been planted during the interwar years through the related efforts of academics, universities, and the internationalists who sought to professionalize knowledge and create a more stable basis for intellectual understanding and national policy. Nurtured by the Council and the Rockefeller Foundation, area studies emphasized an interdisciplinary, scientific approach to international studies. Private sector academics, internationalists, and foundation officers had thus built the intellectual and institutional infrastructure for area studies prior to the Second World War. They now hoped that wartime imperatives would accelerate their efforts to introduce Americans to Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, to provide financial and intellectual support to area studies scholars, and, ultimately, to generate relevant knowledge for democracy and policymaking.

Third, the ACLS was uniquely qualified to assume leadership in language instruction because of its experience, developed after World War I, in a distantly related, but vital, academic field. Indeed, in tandem with the Rockefeller Foundation during the 1920s, the ACLS had supported the collaborative work of such intellectual luminaries as Franz Boas, Edward Sapir, and Leonard Bloomfield by establishing the Committee on Native American Languages and funding research on spoken Native American languages. Boas and his Committee members

developed techniques to record, analyze, and interpret tribal speech without the assistance of dictionaries and other conventional tools. Their so-called “descriptive” or “oral” approach to language study emphasized listening and phonetic imitation. In a 1943 article on Boas’s work and the new approach to modern language instruction that emerged from it, J. L. Brown explains the tenets of the new method:

In analyzing unwritten or exotic languages, the student must rely on what he hears; he cannot depend on the distorted picture of speech that the written record usually gives. And in the course of this discipline it was seen that this was a very effective method of studying other languages as well, particularly those where the spoken language had little or no connection with the written language, such as Chinese, where speech and writing are two absolutely different things and should be studied as such.<sup>7</sup>

Graves translated Boas’s academic practices into a pragmatic tool for national security. Charles Hyneman explains that “before [World War II] Graves had decided that Americans could learn foreign languages as readily as Europeans and, furthermore, had made up his mind that America needed a good supply of people who collectively could speak each of the important languages of the world. To correct this national deficiency in language competence, Graves thought up, [and] sold to his Council” the oral approach to language development.<sup>8</sup> This approach required that students abandon the common regimen of three to four hours per week of grammar instruction and reading comprehension in favor of working intensively with native speakers in drill sessions for fifteen to twenty hours per week. This approach was further popularized in 1941, when Bloomfield wrote, and the Linguistic Society of America published, *An Outline Guide to the Practical Study of Foreign Languages*. This booklet concisely argued in favor of the “oral

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<sup>7</sup> J. L. Brown, “Trends in Language Instruction,” *Modern Language Journal* 27 (Dec. 1943): 563.

<sup>8</sup> Charles S. Hyneman, “The Wartime Area and Language Courses,” *Bulletin of the American Association of University Professors* 31 (Autumn 1945): 437.

approach” and served as a guide for government agencies and universities attempting to revamp their language programs. Fifteen hundred copies were sold to the U.S. Army.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the ACLS had spent two decades developing a strategic vision for universities and the humanities and, at its 1942 annual meeting, approved a resolution declaring,

[a]mong the most important contributions which the universities can make to the prosecution of the war and the planning of the peace are the intensification of the teaching of all languages likely to be useful in the emergency, the stimulation of the scientific implementation of the study of those languages, and in particular the development of the language powers of those who study languages not alone for their own sake, but for their use as instruments in all fields of science, scholarship, and international relations in war and peace. The Council holds itself ready to participate with the universities and colleges in all programs of activity designed to accomplish these aims.<sup>10</sup>

The wartime crisis thus provided a unique opportunity for the Council to promote its prior initiatives part of the national agenda.

To aid the war effort and build a partnership with the federal government, the Rockefeller Foundation and the ACLS adopted a two-pronged approach. The first involved the expansion of interwar programs for supporting area experts through fellowships and study aids, the creation of tools for research such as translations and bibliographies, and the distribution of aid for publications.<sup>11</sup> On April 2, 1941, the Rockefeller Foundation provided the ACLS with one one

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<sup>9</sup> Mortimer Graves and Milton Cowan, *Report of the First Year's Operation of the Intensive Language Program of the ACLS* (Washington, D.C.: ACLS, 1942): 7.

<sup>10</sup> H. M. Lydenberg, “Annual Meeting, 1942,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 35 (Oct. 1942): 37.

<sup>11</sup> In 1939 the Committees on Far Eastern Studies published the following: *Notes on Far Eastern Studies*, E. H. Pritchard's *Bulletin of Far Eastern Bibliography*, *List of Selected Books and Articles on Japan in English, French and German* that included more than 800 titles and descriptive notes for use as a primary bibliography, the *Morse Series on Chinese and Related Civilizations*, an edition of Charles Gardner's *Union List of Western Books on China*, and Vol. 2 of H. H. Dubs' translation *The History of the Former Han Dynasty by Pan Ku*. In 1941 the Committee established *Far Eastern Quarterly*, which was edited by Hugh Borton, Cyrus H. Peake, and Earl H. Pritchard. The Committee Reports also mention publication of special indexes and bibliographies for scholars. In 1941 John Fairbank produced and distributed a series

hundred thousand dollar grant for general support.<sup>12</sup> Two years later, the Foundation provided another eighty-five thousand dollars to develop personnel and resources for the teaching of modern languages in American universities.<sup>13</sup> This approach reflected the Council's prewar faith in the power of scholarly, disinterested expertise to solve social problems, as well as the Progressive era notion that such politically neutral, scientific knowledge should contribute to governance. Although this program expansion took place in the context of global war, the Council's wartime efforts did not precipitate significant programmatic departures from its prewar agenda and, thus, reflected a political and intellectual continuity with its earlier efforts.

The second approach involved the creation of the Intensive Language Program, which brought together foundation officers, academics, and public officials to operate language training programs. This practical and short-term program was designed specifically to meet immediate wartime needs. Two committees governed the program: the Committee on the National School of Modern Oriental Languages and Civilizations and the Committee on Intensive Language Instruction. Graves chaired the Committee on the National School, which included Franklin Edgerton and G. Howland Shaw of the State Department. This Committee was modeled after the London School of Oriental Studies and the Ecole Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes of Paris, national institutions that provided academic training in Asian studies and languages for

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of pamphlets entitled *The Far Eastern Leaflet*, designed to present Far Eastern culture to teachers in history and the social sciences. The titles include: *A Totalitarian Form of Government in Ancient China*, *Religion as a political Sanction in Ancient China*, and *Insularity in Japanese History*.

<sup>12</sup> RF, "Grant Summary Report," 2 April 1941, folder 2288, box 190, series 200, RG 1.1. Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>13</sup> RF, "Grant Summary Report," 15 January 1943, folder 2366, box 197, series 200, RG 1.1., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

both the government and the private sector. These public institutions served as a national resource for creating expertise and intelligence for public policy and entrepreneurship. Although the Intensive Language Program focused on short-term needs, Rockefeller Foundation officers and Council members hoped that it would eventually pave the way for a similar European-style national school in the U.S. As one Foundation officer contended, “eventually a school of modern Oriental and African languages and civilizations will be needed [in the U.S.] to aid departments of the government in their development of communications and intelligence services, as well as to advance knowledge through scholarship.”<sup>14</sup>

In the meantime, however, the Program was responsible for developing the necessary tools for language instruction, like dictionaries, glossaries, indexes, bibliographies, and translations, and serving as an intellectual center for activities relating to language instruction. These responsibilities would prove to be no simple task. For example, when war broke out, the Council asserted that many dictionaries and tools for language study were not in English, “a fact which makes them all but useless to the American student.”<sup>15</sup> In addition, there was a shortage of scholars with sufficient technical skills to be adequate instructors. In order to implement the oral approach to linguistic instruction, the Committee on the National School set about the systematic discovery of native speakers of Thai, Korean, Persian, Turkish, Malay, Swahili, and the other languages likely to be necessary in during World War II. But even when such so-called informants were located, new difficulties arose. The Council’s frustrating experience with a Burmese informant offers a case in point. Paul Benedict had been working at Yale on an

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<sup>14</sup> RF, “Grant Summary Report,” 29 June 1941, folder 2365, box 197, series 200, RG 1.1., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>15</sup> Graves and Cowan, *Report of First Year’s Operation*, 5.

analysis of Burmese for six months with one of only two native Burmese residents known to be in the U.S. When the informant was called for induction into the Army, Mortimer Graves notified officers of the Military Intelligence Service, who themselves were interested in the analytical work on Burmese. Although a deferment was initially granted, the West Coast branch of the Office of War Information nevertheless soon had the informant moved to San Francisco to broadcast directly to Burma.<sup>16</sup>

The Committee on Intensive Language Instruction focused on promoting language development at a time when the state did not. The Rockefeller Foundation provided two grants in 1941, one of which amounted to fifty thousand dollars to “develop personnel and resources in modern Oriental languages over three years.”<sup>17</sup> As further detailed in the Rockefeller Foundation’s 1941 *Annual Report*, these funds were to be used for the development of personnel and resources to teach “languages which are now little if at all taught in this country—at a time when there is urgent need both within and outside government departments for persons competent in these tongues.”<sup>18</sup> In September 1941, the Foundation provided a second fifty thousand dollar grant to “provide for expense of special intensive instruction in the Chinese, Japanese, and Russian languages during the period ending in 1943.”<sup>19</sup>

The Council used these grants to operate fifty-six courses in some twenty-six different languages, involving eighteen universities and over seven hundred students. The program

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 11–2.

<sup>17</sup> RF, “Grant Summary Report,” 29 June 1941.

<sup>18</sup> RF, *Annual Report* (1941): 276.

<sup>19</sup> RF, “Grant Summary Report,” 26 September 1941, folder 2365, box 197, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

included training in Arabic, Burmese, Chinese, Modern Greek, Hindustani, Hungarian, Iranian, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Mongol, Pidgin English, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Thai, and Turkish. Under the oral approach discussed above, these intensive courses required that full-time students fulfill roughly fifteen hours of classroom instruction and 15 hours of drill with native speakers, in addition to between twenty and thirty hours of individual preparation per week. Council members considered the first year's summer program a success. The first-year report confidently asserted that this effort represented by far the most impressive array of intensive language instruction ever presented in American academic life. Graves noted that, in the 1941/1942 academic year, all work being done in the more unusual languages in this country entailed the cooperation of the program. He asserted that "the machinery of the Program has been used by the Military Dictionary Project of U.S. Military Intelligence . . . The Director [Graves] is constantly called upon for advice on language problems by practically every agency of the Government, which has these problems—the Office of Strategic Services, Board of Economic Warfare, Department of Justice, as well as the numerous departments of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps—and for recommendations of persons with unusual language competencies for employment by these rapidly expanding agencies."<sup>20</sup>

The Rockefeller Foundation was enthusiastic about the Council's role in developing area expertise for the federal government. As Foundation officer John Marshall explained, "suddenly the country is confronted by the need of having available for various types of service people who command the lesser known languages, Chinese, Japanese, Turkish, Arabic, and even Russian." He asserted that Mortimer Graves "knows the personnel in these fields as very few people do. His help was asked by the Civil Service Commission in drawing up its Roster of Scientific

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<sup>20</sup> Graves and Cowan, *Report of First Year's Operation*, 29.

Personnel, and . . . now . . . he is working with the commission on the Utilization of the Roster.” The importance of this work, Marshall explained, was typified by the fact that “the FCC [Federal Communications Commission] is just now recruiting a staff of some 350 people for its defense listening post to record foreign broadcasts, estimating that some seventy five percent of these broadcasts will be in languages other than English.”<sup>21</sup> Moreover, as one Rockefeller Foundation officer proudly asserted in June of 1941, “numerous officials in the FBI, the FCC, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, have been at one time or other parties to consultation with the Executive Officers of the Council with respect to [language and area] developments.”<sup>22</sup>

In a confidential memorandum dated February 1942, an unidentified Rockefeller Foundation trustee described the effect on American universities of U.S. entry into the war:

On the date the Japanese made their treacherous attack on Hawaii there were two undergraduates at Yale enrolled in a Japanese language course: only two. Since then forty have signed up for a new course, which was started on January 19 to give intensive training in spoken Japanese. It is expected that within a few months they will be ready to serve as interpreters, intelligence officers, censorship officers, radio propaganda writers, announcers, and monitors of foreign language broadcasts. The need of such services is rapidly mounting in the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, and Departments of State and Commerce. The principal catalyzing agency has been the American Council of Learned Societies. The Government at Washington is encouraging the ACLS to forward these educational plans on as large a scale as possible. In effect it is saying: You train them, we'll hire them and make good use of them in the national effort.<sup>23</sup>

During the period just prior to America's formal entry into the war, Graves and the Council had helped build an intellectual infrastructure for area studies language instruction by organizing courses, funding experts, and serving as a liaison between the state and the academic

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<sup>21</sup> John Marshall, “Internal Memorandum,” 2 April 1941, folder 2325, box 194 series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>22</sup> RF, “Grant Summary Report,” 29 September 1941.

<sup>23</sup> RF [anonymous] Trustee, “Confidential Bulletin,” February 1942, folder 2366, box 197, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

community. The Council's wartime initiatives built on these prewar efforts and continued to rely on academic institutions and to employ scholarly approaches. Academics dominated the Council's language and area committees, while scholars like Boas and academic bureaucrats like Graves developed new teaching paradigms. The Council's wartime activities, thus, did not compromise its traditional Wilsonian commitments because the scholarly enterprise remained largely intact and independent.

But with U.S. entry into the war, the Council's partnership with the federal government expanded and changed. After Pearl Harbor, the public sector increased its capacity to use area and linguistics knowledge, but did so in collaboration with the ACLS. These federal programs were neither uniform nor coordinated, but rather reflected a hodgepodge of competing efforts by various agencies. The largest single military effort to increase area and linguistic expertise was the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Established on December 18, 1942, the ASTP did not begin the first personnel training until March 29, 1943. During that brief three-month period, the Army created an administrative education structure, successfully activated Army units, developed a curriculum, assigned personnel, and assembled and operated screening boards to test candidates. At its peak in December 1943, 135,629 soldiers were training in 202 colleges and universities.<sup>24</sup> The ASTP provided training to enlisted men who supported Civil Affairs Army officers, as well as to commissioned and noncommissioned officers trained for the special problems of occupied territory.<sup>25</sup> The primary ASTP goal was to give military personnel "the ability to speak the language fluently, accurately, and with an acceptable approximation to a

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<sup>24</sup> Henry Curtis Herge, *Wartime College Training Course Programs of the Armed Services* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, Commission on the Implications of Armed Services Education Programs, 1948), 26–7.

<sup>25</sup> Hyneman, "Wartime Area and Language Courses," 435.

native pronunciation.”<sup>26</sup> An additional cultural goal was to introduce Americans to foreign regions through area courses.

The Army’s initiatives resembled those of the ACLS in several important respects. First, both encouraged a large degree of interdepartmental collaboration among faculty and administration. The military’s foreign area training, for instance, involved an interdisciplinary curriculum that included geography, society (that is, racial composition and social customs), economy, and government.<sup>27</sup> To implement the Army curriculum, each participating academic institution had a coordinator who scheduled courses and managed administrative issues, as well as a special faculty group. The faculty was responsible for transforming isolated disciplines and discrete classes into a cooperative intellectual venture that ultimately provided a coherent view of a particular region and area.<sup>28</sup>

Second, the Army employed the Council’s oral approach to language instruction in its ASTP-funded courses, which emphasized drill sessions and required fifteen to eighteen contact hours per week.<sup>29</sup> The ACLS developed and published materials designed to teach the spoken form of the “esoteric” languages, and it delivered over two million education manuals to the War Department by 1945.<sup>30</sup> In July 1946, the Council sold the program and materials to the Henry

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<sup>26</sup> Robert John Matthew, *Language and Area Studies in the Armed Services, Their Future Significance* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1947), 62.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 59–61.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> J. M. Cowan, “Intensive Language Program,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 38 (Dec. 1945): 84–5.

Holt publishing company just one month later Henry Holt issued its first set of the Holt Spoken Language Series.<sup>31</sup>

Third, both Council and ASTP programs tended to reward elite universities and reinforce social and economic divisions along traditional lines of class, race, and gender. Although no systematic study of ACLS fellowships and grants between 1919 to 1945 has been conducted, even a cursory analysis reveals that the Council primarily provided financial support to male applicants from a handful of East Coast academic institutions, including Harvard, Yale, Cornell, and Princeton. Similarly, ASTP contracts were also provided overwhelmingly to large, established academic institutions, thereby reinforcing traditional social and economic divisions among people of different classes and racial backgrounds. At its zenith, the ASTP had 663 contracts with American institutions of higher education. Those institutions represented little more than one-third of all colleges and only about one-half of all four-year, degree granting institutions. Moreover, only about 4 percent of the total number of junior colleges received approval status from the Army, a necessary first step to be eligible to provide educational services.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the institutional and intellectual continuity between prewar and wartime initiatives in area studies, many Council members feared this expanding influence of the public sector and its implications for the future. At the heart of their concern was a question over the proper relationship between the public and private sectors—after all, the Council’s intellectual and institutional credibility hinged on its commitment to scientific knowledge, its long-term

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<sup>31</sup> [Unknown author], *Newsweek*, 19 April 1948, folder 2366, box 197, series 200, RG 1.1, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. The *Newsweek* article states that the War Department would be operating language courses and manual production.

<sup>32</sup> Herge, *Wartime College Training*, 14.

academic goals, and its independence from the politics of governance. According to these critics, universities should develop diverse expertise but must not be dictated to or incorporated into the public sector. By forcing academic institutions and the federal government into a closer working relationship, wartime mobilization thus raised fears among some about the long-term effects of such collaboration.

One such fear was that academic goals would be compromised. Wolfgang Paulson, for instance, argued in the *German Quarterly* that the ASTP was not only unprofessional but ineffective for its stated purpose. He complained that universities had differing interpretations of ASTP academic requirements, which resulted in uneven program implementation. For example, one analysis of the ASTP documented differing attitudes among language teachers toward grammar instruction, including when grammar should be introduced and how much it need be emphasized.<sup>33</sup> Paulson recommended a return to the traditional approach to language instruction, which emphasized reading comprehension. He asserted that “our aim cannot be to prepare the student to meet with any odd situation that might arise in a German, French, or Spanish restaurant in downtown New York. What we are imparting to him should be more than to enable him to buy a railroad ticket or a new suit, to get on and off street cars at the proper corner, or successfully to date either Mademoiselle X or Fraulein Y.”<sup>34</sup>

Council members were also wary that the war’s emphasis on practical knowledge would, ultimately, undermine liberal education. In 1944, the ACLS endorsed a letter from the American Philological Association (APA) to Paul McNutt of the War Manpower Commission entitled “on

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<sup>33</sup> Wolfgang Paulson, “The A.S.T.P. Experiment and Our Future Language Courses,” *German Quarterly* 17 (Nov. 1944): 169.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.

behalf of liberal studies in a program of military training.” The APA argued that the military focus on utilitarian knowledge undermined not only the goal of liberal education, but also wartime and postwar peace efforts:

If our armed forces are to be effective representatives of our country abroad and intelligent champions of the civilization for which they fight, more [humanistic and liberal education] is needed. Our national heritage is a heritage of ideas; it cannot be understood or transmitted without some appreciation of its roots in history and of the tradition of other nations. An understanding of our own culture and that of other peoples will be even more important in the days when American citizens must cooperate in framing terms of peace and in reconstructing the world after the war.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, several Council members feared that scholarship itself was comprised by both public sector and commercial forces. For example, at the 1943 annual meeting, Mortimer Graves presented a resolution drafted by L. C. Karpinski, the representative from the History of Science Association. The resolution criticized “the extensive inroads made into the university and college staffs by great corporations and public utilities” and recommended that “all teachers in the institutions of higher learning be required by college officials to register their contractual relations with corporations or private or even public utilities.” The aim of the resolution was to protect academic and intellectual integrity by ensuring that political interests did not masquerade as independent expertise. All public and private “connections should be noted after the teachers’ names in some readily accessible publication for each institution so that any pronouncements made by professors may be judged by the public and the press as to whether such pronouncements emanate from a financial interest or from an academic (unpaid) interest in the public welfare.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> S. Whittemore Boggs, “Annual Meeting, 1943,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 36 (Dec. 1944): 39.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

Area studies and language programs provide one example of wartime public and private partnership. In this case, a federalist political tradition prohibiting large government bureaucracies, coupled with the demands of wartime mobilization created unique opportunities for scholars and experts to contribute to governance. In the 1920s and 1930s, the ACLS developed programs within an isolated community of experts uninfluenced by political pressures and, thus, scholars, rather than public administrators, played the dominant role. The federal government's lack of experience in education and the humanities left the Council uniquely well positioned to provide operating know-how as well as intellectual and program development leadership. Wartime created an opportunity for the ACLS to demonstrate not only the strategic relevance of the humanities, but also its competency and skill in administering the projects.

Within the context of global war, fears that public sector inroads into academia would undermine scholarly autonomy and standards might, at first glance, appear grossly out of step with the significance of contemporaneous world events. Indeed, the war placed the future of liberal democracies in the balance. Scholarly concerns, however shallow they appeared at the time, were nonetheless prescient, foreshadowing one of the major dilemmas of the postwar period—how to balance the goals of disinterested expertise with the political aims of the Cold War. While a return to normalcy followed World War I, the rapid growth of public sector activities and a host of new and apparently permanent public and private partnerships followed World War II. The appropriate relationship between public and nongovernmental organizations in the creation of credible, disinterested, and scientific humanities knowledge would become an increasingly controversial question as the goals of foundations and the federal government became more complex and inextricably bound together. In terms of immediate wartime

operations, however, the politics of area and language studies remained less controversial than the politics of cultural diplomacy.

### **The Changing Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Wartime**

In contrast with area studies, cultural diplomacy initiatives during wartime provide a much different perspective on the evolving nature of postwar public-private relationships. Cultural politics quickly emerged as a multipurpose technology in the war effort. As John Dower explains in *War without Mercy* many Americans and Japanese viewed each other as having diametrically opposed ways of life and thought, in some extremes even believing each belonged to different species. In the minds of many, then, there was an assumption of essential cultural conflict between the two peoples.<sup>37</sup> Such cultural beliefs not only reflected imperialist economic and political motives, but became an important factor for mobilizing the masses and providing an interpretive framework for analyzing events. Cultural propaganda, moreover, clearly became an important wartime tool, as the Axis powers launched an aggressive media campaign under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels who, as Hitler's minister of propaganda, revolutionized the use of mass communications. Germany, in fact, launched a mass media offensive that paralleled its military efforts building high-power radio transmitters and broadcasting political programs worldwide, producing effective documentary films, and erecting a strong distribution network for Germany's government-controlled news. The German government also banned some American films that were either directed or produced by Jews and mounted increasing attacks on Hollywood because Jewish talent allegedly dominated its entire

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<sup>37</sup> Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 133; John Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).

industry. Indeed, after 1939, Germany automatically banned all American movies in each newly conquered territory.<sup>38</sup>

The American approach to cultural politics was, at least initially, divided into two camps, both of which leveraged the diverse skills and resources of the public and private sectors. One camp focused on the U.S. propaganda drive under the Office of War Information (OWI), which used radio and other cultural media for wartime activities. This effort sought to broadly communicate American war aims, as well as to bolster morale and win friendship abroad. To accomplish these ends, the OWI purchased private radio transmitters, produced Voice of America broadcasts, and, in collaboration with other public and private agencies, distributed twenty-four-hour programming in more than forty languages that reached every part of the world. In order to further improve the quality and distribution of private mass media, the OWI also established information libraries in twenty-eight foreign locations, created exhibits, published and distributed magazines and newsletters summarizing articles in private newspapers and magazines, cooperated with private publishers to distribute cheap paperback overseas editions of American books, and sponsored visits to the U.S. by foreign journalists. Finally, the OWI established a liaison with the film industry—the Bureau of Motion Pictures—to employ Hollywood as a propaganda tool in the war effort. For example, the Bureau, in collaboration with other wartime government agencies, suggested additions and deletions to films in order to clarify wartime issues. The Bureau also denied licenses to films that portrayed class conflict or presented American life as violent, cynical, idle, or lavish.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 204.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 209–10.

Almost from the start, internal and external debate over the agency's principal aims undermined the OWI's efficacy. By providing a historical perspective to interpret world events and describing the war in strong rhetorical terms as a battle between good and evil, OWI staff hoped to rally American support and clearly define an American mission that was as much ideological as it was military. Although OWI staff generally wanted to shape American public opinion, others in government believed the agency should simply issue press releases. Moreover, many wartime bureaucrats either considered OWI altogether irrelevant or feared that its desire to distribute information might recklessly endanger the military campaign. Accordingly, the State Department, Navy, and other federal agencies refused to provide information for OWI news releases, movies, and documentaries. Indeed, President Roosevelt and the American military leadership consistently pursued practical, as opposed to idealistic, strategies. Finally, many liberals, both inside and outside the government, were uneasy about the very idea of propaganda and the potential use of false or at least misleading information for political purposes. Proponents of propaganda, however, implicitly rejected the ideals of disinterested knowledge and expertise and continued to cynically pursue a program of sophisticated deception in the name of garnering national support for the war effort.<sup>40</sup>

The efforts of the Council and, at least initially, the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations typify the approach of the second camp, which reflected a more traditional philosophy of cultural diplomacy that emphasized mutual understanding and global cooperation. Through participation in such organizations as the International Committee of Historical

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<sup>40</sup> Allan Winkler, *The Politics of Propaganda: The Office of War Information, 1942–1945* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1978); Gary Brett, *The Nervous Liberals: Propaganda Anxieties from World War I to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Sciences, the National Committee of the League of Nations, and the International Union of American Academies (UAI), the ACLS played an active internationalist role in creating a network of scholars who were enthusiastic about the pursuit of peace through less political and more intellectual means. Forsaking nationalist propaganda, these individuals considered democratic representation and multinational scholarly initiatives more important than innovations in achieving global security. Under this approach, scholarly projects, such as archeological excavations, historical studies, translations, and bibliographies constituted, the building blocks for a new internationalist understanding.

Among other developments, increasing Axis infiltration into Latin America brought the tension between these different approaches to the fore. Indeed, in a letter to James Shotwell, Frank Southard wrote disparagingly about U.S. prospects in Latin America as early as 1940, explaining that Germany was making extensive inroads into Chile and Argentina. For instance, German economists “are assuring businessmen and government officials [in Latin America] that once England stops her silly resistance, the new economics of Germany will provide a beautiful and smoothly-working multilateral clearing system in which all of the advantages and none of the disadvantages of the familiar foreign exchange system will be retained.”<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the German economist Dr. Herman Max became director of the Central Bank of Chile and also advised the central banks of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Ecuador. Given Latin America’s economic woes, a well-organized international economic system was naturally quite alluring.

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<sup>41</sup> Frank Southard to James Shotwell, 5 December 1940, folder CIC Latin America, box B62, ACLS Papers, LC.

Wartime exigencies thus crystallized several questions. How could the U.S. best strengthen ties with Latin America? How could it demonstrate that the “American way” was better than the fascist, totalitarian alternative? And how could these goals be achieved without creating a large bureaucratic state structure? The Division of Cultural Relations provided a forum for government officials as well as private sector representatives to experiment with institutional collaboration in the development and extension of cultural diplomacy. Wartime pressures and the State Department’s eventual willingness to use culture and ideas to achieve political ends, however, ultimately undermined the Council’s internationalist approach. The conflict that emerged centered on three areas: first, the definition, development, and implementation of cultural diplomacy initiatives; second, the relationship among the Council, the Division, and the newly established Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, which focused on combating Axis influence in Latin America; and third, postwar planning. In each instance, the relationship between the Council and the federal government hinged on a basic tension between the state’s reliance on the programmatic contributions of nongovernmental organizations and the state’s desire to use those contributions for political ends, contrary to the internationalist vision of such organizations as the ACLS.

#### Prewar Challenges to Internationalist Cultural Diplomacy

As the prospect of global conflict grew increasingly likely, members of the scholarly community frantically tried to thwart, or at least to minimize, the impending crisis. The ACLS sought to do so within the context of traditional cultural diplomacy, emphasizing mutual understanding rather than political persuasion, partisanship, or propaganda. Waldo Leland drafted a memorandum to the General Advisory Committee of the State Department entitled

“Memorandum Respecting Inter-American Cultural Relations” that reflected the mood of the time:

The nature of the present emergency makes it important to achieve as soon as possible a sense of solidarity among the countries of the Western Hemisphere. Such a sense of solidarity must rest on firm foundations: political, economic, and cultural, of which the cultural foundations are not the least important... The problem seems to be to see to what points of the long-range program stimulus can be applied that will rapidly multiply cultural contacts and increase the strength of cultural relations.<sup>42</sup>

Although Leland certainly recognized the import of economic and political issues, his approach clearly focused on long-term mutual cultural understanding. He emphasized that Inter-American relations should be built upon an understanding of the common desires of the peoples involved and must utilize existing opportunities and institutions to the extent possible.

Accordingly, this approach relied upon efforts such as international conferences, translations of important academic and literary works, the reform of the copyright law to allow for the free flow of knowledge, a reduction of postage rates, and exchange programs for professors and students at the level of secondary schools as well as graduate and post-doctoral levels. Between 1938 and 1940, the Division of Cultural Relations at the State Department, which purely served a coordinating and clearinghouse function, operated according to the traditional internationalist approach.

Traditional cultural initiatives, however, were gradually undermined as the Division increasingly adopted the politics of propaganda and short-term political goals. On September 18, 1941, the General Advisory Committee—which included representatives from both the public and private sectors—discussed the appropriate criteria for developing the Division’s cultural

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<sup>42</sup> Waldo Leland, “Memorandum Respecting Inter-American Cultural Relations,” folder State General Advisory 1940, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC. The memorandum is undated and Waldo Leland's name stamped on the final page.

relations program, bearing in mind the reality of the escalating global crisis. According to the meeting summary forwarded to Waldo Leland from Charles Thomson, chief of the Division of Cultural Relations, State Department members of the General Advisory Committee argued that the “basic themes of the future cultural relations program should be economic and social as well as intellectual and artistic, with neglect of none of these aspects.” In their view, improved cultural relations could only be achieved in concert with economic and social aims, which were of primary significance because the “American objective was to find, and to give, an expression of the American meaning and purposes.”<sup>43</sup> As one attendee argued,

Cultural activities themselves must be defined in terms of *social functions* [and] that the development of our cultural program should go hand in hand with economic development and social progress. In effect, the cultural program itself should be broadened, in view of the contemporary demands by the masses for social benefits and economic security and the advantages which science can make available.<sup>44</sup>

The participants concluded that, in addition to traditional cultural relations, planning efforts must include financial support for technical training, new facilities to ensure the free flow of money, and the loan of experts for the building of roads, the improvement of agriculture, and crop development. These recommendations reflected the belief that cultural relations alone were not an effective tool for the promotion of mutual understanding and peace and that only through linking cultural with other political and economic initiatives would such efforts be useful.

Leland, however, rejected these recommendations and the underlying argument that cultural initiatives should be guided primarily by potential “social function” and thus must go “hand in hand with economic development and social progress.” First, Leland argued that this

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<sup>43</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Précis of the Discussion of the General Advisory Committee on the Future Cultural Relations Program, Held September 18, 1941,” folder State General Advisory Committee, 1941, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

rationale violated the spirit of cultural diplomacy, the credibility of which traditionally hinged on isolation from larger social and economic issues. He complained that the recommendations “are so far-reaching that they would radically change the program of cultural relations as heretofore understood.” Such an approach would infuse politics and propaganda into cultural activities and make cultural diplomacy “an instrument in the hands of the Government of the United States for the achievement of social and economic (and by extension political) objectives in other countries. Cultural relations...[would be] merely incidental in a program of action to accomplish other purposes.”<sup>45</sup>

Second, Leland asserted that the recommendations would garner criticism within those U.S. government agencies responsible for social and economic policy. He stated that “these agencies would, rightly, point out that the cultural relations agency is not provided with staff or advisory bodies composed of experts in economic and social matters.” Third, he noted, that such a politico-cultural program would “arouse distrust and suspicion in other countries. It would be regarded as a device of governmental propaganda and not as a disinterested program of cultural and intellectual relations, motivated only by a sincere desire to promote mutual understanding and to derive mutual benefit from cultural and intellectual exchanges.”<sup>46</sup> Cultural leaders, he argued, were fundamentally different from their economic and social counterparts and should remain intellectually and administratively distinct. Although Leland’s concerns may initially have appeared minor in the context of an impending global war, they were, in fact, quite prescient. Indeed, the OWI would later be crippled by a crisis of credibility both at home and

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<sup>45</sup> Waldo Leland, “Comments on Précis of Discussion on September 18, 1941 in General Advisory Committee of Division of Cultural Relations, Department of State,” 12 March 1941, folder State General Advisory Committee 1941, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

abroad and, given its lack of economic, political, and military experience, would be treated with suspicion by other wartime agencies.

Although neither State Department nor Council archives reveal any response to Leland's arguments, wartime mobilization clearly increased the pressure to combine traditional and political ideas about cultural diplomacy. In a letter to Leland dated January 7, 1942, Charles Thomson asserted that "in view of the declaration of war by the United States on Japan, Germany and Italy, the Department has been faced by a number of new questions relating to its program of cultural relations. [It] is of fundamental importance to carry forward and in some phases to intensify the program of cultural relations... There is, of course, no doubt that war conditions and objectives will require modification in the program."<sup>47</sup>

In a series of resolutions issued shortly thereafter, the General Advisory Committee took another step in the direction of combining traditional and new propagandist ideas about cultural diplomacy. As usual, Committee members urged the vigorous maintenance of cultural relations between the people of the U.S. and the other free peoples of the world for the purpose of developing mutual understanding and sympathy. The Committee, however, also stated that cultural relations were important weapons in the fight to defeat the Axis powers and, thus, were central to the war effort. In the resolution's preamble, for instance, members asserted that,

The [General Advisory] Committee is convinced that the program of cultural relations, with its objectives of promoting mutual understanding and of laying the intellectual foundations of unity of purpose among free peoples, is one of the most effective weapons against attacks on culture and intelligence, and that its objectives are indispensable to assuring for a long future full freedom of cultural and intellectual life.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Charles A. Thomson to Waldo Leland, 7 January 1942, folder 1942, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>48</sup> U.S. Department of State, "General Advisory Committee Resolutions," 26 February 1942, folder General Advisory Committee 1942, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC.

Committee members were none too subtly arguing that cultural relations were critical to both short- and long-term political, social, and economic goals. In addition, the Committee suggested that “the program should be as broad as intellectual and cultural activities themselves—and thus include interchanges in all fields of the arts, sciences, technology, and letters, and that the interchanges should be of value to all countries participating in them and that they should extend to all groups of the populations and should serve to promote human welfare and should help to preserve intellectual and cultural freedom.”<sup>49</sup> This clearly articulated support for a broader conception of cultural relations that included science and technology demonstrated the Committee’s increasingly clear commitment to the war effort.

Thus, despite protest from Leland and other Division members, the Committee continued to shift away from traditional notions of cultural diplomacy. On the one hand, in the months prior to the war, Leland and other members of the General Advisory Committee protested against the growing role of political, economic, and social issues in the Division’s initiatives. On the other hand, just a few months later, the General Advisory Committee argued that their cultural initiatives should be as “broad as intellectual and cultural activities themselves—and thus include interchanges in all fields of the arts, sciences, technology, and letters.” By expanding the definition of cultural interchanges, the Division sought to enlarge its intellectual and programmatic terrain at the same time that it reaffirmed such interchanges were for the promotion of mutual understanding rather than propaganda or social and economic development per se—that is, the interchanges would be academic and directed toward long-term intellectual growth and understanding, not toward specific short-term goals. Thus, under the pressure and enthusiasm of the war effort, the General Advisory Committee was carefully balancing its

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

rhetoric, not only in order to broaden its role, but also to affirm its traditional commitments and values. Yet while the Division embraced the opportunity to contribute to the war effort, it simultaneously moved closer to the political arena.

#### The Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, the Division, and the Council

The creation of a position entitled Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs posed another challenge to the Division's exclusive ability to shape the direction of U.S. cultural diplomacy. The spread of Axis influence in Latin America increased the need for the U.S. to promote inter-American relations and reaffirm regional friendships. Because the Division was ostensibly only a coordinating body that relied on the private sector for program operations, President Roosevelt established the Office for Coordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations between the American republics, with Nelson Rockefeller as the Coordinator.<sup>50</sup> The Coordinator's Office promoted inter-American economic and political stability and pro-Allied sentiments through a number of strategies. It expanded transportation services and promoted hemispheric trade, agricultural modernization, tariff reduction, and the dissemination of health- and sanitation-related knowledge.<sup>51</sup> Cultural relations and diplomacy also represented another tool to combat Axis infiltration. The Coordinator's Office exported motion pictures, radio programs, and pro-Allied newspaper articles. It was, however, less concerned with actual

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<sup>50</sup> Irwin Gellman, *Good Neighbor Diplomacy: United States Policies in Latin America, 1933–1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 149. Also see U.S. Office of Inter-American Affairs, *History of the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947). The division's name changed to the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA) in 1941, and, toward the end of the war, to the Office of Inter-American Affairs.

<sup>51</sup> U.S. Office of Inter-American Affairs, *History of the Office*, 5.

scholarly and artistic exchanges than with promoting American communication and increasing technical assistance initiatives.<sup>52</sup> Staffed by people from the private sector, the Coordinator's Office had an initial budget of \$3.5 million in 1940 that soared to \$38 million by 1942, an amount ten times greater than that allotted to the State Department's Division of Cultural Relations.

From the outset, the Coordinator's Office and the Division were more competitive than cooperative toward one another. The State Department, responsible for representing the U.S. abroad, resented Rockefeller's independent activities in Latin America, the fact that he reported to the White House (and not to the State Department), and his willingness to ignore legislation requiring him to consult with State Department officials. The State Department complained that when it "...attempted to exercise the judgment it is bound under its duties and responsibilities or suggested elimination of parts of the [Coordinator's Office] program, the natural result was that we were regarded as obstructionists. This...could have been avoided by having us participate in the shape of the program."<sup>53</sup> Moreover, while the Coordinator's Office aimed to move swiftly and decisively to combat Axis influence in Latin America, the State Department, with its more elaborate and entrenched bureaucratic structure, operated slowly and cautiously. State officials defensively argued that "despite our slowness, which arises from the process of giving the most careful consideration to every step taken with a view to comprehending not only the good results

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<sup>52</sup> Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream*, 207.

<sup>53</sup> [Unknown author] to Dr. Corrigan, 23 January 1941, Department of State, Records of the War History Branch, Working Papers and Source Materials for Histories of Organization Units, 1938-1949, Record Group 59, Box 51, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

but the possible repercussions, the Department was making very real progress” and had “gone far in streamlining its internal activities in order to produce rapid action.”<sup>54</sup>

Rockefeller attempted to build a bridge between the Coordinator’s Office and the Division by asserting that he “would like to have the benefit of the guidance of the [General] Advisory Committee not only because of its eminence in the cultural field, but also because this method would prevent duplications and would enable his office to carry out its function of supplementing existing programs.” He also, however, made subtle modifications to their supposedly shared cultural mission: Rockefeller argued that, like the Division, the objectives of his program were to “create a better understanding between the Americas, to correct misinformation concerning the U.S., and to enable the peoples of Latin America to learn the ideas and objectives of the United States.”<sup>55</sup> In making no mention of the importance of reciprocal U.S. understanding of Latin American culture, ideas, or objectives, Rockefeller clearly revealed that his aim was unabashedly nationalistic and U.S.-centric.

The escalating tension between the Coordinator Office and the Division came to a head in July 1941, when, after coming under heavy criticism, President Roosevelt instructed Rockefeller to discuss and seek approval for all projects from the Division. In one history of the Coordinator's Office, an official explains that “a memorandum of agreement was drawn up between the [Coordinator's Office] and the Department of State whereby there was established a Joint Committee to consider projects in the field of cultural relations.”<sup>56</sup> This Joint Committee

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Minutes of the General Advisory Committee Meeting, October 10, 1940,” folder State General Advisory Minutes, box B94, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. Office of Inter-American Affairs, *History of the Office*, 91.

was composed of Charles Thomson, chief of the Division of Cultural Relations, a representative from the Office of the Coordinator, and Leland, who represented private internationalist institutions writ large, the Council, and the Division's General Advisory Committee. In the new collaborative model, Frank Ninkovich explains that the State Department "played the decisive role in policy, the CIAA provided the money, and private organizations furnished the operating know-how."<sup>57</sup> This arrangement represented a drastic shift from that established only three years earlier in 1938 when the Division was first created. Under the original authorizing legislation, the Division played only a subordinate coordinating and clearinghouse role, whereas private sector organizations defined policy and provided funding. As a result of this new model, the Division, the Council, and the Coordinator's Office began working closely together to meet both short- and long-term goals, thus comingling traditional internationalism with a more political approach to cultural diplomacy.

The creation of the Joint Committee changed the financial, institutional, and intellectual content of cultural diplomacy in several ways. First, cultural diplomacy initiatives expanded and developed a more complex financial structure. Ninkovich points out that, by the fall of 1941, there was a craze for Pan-Americanism:

Hundreds of institutes or seminars on Inter-American relations, financed by the foundations, the ACLS, and the CIAA, were held throughout the nation. Pan-Americanism was promoted in the schools by means of essay contests, speech competitions, and poster contests. Assorted groups, from bar associations to Catholic organizations to women's clubs to poetry societies, were encouraged to develop programs that would result in contact with kindred Latin American organizations.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Frank Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations 1938-1950* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 35-9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

Public and private funding for the Division increased steadily during the war. Although it paled in comparison to other wartime budgets, this funding was nonetheless significant in that it reflected a new type of public sector activity—one that was practically non-existent prior to the 1930s—that brought intellectual organizations like the Council into closer proximity to the federal government. Federal government funding included \$94,500 for student and faculty exchanges (compared to \$75,000 appropriated the previous year), \$69,000 for travel grants to distinguished leaders, professors, and students going to and coming from Latin America, and an additional \$260,000 for loan of experts and technicians to some Latin American governments.<sup>59</sup> Projects in the Coordinator's Office were increasingly funded and operated directly through the Council, including \$93,000 for institutes and libraries in South America, \$80,000 for a program to translate and publish North American books into Spanish and Portuguese, and \$12,000 for an Inter-American Conference on Negro Studies.<sup>60</sup> In July 1943, two years after the creation of the Joint Committee, the Division absorbed the activities and the budget of the Coordinator's Office in order to avoid program duplication and to further centralize government initiatives. The Division's budget then reached a new high of \$1,596,871, which was distributed as follows: \$60,000 for exchanges; \$305,000 for grants to leaders; \$76,676 for professional missions; \$285,000 for grants to Latin American students; \$125,000 for training and education of vocational teachers and leaders; \$75,000 for art and music exchanges; \$250,000 for exchanges of

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<sup>59</sup> Manuel Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings of U.S. Cultural Diplomacy, 1936–1948* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, 1976), 155.

<sup>60</sup> ACLS, "Funds Secured or Pledged since Last Meeting, January 15, 1941 to January 15, 1942," *Bulletin—ACLS* 35 (Oct. 1942): 54.

books and other educational materials; and \$420,195 for grants to American cultural institutes, libraries, and schools in Latin America.<sup>61</sup>

Leland attempted to ensure that the Coordinator's Office and the Division did not completely undermine the traditional vision of cultural diplomacy. One example is his effort to preserve the independence of Latin American cultural institutes, which organized lectures and exhibits, operated fellowship and exchange programs with the U.S., and served as libraries and information resources. In a document that appears to be authored by Leland, the author asserts that such cultural institutes are,

[m]ore or less spontaneous manifestations of a desire on the part of intellectuals of the countries in which they are situated to advance intellectual and cultural relations between those countries and the United States. They have not been created or organized by or under the inspiration of any officials of the United States, and the latter have maintained no formal relations with them. Members of the North American colonies have sometimes taken part in the organization and more often in the maintenance and administration of the Institutes, but the leadership as well as the initiative has usually been exercised by nationals. In the opinion of the Council the spontaneous, autonomous character of the institutes devoted to cultural relations with the United States should be respected and preserved. Their basic support—for rent, salaries, and other regularly recurring expenses—should, so far as possible come from local sources.<sup>62</sup>

Despite Leland's pleas, the Coordinator's Office ultimately used the ACLS to fund cultural institutes.<sup>63</sup> As H. M. Lyndenberg explained at the Council's 1942 annual meeting, the ACLS would serve as a "fiscal agent for the expenditure of certain subventions" which were ideally "disbursed by a nongovernmental agency." These subventions provided assistance to "so-called Cultural Institutes in Latin American countries, for fulfilling contracts with Latin

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<sup>61</sup> Espinosa, *Inter-American Beginnings*, 210.

<sup>62</sup> [Unknown author] to Dr. Corrigan, 23 January 1941.

<sup>63</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 46.

American publishers for the publication of translations of North American publishers of North American books, and for other similar purposes.”<sup>64</sup>

Rhetorically, the Council, Division, Coordinator’s Office, and Joint Committee shared the common goal of promoting U.S. cultural relations in Latin America. Tensions arose, however, when their interests in fulfilling long-term internationalist versus short-term political aims diverged. Wartime mobilization and greater public–private collaboration ultimately challenged the Council’s internationalist vision, forcing it to participate in increasingly politicized forms of diplomacy. The battle between the Division and the Coordinator’s Office provides but one example of the struggle over cultural diplomacy; postwar planning provides another.

#### Intermingling Internationalism and Nationalism: Planning for the Postwar Era

Postwar planning efforts provide another example of how the ACLS was pressured to abandon its narrow academic focus on cultural initiatives and to incorporate a more nationalistic political approach. In mid-1942, the Division established the Research Committee, headed by Dr. Ralph Turner, to develop a cultural diplomacy agenda for the postwar era. An academic who had published widely on western philosophy and cultural traditions, Turner was also experienced in the politics of policymaking, as he had formerly been a member of the Board of Economic Warfare and the Social Security Board. Although Turner was ideally suited to guide the Division’s long-term development in view of his combined academic and political experience, he was ideologically and intellectually out of sync with the vision of the Division’s overarching

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<sup>64</sup> Lydenberg, “Annual Meeting, 1942,” 30. For similar remarks, see Espinosa *Inter-American Beginnings*, 175 and 179.

goals and objectives held by Leland and other members of the General Advisory Committee. Debate between Turner and members of the latter Committee stemmed from differences over such fundamental issues as whether the Division should use cultural diplomacy initiatives as a foreign policy tool to export American culture abroad, or whether the Division should promote mutual cultural understanding independent of the political process. These differences of opinion, moreover, were shaped in large part by the competing intellectual and institutional commitments of the Council and the State Department.

At the first postwar planning session of the General Advisory Committee on June 19 and 20, 1942, Leland reviewed the history of cultural relations and made the quintessentially scholarly suggestion to intensify academic efforts in area studies in order to increase Americans' understanding of the world.<sup>65</sup> In his remarks, Leland emphasized that the traditional distinction between the public and private operation of cultural initiatives reflected by the institutional and intellectual history of the Division had become blurred by the efforts of the Coordinator's Office and other wartime agencies. In highlighting the increasingly ambiguous relationship between the public and private sphere, Leland further asserted that "the functioning of both governmental and private agencies in the international cultural field has raised a problem which now must be studied to determine the respective spheres of activity and a suitable form of cooperation."<sup>66</sup>

Speaking after Leland, Turner commented on the general objectives of a cultural relations program in which traditional, idealistic elements were combined with newer, more practical, and policy-oriented aims. Turner argued that the goals of cultural policy should include "the

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<sup>65</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Minutes of the General Advisory Committee Meeting, June 19-20, 1942," folder General Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, box B94, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

exchange of information and persons in order to create a better understanding between peoples.” He added that the objectives of cultural relations included “the spread of knowledge and techniques in order that peoples may share in the improvements of the material circumstances of life, [and]...the promotion of measures for the amelioration of distressing circumstances of existence in order that abuses likely to cause internal and external disorders may be abated.”<sup>67</sup> Turner emphasized that “cultural relations programs, although justifiable in general terms as contributions to international intellectual intercourse, should support concretely the foreign policy of the United States.” Because the State Department was an inherently political institution, it was the Division’s responsibility to “align its program with American foreign policy.” Turner contended that cultural relations should serve the national interest and should explicitly support the extension of the American way of life. This support, he stated, “should take form in contributing to an international situation under which American democracy will be secure and can develop.” He asserted that “cultural relations programs can contribute to the establishing and the maintaining of such conditions if they are directed towards strengthening the democratic tendencies among other peoples.”<sup>68</sup>

Turner also distributed a memorandum entitled “The Purpose of Research in Developing Cultural Relations Programs” in which he proposed using cultural relations to achieve national and international goals, particularly the spread of democracy abroad. He suggested an ambitious research agenda to explore and communicate to other cultures the meaning of American democracy, an interpretation of American democracy under the conditions of the mid-twentieth century, and a projection of American democracy as a factor in the organization of an

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 35.

international order.<sup>69</sup> In so doing, Turner naively implied that the genesis of American democracy was a self-evident and indisputable concept that could easily be dissected, analyzed, and conveyed in simple terms to an international audience.

Together with his comments on the objectives of cultural relations, Turner's research agenda generated heated disagreement among the members of the General Advisory Committee. Ben Cherrington, an academic who served as chairman of the Advisory Committee, argued that only after the long-term objectives of cultural relations programs had been defined could a research agenda be articulated. He added that the first question that must be addressed is whether "cultural relations [is] a matter of nationalism or is it to be an instrument in the international concept?" Leland, too, attempted to protect the autonomy and integrity of cultural diplomacy, as well as that of the Council and the Division, by arguing that "independent intellectual organizations working in the same field [as governmental agencies] would [and should] determine their own policy."<sup>70</sup> In his view, then, there should be no state-centered coordination of cultural activities.

The debate between Turner and Committee members over the future of cultural relations continued at the following General Advisory Committee meeting on February 23 and 24, 1943. This meeting was especially large because not only were the usual members of the General Advisory Committee (including Leland, Carl Milam from the American Library Association, and Archibald MacLeish from the Library of Congress), but also Stanley Hornbeck and Alger Hiss from the State Department, five members from the Coordinator's Office, and Colonel Jesse

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 30-1.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 29-37.

Miller from the War Department. These latter attendees clearly signaled the new interest among State Department officials in cultural relations as a possible tool for the national defense.

The first item on the agenda at the February 1943 meeting was another memorandum from Turner, this one entitled "The Post-War Program of the Department of State in Cultural Relations." In this memorandum, Turner announced that State Department officials had already accepted in principle an earlier memorandum called "The Permanent Cultural Relations Program as a Basic Instrumentality of American Foreign Policy," which he stated was a "declaration of intention." In the ensuing discussion, Turner argued that future cultural relations would play a central role in foreign policy. As he explained, "the present circumstances call for a reconsideration and a reexamination of thinking on the subject [of the relationship of cultural relations to foreign policy]." Further, he added, "If cultural relations have in the past been at the periphery of foreign relations, it may be that in the new situation into which the world is moving cultural relations are at the heart. Possibly this may be revealed only as we acquire a new conception of foreign policy, or as we more clearly define and relate cultural activities to it."<sup>71</sup> Turner's suggestion that cultural relations would be at the heart of the "new" foreign policy did not bode well for old-line internationalists.

The response to Turner's memorandum was mixed. On the one hand, critics expressed fear that collapsing cultural relations into an overarching foreign policy would inevitably damage the integrity of the former at the expense of the latter. Leland argued, for instance, that "once cultural relations programs became the servant of foreign policy there would be nothing to

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<sup>71</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Minutes of the General Advisory Committee Meeting, February 23-24, 1943," p. 8, folder State Minutes of the General Advisory Committee 1943, box B94, ACLS Papers, LC.

prevent their continuing in that capacity under a deteriorating policy.”<sup>72</sup> Cherrington concurred, warning that “if one nation were to use a cultural program to advance national policies, other nations might assume the same privilege—and we must therefore place some limitation upon this activity to prevent its degeneration into a weapon of warfare.”<sup>73</sup> Charging that Turner’s concept of American culture and cultural relations was intellectually bankrupt, Leland predicted that Turner’s ideas would not be accepted abroad. According to Leland, Turner’s outlook implied “an understanding of American culture which might not be accepted outside of the United States. It presupposed a certain validity of our experiences which [was] not necessarily so, since in many fields of human progress we have been behind the rest of the world.”<sup>74</sup>

On the other hand, however, General Advisory Committee members hoped to reconcile these differences by broadening the concept of foreign policy to make it more compatible with the internationalist philosophy. Charles Thomson, for instance, searched for “a road between two concepts which were both unacceptable—one that cultural relations should be used as a mere tool of political or economic policy, and the other that cultural relations could exist in a vacuum, set apart from these other elements of foreign policy.”<sup>75</sup> Milam from the ALA asserted that “the objectives of cultural activities and the people who engaged in them should remain simple—the advancement and diffusion of knowledge throughout the world in the belief that a climate would thereby be created for the propagation of the kind of foreign policy [that] this nation” believes in. He cautioned, however, that “our cultural program could adhere to these

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 9–10.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

fundamental objectives, which were a sincere manifestation of our internal national policy, regardless of changing elements in our foreign policy.”<sup>76</sup> Cherrington, too, contended that “...instead of seeking to increase the security of the American people through cultural relations, the program should be directed toward free cultural growth on an international basis in the expectation that this in itself would provide a suitable world climate in which international peace and security, and hence the security of the American people might grow.”<sup>77</sup> Finally, even Leland conceded that “if the objective of foreign policy were accepted as the promotion of those conditions which will make possible peaceful relationships throughout the world, any misgivings concerning the use of a cultural relations program to implement such a policy would be allayed.”<sup>78</sup> He remained concerned, however, that “the real danger is that programs of cultural relations might be promoted as instruments of social, economic, or political policies, rather than for exclusively cultural or intellectual objectives.”<sup>79</sup>

Competing definitions of cultural diplomacy diverged along institutional, intellectual, and ideological lines during the Second World War. Advocates of traditional cultural programs, like Leland, were increasingly on the defensive, unsuccessfully arguing that mutual understanding through cultural interchange would provide a sound basis for successful international cooperation over the long term. Advocates of information and propaganda initiatives, by contrast, focused on using media like radio, newspapers, and movies to achieve specific political goals, such as securing the allegiance of the masses abroad. By 1944, the federal government

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Boggs, “Annual Meeting, 1943,” 32.

had firmly incorporated cultural initiatives into mainstream foreign policy. In January, the General Advisory Committee was dissolved and the activities of the Division of Cultural Relations were redistributed to the Office of Public Information's (OPI) new Science, Education and Art Division and the Motion Picture and Radio Division. Several months later, the State Department reorganized again, renaming respectively the two divisions the Division of Cultural Cooperation and the Division of International Information. Leland complained, in April 1944, that it was disastrous that the OPI should be handling cultural relations. Accordingly, the General Advisory Committee,

urged that the title Cultural Relations or Cultural Cooperation should be restored to the Division, and that functions of operation should be restored to the Division, and that functions of cultural relations should be dissociated so far as possible from functions of public information. The Committee also urged that cultural relations should be recognized as a major function of the Department of State, of importance comparable to economic and political relations.<sup>80</sup>

The following year, President Harry Truman transferred the mass media, information, and propaganda-related functions of the Office of War Information to the State Department, which further combined propaganda and cultural activities.

## **Conclusion**

The Council and its area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives evolved within the context of the unprecedented national wartime crisis. The federal government's wartime operations depended to a great extent upon the active participation of nongovernmental organizations in cooperation with small communities of technical and academic experts. These

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<sup>80</sup> Waldo Leland, "Memorandum Report to the National Research Council, Division of International Relations," 25 April 1944, folder State General Advisory Committee 1944, box B93, ACLS Papers, LC.

expert communities vetted ideas and developed programs that were often ultimately adopted on a national level through collaborative public–private partnerships. But such wartime partnerships were in reality marriages of convenience in which continuous struggles over competing visions of knowledge, policy, and political power took place. The ACLS and the public sector, after all, brought to their cooperative partnerships different priorities and agendas. Emerging from the democratic and decentralized environment of private academic associations, the ACLS represented a prewar Progressive Era internationalism that emphasized the free flow of ideas and disinterested expertise. As an increasingly large public sector bureaucracy, the wartime federal government by contrast emphasized nationalist aims, politics, and a top down approach.

Area studies and cultural diplomacy provide unique case studies for exploring how public sector priorities (as well as strengths and weaknesses) interact with academic knowledge and nongovernmental organizations. In the case of the Council’s area studies and language programs, the collaboration between the public and private sectors operated relatively smoothly because the former deferred to the latter in large degree. The Council retained a high degree of independence in area studies and language program development in view of several factors: the public sector’s historically weak role in education and the humanities; the technical (as opposed to interpretive) nature of the language initiatives; and the pressing nature of wartime mobilization, which essentially forced the federal government to rely on the expertise of nongovernmental organizations such as the Council. Although war dramatically increased the scale of the Council’s operations, much of the content remained scholarly and educational.

In the case of cultural diplomacy, however, the public–private relationship evolved quite differently. By collaborating with the State Department as early as 1938 and continuing to contribute to the war effort in subsequent years, Leland and the ACLS made available the diverse

skills and resources of the cultural and academic community to the public sector. Yet in doing so, they had hoped that the federal government would serve only a coordinating and clearinghouse role. Besieged almost immediately with demands to adopt a more politically, socially, and economically-driven cultural relations program, Leland and his colleagues on the General Advisory Committee argued unsuccessfully that the credibility and effectiveness of cultural diplomacy initiatives hinged on separation from nationalist wartime programs. Instead, State Department and White House officials disregarded their concerns and combined cultural relations with other kinds of wartime information and nationalist propaganda.

The impact of the war on the Council and its humanities initiatives was complex and contradictory. Wartime mobilization provided humanities experts with greater access to political power and greater influence over national policies—Graves helped design the ASTP, for instance, while Leland served as a senior member of the Division of Cultural Relations. Moreover, foundations simultaneously increased their funding for the humanities generally, allowing the ACLS to expand its fellowships and grants in nonwestern studies. These wartime successes put the Council and indeed the humanities on the map for the postwar period, when both would remain active in cultural and intellectual politics. At the same time, however, wartime proponents of nationalist politics and propaganda initially succeeded in co-opting cultural diplomacy initiatives as a tool for achieving foreign policy aims. Thus, wartime mobilization undermined the Progressive goal of disinterested expertise and internationalist dream to support long-term peace rather than short-term political goals.

## CHAPTER 4: THE POSTWAR PERIOD, 1945–1957

### **Introduction**

The development of area studies, cultural diplomacy, and indeed the ACLS itself into an institution during the initial years of the Cold War provides a unique window to explore the continued evolution of the humanities and the changing character of public–private relations during a critical stage of modern American history. Although both area studies and cultural diplomacy gained broader institutional and financial support during the early Cold War period, the former remained securely rooted in the academic community, whereas the latter continued as a battleground between advocates of a traditional, nonpolitical approach to the humanities and those who emphasized nationalist political aims. Moreover, this divergence solidified as the Council itself entered a period of institutional decline. Postwar critics charged that the ACLS represented an antiquated humanities organization that had fallen out of step with the larger bureaucratizing trends of the period. Yet, while critics in the late 1940s initially argued that the Council was a small-scale organization driven by personal rather than institutional leadership, by the mid-1950s other critics charged that the organization was subversive, communist, and un-American. As a consequence of such criticism, Waldo Leland and Mortimer Graves were forced out of the Council, the organization’s administrative offices were moved from Washington, D.C. to New York City, and a new executive leadership structure was installed.

Analysis of the early postwar history of area studies, cultural diplomacy, and the Council highlights several significant points. First, the expansion of public operations during the Cold

War was largely influenced by existing institutional and intellectual arrangements. The Second World War and Cold War prompted Americans to embrace a more internationalist perspective, it ushered in a new period of federal growth, and ultimately led to further combining of public and private goals. At the same time, however, entrenched debate about the proper role of the public and private sectors remained important. The postwar evolution of public–private partnerships and the expansion of the humanities in education and policy circles were shaped not simply by the new Cold War environment, but also by long-held liberal concerns about the creation of large public bureaucracies. Second, postwar public partnerships were neither natural nor logical arrangements by which elites in each sector pursued common goals. Rather, as demonstrated by the postwar institutional history of the ACLS, such partnerships reflected cross-institutional alliances that were often characterized by conflict and compromise. The Council’s early postwar years reflected the collision of scholars from the ad hoc, decentralized environment of academia with public sector bureaucrats focused on nationalist concerns.

Third, despite the fact that the Cold War narrowed the parameters of political discourse and ushered in a long period of American conservatism, intellectual and institutional diversity continued to shape the American political landscape. The American academic enterprise, vastly expanded by financial support from both foundations and the federal government, grew to serve a diverse set of priorities determined by a wide range of government, corporate, and scholarly interests.

### **Historical Context**

The end of the Second World War did not bring a return to prewar American normalcy and isolationism. The U.S. emerged from the wartime crisis with unparalleled power and global responsibility, but the immediate postwar economic and political environment was extremely

unstable. Americans feared that postwar decline in federal expenditures would create another depression-era economy. In addition, independence movements in the Third World abruptly ended centuries of colonial rule, creating new opportunities—as well as new challenges—for the spread of liberal democracy. The optimism generated by victory in 1945 was quickly eclipsed by the success of communism in China and rising tensions between the U.S. and the Soviet Union over the structure of governments in Eastern Europe, the future of Germany, the economic reconstruction of Europe, and international policies toward the atomic bomb and nuclear energy. The breakdown of East–West relations culminated in the onset of the Cold War, which became the defining international paradigm for the next four decades.<sup>1</sup> Postwar America rejected isolationism, embraced its new global status as a superpower, and adopted a relatively more benevolent attitude toward international involvement. Although postwar internationalists shared a common focus with their predecessors on transnational relationships, the idealism of prewar internationalists gave way to political pragmatism, typified by the Marshall Plan, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank—all of which promoted American-style democracy and capitalism globally.

The Second World War also changed American attitudes toward politics. Prior to 1945, liberalism and federalism fueled popular fears that public institutions could be easily corrupted by special interests and posed an inherent danger to individual freedom. These ideas had gained wide currency through the 1920s. Progressive Era reformers promoted technocratic authority by promising to provide a scientific and bipartisan basis for social policies. Moreover, the dominance of interwar isolationism reflected the belief that U.S. involvement in World War I

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<sup>1</sup> William Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991): 44, chapters 1-5.

was, at least in part, the result of American corporate greed for government contracts. Such cynicism toward the public sector waned in the postwar period, as Americans embraced a more activist federal government. For example, with the Unemployment Act of 1946 the government expanded its role in macroeconomic planning, and, with the GI Bill, it promoted long-term prosperity and upward mobility through educational advancement. Furthermore, as William Chafe describes, the postwar state sponsored diverse technological breakthroughs that gave rise to a post-industrial economy based on consumer goods and operated by a new managerial class comfortably situated in large corporations.<sup>2</sup>

Americans' prewar confidence in disinterested expertise and bipartisan nongovernmental organizations, however, informed this expansion of government operations. Donald Critchlow explains that, at the end of the war, Americans made a political decision to have the government train, subsidize, and regularly consult a sizable population of civilian experts on such issues as defense, welfare, health, and economic stability.<sup>3</sup> Hugh Heclo, moreover, has shown that, while federal spending rose from \$22 billion to \$167 billion between 1955 and 1980, federal employment increased less than one-fifth during this time.<sup>4</sup> Postwar realignments brought the public sector and the privately organized, independently managed world of academic research into such close collaboration as to constitute a unique and coherently structured intellectual and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 112-116.

<sup>3</sup> Nelson Polsby, "Tanks but No Tanks," *Public Opinion* (Apr.–May 1983): 14–6, quoted in Donald Critchlow, "Think Tanks, Antistatism, and Democracy: The Nonpartisan Ideal and Policy Research in the United States, 1913–1987," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States* ed. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner (Cambridge, England: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 284.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh Heclo, "Issue Networks and the Executive Establishment," in Anthony King, ed. *The New American Political System* (Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute, 1980), 87–124 quoted in Critchlow, "Think Tanks."

institutional network. Public–private partnerships enabled the federal government to expand via increased access to diverse scientific and academic expertise, while limiting bureaucratic growth and maintaining the liberal, federalist ideal of an active and democratic private sector. The rise of a stable, closely knit working relationship between public agencies and private academic institutions constituted one of the major innovations of the postwar period and has been described as the foundation for the modern institutional ecology of policymaking and knowledge creation.<sup>5</sup>

Postwar American political culture was thus characterized by growing internationalism, increasing federal responsibilities, and deepening public–private partnerships. This new environment inevitably raises important historical questions about the relationship among politics, expertise, and policymaking: How did the Cold War impact the politics of ideas and culture? Did political pressures undermine scholarly independence and credibility? And in what ways did the landscape of nongovernmental organizations change in the postwar period? The early postwar history of area studies and cultural diplomacy, and indeed of the ACLS itself, presents complex and at times contradictory answers to these questions.

## **Public and Private Partnerships in Area Studies and Cultural Diplomacy**

### Postwar Area and Language Studies

While the U.S. emerged from the Second World War as a world leader, it possessed little of the intellectual and analytical knowledge needed for international leadership. Although the

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<sup>5</sup> James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1991); Roger Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Council had been laboring to promote area knowledge for two decades, there was still much intellectual and institutional work to be done. Contemporary statements by the individuals responsible for the funding of area studies initiatives provide little insight into the impact of early Cold War developments on their decisions. Foundation program officers and trustees were, at the time, surprisingly reticent about the role of international events (such as Soviet expansionism and communist success in China) and the resulting fear of escalating East–West tensions in shaping program development in area studies. Rather than candidly debating the relationship between political culture and foundation policies, program staff generally made only oblique references to the significant global changes that underscored the pressing need for America to better understand the new international environment. This tendency was particularly true of the program staff at the Ford Foundation, who played a central role in the postwar development of area and language studies. Consider, for example, the generalized statements of the Ford program officer who drafted the “International Training and Research Program Proposal for Long-Term Support for Nonwestern Area Studies,” in order to justify the Foundation’s considerable investment in nonwestern studies discussed below: “Our schools and universities need to outgrow their parochialism and to help the American people achieve the understanding necessary for living and working in a rapidly changing and inter-dependent world. The need exists on one level for political, even military, reasons, and for improved U.S. representation and assistance abroad.” The author divided initiatives in nonwestern studies into two categories. The first, “largely behind us now,” focused on introducing interdisciplinary graduate area studies in American universities. The second, which lay ahead, focused on establishing nonwestern studies on a permanent basis.<sup>6</sup> Although this program officer implied the important role of

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<sup>6</sup> Ford Foundation, “International Training and Research Program Proposal for Long–

contemporaneous Cold War developments in shaping foundation policy, he failed to analyze the “rapidly changing” world to which he referred in any detail, or even to explicitly discuss the “political” and “military” reasons for improved international understanding.

Despite such reticence, however, the archival records provide invaluable insight into the role the Cold War played in shaping foundation policies and the postwar development of area studies. For instance, foundation archives document steep increases in area and language funding, as the Rockefeller, Ford, and Carnegie foundations implemented aggressive programs to develop expert knowledge. These initiatives served as the main source of financial support for many college- and university-based programs from the end of the war until the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which was the first legislation to earmark federal funds for the development of strategically important educational fields, including area and language initiatives.<sup>7</sup> Thus, although foundations contributed less than one million dollars to nonwestern studies between 1934 and 1942, their financial support increased dramatically in the early postwar period.

The Rockefeller Foundation, one of the first organizations to address the need for more trained area personnel, provided \$250,000 to Columbia University in 1945 for the establishment of a Russian Institute in the School of International Affairs. The Rockefeller Foundation invested another one million dollars in university programs and activities sponsored by the

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Term Support for Non-Western Area Studies,” 14 May 1959, p. 1, Reel 010561, Ford Foundation Archives, New York [hereafter designated as ACLS Papers, FF].

<sup>7</sup> James Vachel Dougherty, “A History of Federal Policy Concerning College or University-Based Foreign Language and Area Studies Centers, 1941–1980” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, College Park, 1993), 58.

Council in 1946 and 1947, as well as several additional million dollars through 1951.<sup>8</sup> When David Stevens retired as director of the Rockefeller Foundation's Humanities Division in 1949, Charles Burton Fahs assumed his position. A first-generation Asian area specialist, Fahs had received his doctorate from Northwestern University, had worked with internationalist organizations like the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR), and, during the war, had joined the Office of Strategic Services. Under Fahs, the Humanities Division focused on the promotion of American Studies, increased participation in cultural and intellectual organizations abroad, and the strategic development of pragmatic knowledge in nonwestern studies.<sup>9</sup> Following the lead of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation made in 1947 a series of five-year grants to a dozen or so universities in support of area institutes for graduate training and research on Japan, India, the Near East, Southeast Asia, and Latin America. One such grant, for instance, provided \$740,000 to the Russian Research Center at Harvard. Indeed, between 1952 and 1963, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation spent approximately five million and four million dollars respectively on area studies.<sup>10</sup>

Rockefeller and Carnegie contributions, however, paled in comparison with those of the Ford Foundation. Ford entered the field of area studies by providing one million dollars to the Foreign Study and Research Program—an initiative administered by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC)—in 1952, and, over the next seven years, provided more than seventeen million

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<sup>8</sup> George Beckman, "The Role of the Foundations," in *The Non-Western World in Higher Education*, ed. Donald N. Bigelow and Lyman H. Letgers (Philadelphia: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1964), 14.

<sup>9</sup> Joel Colton and Malcolm Richardson, "The Humanities and 'The Well-Being of Mankind': A Half-Century of the Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation" (unpublished manuscript, 1985), ch. 4, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup> Beckman, 15.

dollars in support of Near East studies at the University of Michigan, Columbia, Harvard, and Princeton; Islamic studies at McGill University in Canada; African studies at Boston University and Northwestern University; Southeast Asia studies at Cornell, Yale, and the University of Chicago; and Far East studies at Harvard, California (Berkeley), Cornell, Stanford, and the University of Washington.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, between 1952 and 1963, the Ford Foundation's International Training and Research Program (ITR) allocated approximately \$138 million for grants to improve America's ability to deal with international problems by increasing the supply of trained personnel with relevant area knowledge. As Ford trustee Cleon Swayzee explained in retrospect, "the basic aim of foreign area study is to make the application of a traditional discipline more effective than it would otherwise be by supplementing it with a thorough knowledge of the language, history and contemporary economic, political and social organization of the area where the discipline is to be applied."<sup>12</sup>

In addition to documenting this dramatic increase in funding, the archival records also reveal a significant amount of continuity between prewar and postwar initiatives. As during the interwar years, foundation programs in the early postwar period focused on promoting academics, universities, and professional associations as logical vehicles for the development of expert and scientific knowledge. Swayzee, at the Ford Foundation, for instance, described the postwar crisis as an educational one, lamenting that in the new global environment "a whole new international and foreign dimension needed to be added to an educational system heretofore

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<sup>11</sup> Ford Foundation, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Cleon Swayzee, "International Training and Research, 1951-1966," 2 June 1967, Reel 010561, FF Arch. For a broader discussion of Ford's policies, programs, and grants, see Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), chs. 6-8.

inward looking and backward looking and oriented almost exclusively to the western tradition.”<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, Graves’s wartime suggestion to create a National School for Oriental Languages was not pursued, or even considered. Rather, the policies of Ford and other foundations focused on building academic knowledge through the American university system in order to increase the number of foreign area specialists and to improve public understanding of international issues.<sup>14</sup> At the heart of these initiatives was a continued faith in disinterested expertise and the central role of the university in the nonpolitical development of credible, objective knowledge.

Although foundation funding was undoubtedly essential to the growth of postwar nonwestern studies, so too were the efforts of internationalists who emphasized the significance of area studies for the spread of democracy and enhanced national security. Echoing arguments presented during the interwar years, postwar internationalist academics contended that broader understanding of other regions of the world would enhance the potential for lasting peace at home and abroad. Robert Hall of the SSRC, for one, argued that the university was a critical ingredient for U.S. global security and success: “The provincialism of the American public...is in no small way the fault of the American University” and “a vast understanding and continued interest in all other lands and in all other peoples is mandatory if we are to gain that peace. Is this not at least a partial responsibility of our universities?”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Swayzee, “International Training,” 1.

<sup>14</sup> Beckman, “The Role of the Foundations,” 15; McCaughey, *International Studies*, 144, 154–5.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Hall, *Area Studies: With Special Reference to Their Implications for Research in the Social Sciences* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1947), 22–3.

Mortimer Graves remained the Council's principal proponent of foreign area and language studies. He, too, linked world peace to improved mutual intellectual and cultural understanding. In February 1954, Graves wrote that:

while nobody would argue that cross cultural understanding would automatically bring [world] peace... There can be little question that one of the greatest obstacles to peace is the present lack of possibility of meeting of minds across the barriers of diverse languages, cultural traditions, and historical experiences. We are tangled up in a "Communist"-Western struggle, but Communism and our own Western culture are only two of the bodies of thought competing for a share of the allegiance of mankind—Far Eastern, Islamic, Indian thinking, also are in the fight. Yet very few Americans ever meet any culture differently patterned from their own in their whole educational experience. This is primarily a job for the humanities.<sup>16</sup>

As Graves further explained in writing to Frances Bolton, a Congressional representative from Ohio and member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, "the United States has not yet learned how to get along in this world crowded with conflicted cultures." According to Graves, "we need sympathy [and] maturity with people who seem to us exasperating... This last, at least, could be developed through the addition of the Asian, African, non-West-European dimension to American education, for the purpose both of developing the highly trained specialists which we need and of making it possible that Americans have the power to extend their bases of comparison by meeting civilizations differently patterned from their own." He further noted that "all of this requires the development of a new generation of scholars, specialists, and teachers of these remote civilizations and cultures. You will find our fingers in practically every development of this kind of study in universities and colleges that has taken place in this period."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Mortimer Graves to [?] Cuyler, 26 February 1954, folder Humanities Discussion 1954, box E61, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>17</sup> Mortimer Graves to Frances Bolton, 5 January 1956, folder Humanities Discussion 1956-1957, box E62, ACLS Papers, LC.

Both Graves and Charles Odegaard, the director of the Council in 1951, advocated that an educated citizenry would not only serve the cause of democracy and world peace, but would also strengthen America's national security intellectual infrastructure. Writing to Senator Clifford Case, Graves pondered the new challenge facing the U.S. government: "Where are we going to get all the trained brains we need for competitive existence in a minority society in a crowded, scientific, social, spherical, dynamic world of conflicting civilizations? What we need is a national operation on this problem, which will: 1) assess our present supply...; 2) make imaginative estimates of future needs; and 3) devise and set afoot programs for meeting those needs."<sup>18</sup> Odegaard likewise argued that "highly trained experts in language and literature, in the history of human cultures, [and] in philosophy and religions" were important for national security reasons. As he explained, "some nations we want to persuade to be our friends and allies; others we hope will be at least neutral; and some we may think can be handled only with threats and possibly actual physical force." According to Odegaard, these nations must first be distinguished in terms of cultural traditions, social organization, and systems of ideas and values: "To get to know men and their variations the world over requires as much specialized knowledge as to get to know the atom. Without the knowledge of men and nations, we use our technology and military force blindly."<sup>19</sup>

In addition to strengthening democracy and national security, academics hoped that area studies would address intellectual and scholarly limitations that plagued both the humanities and

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<sup>18</sup> Mortimer Graves to Senator Clifford Case, 20 December 1956, folder Humanities Discussion 1956–1957, box E62, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Odegaard "Statement Delivered to the Senate Subcommittee on Preparedness, 30 January 1951," folder 2557, box 265, series 200, RG 1.2. Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

social sciences. Raising similar concerns as did Jameson and Leland during the interwar years, scholars in the postwar period worried about academic overspecialization, segmentation, and marginalization from pressing social and political issues. Critics complained that the humanities were too “soft” and divorced from the need for practical knowledge, and that they effectively functioned as a hobby of the elite. Others argued that the social sciences were too narrowly segmented and, although they focused on discovering the general laws that governed human behavior, their results too often lacked universality because empirical data was almost exclusively based on western societies.<sup>20</sup> How could general economic or political theories have universal applicability and credibility if research was based exclusively on the U.S. or Western Europe? As Immanuel Wallerstein points out, the humanities and the social sciences needed each other. Proponents of an area approach hoped to combine elements of the humanities and the social sciences to produce a holistic, comprehensive analysis of the nonwestern world. Ideally, they hoped that “the area program can and should achieve a proper balance between the synthesis of (1) scientific concepts and values, which are objective, quantitative and measurable, and (2) the complementary and necessary intuitive understanding, which is subjective and immeasurable.”<sup>21</sup> The scholar’s goal to create objective yet contextualized expert knowledge of disparate cultures would be best achieved in this new scholarly paradigm.

The institutional structure of the university itself, however, aggravated the problem of overspecialization. While universities were oriented around individual disciplines, a true area approach required cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional alliances. As Charles Wragley

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<sup>20</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Unintended Consequences of Cold War Area Studies,” in *The Cold War and the University*, ed. Noam Chomsky (New York: New Press, 1997): 195-231.

<sup>21</sup> Hall, *Area Studies*, 37.

explained, “no single person, or even science or discipline, is capable of dealing with the complexities of the culture and environment of an area. The geographic limits of an area induce the specialists to pool their knowledge and prevent them from ignoring the relevance of factors which are outside the domains habitually considered by any one of them.”<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, scholars and university departments needed to work together collaboratively to achieve an integrated intellectual approach to area studies.

During the early postwar period, area programs were diverse, eclectic, and deeply rooted in the histories and character of their respective institutions. Robert Hall of the SSRC lamented that “some [area programs] were reported to have strong local backing and others to be struggling against overwhelming opposition. Some seemed obviously to be the monopolies of individual departments and still others appeared to represent real group interest and cooperative endeavor.”<sup>23</sup> Moreover, neither the Council’s interwar regional studies initiatives, nor the Army’s intensive wartime courses, provided ideal models for postwar area programs. The former embraced an extremely broad, scholarly definition of relevant knowledge and, thus, were not focused on practical learning; the latter, designed as crash courses to help military personnel function abroad, were not geared toward providing a base of knowledge for further scholarship.

In view of these intellectual and institutional obstacles to postwar area programs, Graves wrote to John Gardner, then president of the Carnegie Corporation, that “university administrators must be brought to realize that they have [a] problem.” Indeed according to Graves, “our higher educational establishment has to provide the machinery for producing experts as well as the opportunity for the American to meet societies other than his own in his

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<sup>22</sup> Wallerstein, “Unintended Consequences,” 205.

<sup>23</sup> Hall, *Area Studies*, 3.

college experience.” He concluded that “we (foundations and bodies like the ACLS) have the task of helping the colleges and universities to reach this end.”<sup>24</sup> Graves also warned that “colleges or universities left to their own resources are almost helpless in the face of this challenge. This problem [of promoting area studies and foreign languages] belongs to the nation.”<sup>25</sup>

While such analysis of foundation and public sector funding affords a high-level view of the Cold War’s impact on area studies (and highlights that advocates attempted to balance democratic, political, and scholarly aims), a brief look at the history of the Council’s Committee on Slavic Studies affords a narrower but more detailed perspective. Graves established the Committee in 1938 in order to assess the intellectual needs of American Russian studies and to implement a program of support for that field. Although wartime service soon absorbed much of the time and attention of its members, the Committee managed to establish the *American Slavic and East European Review*, an independent and comprehensive journal of Slavic studies, and to produce several tools for teaching and research, including a 1500-item *List of Works on Slavic Civilizations in West European Languages*, a *List of the First Five Hundred Russian Books for College Libraries*, and a *List of the First Three Hundred Non-Russian Slavic Books for College Libraries*.<sup>26</sup> With the onset of the war, Committee members were recruited into government

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<sup>24</sup> Mortimer Graves to John Gardner, 9 January 1954, folder 1950–1954, box 20, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>25</sup> Mortimer Graves, “Draft of Ten Point Statement,” folder 1950–1954, box 20, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.; George Taylor, “The Leadership of the Universities,” in Bigelow and Letgers, *The Non-Western World in Higher Education*, 1–11. The area studies criteria was distributed in Wendell Bennett, *Area Studies in American Universities* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951).

<sup>26</sup> Gordon B. Turner, “The Joint Committee on Slavic Studies, 1948–1971: A Summary View,” *American Council of Learned Societies Newsletter* 23 (Spring 1972): 7.

service. Philip Mosely, for instance, was called to the Department of State, whereas Geroid Robinson assembled a staff of geographers, historians, political scientists, economists, and anthropologists to determine the relative needs of the Soviet Union in comparison with those of the United States and its allies.

The war and the postwar international crisis highlighted what Graves and other Council members had been arguing for decades, namely that the U.S. severely lacked area knowledge about diverse parts of the world.<sup>27</sup> The postwar period thus increased opportunities for the Council's Committee on Slavic Studies. For instance, in 1948, the ACLS Committee was replaced by a Joint Committee with the SSRC, which provided Slavic studies with a broader intellectual base, a stronger administrative framework, and additional foundation funds. The Rockefeller Foundation subsidized the Joint Committee's *Review*, which had been running a deficit, and funded a three-year program to improve the availability of Russian language materials for Slavic studies in American college and university libraries. In addition, the Joint Committee initiated an abstract and translation service for current Russian periodical and newspaper materials, including the *Russian Translation Project*, which focused on translating into English major Russian works in the humanities and the social sciences, the *Russian Reprint Program*, which republished important works in Russian, and the weekly *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, which provided partial or complete translations, condensations, and summaries from Soviet newspapers and magazines, including such important newspapers as *Pravda* and *Izvestia*.<sup>28</sup> Council member Gordon Turner boasted that "by the close of the first year of operation, subscribers [to the *Current Digest*] included not only universities, news services, and

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> *American Council of Learned Societies Newsletter* 1 (May 1949), 17.

U.S. Government agencies, but also an interesting assortment of foreign governments and international bodies.”<sup>29</sup> In the 1950s, moreover, the Joint Committee sponsored a series of conferences on topics such as “Soviet Economic Growth and Continuity” and “Change in Russian and Soviet Thought,” and it initiated a graduate and post-graduate fellowship program.

Although academics and internationalists had long labored to attain greater strategic attention and national funding for area studies, the sudden shock and fear generated by the Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik on October 4, 1957 provided the necessary impetus for the passage of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. In November 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower stated that one of America’s most glaring deficiencies was the failure to afford sufficient priority to scientific education and that the NDEA would produce requisite levels of scientists and engineers to address national security concerns. Although this legislation originally limited federal funding to the scientific disciplines, a small group of academics successfully argued for the strategic importance of area and language training. For example, Lawrence Derthick, then Commissioner of Education, advanced two related arguments. First, he made the typical Progressive Era argument, one made repeatedly by Graves, that education should focus on learning to live in the world: he asserted that “education in this country is not yet preparing Americans effectively to live and serve overseas.” Building on advancements in area and language studies, he argued future training should focus on “strengthening and revising and stimulating our language teaching programs so that we do not stop just with a reading knowledge of these languages, but we turn out a product that can speak and write and read, with particular emphasis on the spoken language.” The second argument focused on Cold War concerns. Derthick explained that “as a nation we are deplorably unprepared linguistically, either to defend

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<sup>29</sup> Turner, “Joint Committee,” 11.

ourselves in the case of war, or to exercise the full force of leadership in the building of a peaceful world.” In addition, he complained, “we know what the Russians are doing in languages. We know that when they go to a conference...that their people can speak the language fluently; our people cannot communicate with such effectiveness.”<sup>30</sup>

On March 12, 1958, the director of the Council, Frederick Burkhardt, took a different approach in his testimony before Congress regarding the NDEA. Burkhardt provided a more positive, idealistic, and democratic justification for NDEA support of area and language studies. He asserted that:

educational programs whose goals are set by competition with the Soviet Union tend to ignore the differences between the two forms of society and the enormous difference this makes for education. Our own needs should be the criterion, and these needs include the kind of education which will produce citizens capable of free, informed judgment in an increasingly complex and fast-changing society...In this fast changing world, this country is also confronted with the need to understand and have dealings with new nations and newly important cultures whose languages, heretofore considered esoteric, are spoken and studied, if at all, by only a handful of scholars.<sup>31</sup>

By August 13, 1958 both Houses successfully passed the legislation enacting NDEA, and on September 8<sup>th</sup> President Eisenhower signed the bill into law. In the following decades, the Council served as an NDEA administrator and fiscal agent, operating fellowship and grant programs on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education. Title VI of the NDEA recognized the private sector center concept, which emphasized nonwestern studies and languages. One of the early reports issued under NDEA described the area center concept as follows: “The center concept combines the study of the rarely or uncommonly taught languages of the world with more and more course work in those nonwestern civilizations that speak the languages. It

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<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Derthick, U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee Hearings, 85<sup>th</sup> Congress, Senate Library (volume 1260, 1958): 340–5.

<sup>31</sup> Dougherty, “History of Federal Policy,” 77–8.

emphasizes the new and vital interest higher education has in the world's civilizations heretofore dismissed as inferior or unimportant or, what has often been the case, as possessing no worthwhile literature."<sup>32</sup>

Thus, the impact of the Cold War on area studies was indeed significant. First, it reoriented the university and established nonwestern studies on a permanent basis. In 1947, Hall counted forty-five area programs either planned or in operation at twenty-two institutions of higher education. In 1954, the Department of State conducted a survey identifying fifty-five such programs—an increase of eleven—and another survey in 1956 identified one hundred and eight such programs.<sup>33</sup> Second, the Cold War increased the cross-institutional, cross-disciplinary cooperation of academics and internationalists who continued to serve an important role both rhetorically, by persuasively arguing that academic knowledge was essential to democracy and national security, and operationally, by administering program grants. Thus, the legacy of the Council and other internationalist associations was far greater than their simply serving as a fiscal agent for the federal government. Rather, it included the development of strategies for knowledge creation that met multiple goals, both public and private.

Third, the Cold War intensified partnerships between the public and private sectors with ambiguous results. On the one hand, these new partnerships were fundamental to the rise of the modern system for creating knowledge and expertise because they inextricably bound together the public and private sectors in a financial, intellectual, and institutional network. On the other, however, the decreasing proximity between nongovernmental organizations and the federal

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 92. Also, see J. Axelrod and Donald N. Bigelow, *Resources for Language and Area Studies* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1962), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Dougherty, "A History of Federal Policy," 62–3.

government undermined scholarly credibility—because both the political left and right increasingly considered academics partisan and ideological—and placed academics in the line of fire as Cold Warriors attacked critics of American policy. Although the federal government's historical weakness in the field of education militated against such influence in area studies, the relationship between academic knowledge and politics would prove more problematic for the evolution of cultural diplomacy.

### Postwar Cultural Diplomacy

Similarly to area studies, cultural diplomacy benefited from postwar public and private largesse as foundations and the federal government created new cultural initiatives and relied on nongovernmental organizations for model programs and operational know-how. The difference between area studies and cultural diplomacy in the postwar period, however, hinged on their relative proximity to the public sector and the extent to which Cold War politics shaped their evolution. Area studies became linked with the public sector as late as 1957, and, even then, academic institutions continued to play the lead role distributing funds and developing knowledge. Cultural diplomacy, however, became linked with federal initiatives as early as the 1930s, when the State Department served a central role that further expanded during the wartime crisis. In the postwar period, cultural diplomacy evolved along the historical path that began during the interwar years—a path which, although shaped by the persistence of liberal and Progressive Era ideas about the importance of nongovernmental organizations and academic independence, increasingly reflected intense political pressures of the public sector. As a result, Cold War politics shaped the content and internal politics of postwar cultural diplomacy initiatives, very unlike the way it shaped area studies, ultimately both extending and undermining the impact of the private cultural and academic community.

Scholars have ably documented the influence that Cold War political concerns had on shaping postwar cultural diplomacy initiatives, including how program architects often aped the rhetoric and content of traditional initiatives to seek nationalist political aims.<sup>34</sup> Ford Foundation support for the Congress of Cultural Freedom, an avowedly democratic organization that covertly used public and private funds to promote a nationalist American intellectual agenda, serves as a case in point. Ford's initiatives abroad included support for English language journals highlighting contemporary American writing, art exhibits, library development, numerous book programs, and orchestra tours. As Kathleen McCarthy explains, however, "Ford's international arts and humanities grants were cast in ideological terms, weapons in the Cold War quest for the hearts and minds of men."<sup>35</sup>

In addition, American policymakers, fearful of Soviet expansionism, launched a variety of cultural, informational, and propaganda initiatives. Consider, for example, the Information and Education Exchange Act (commonly called the Smith–Mundt Act), which included such initiatives under the guise of a broader foreign policy framework. With the stated aim of strengthening international ties by improving the world's understanding of the U.S., the Smith–Mundt Act was replete with rhetoric reflecting interwar internationalist principles of reciprocity.

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<sup>34</sup> Frank Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Emily Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890–1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Charles A. Thomson and Walter H. C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1963); Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) and *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945–1961* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> Kathleen D. McCarthy, "From Cold War to Cultural Development: The International Cultural Activities of the Ford Foundation, 1950–1980," *Daedalus* 116, no. 1 (1987): 93.

In reality, however, as Walter Hixson points out, “under the impetus provided by the Smith-Mundt Act, Washington launched an aggressive campaign of anti-communist propaganda” via print, radio, film, exchange programs, and exhibitions.<sup>36</sup>

Ben Cherrington, Leland’s friend and colleague from the Division of Cultural Relations, argued against such comingling of cultural, propaganda, and foreign policy goals. With respect to the Smith-Mundt legislation, for instance, he wrote Leland in 1947 “that it would be a serious mistake for Congress to pass legislation which would make it administratively possible ever to combine propaganda with Cultural Interchange.” Cherrington further explained “I found I was losing sleep, literally, so to put my conscience at rest I have gone all out in advocating legislation that will divorce once and for all propaganda from cultural cooperation....In every letter I am urging that Congress appropriate the money requested for the existing program but that the legislation mandate the separation of the two functions.” In conclusion, Cherrington wrote “I hope you will not think it mean of me if I tell you frankly that I hope your conscience will cause you restless nights until you make your conviction known on the hill.”<sup>37</sup>

Cherrington also wrote to Howland Sargeant at the Department of State Office of Public Affairs. He explained “I am pretty much of an old-fashioned nineteenth-century liberal. Having spent considerable time in Germany during Hitler’s regime, augmented by sojourns in Russia, I have become allergic to all trends toward the totalitarian state. Perhaps the preservation of the intellectual freedom of the individual has become somewhat of an obsession with me.”

Cherrington agreed that the U.S. government should have the means to disseminate information

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<sup>36</sup> Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 11; Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 68.

<sup>37</sup> Ben Cherrington to Waldo Leland, 4 June 1947, folder May–July 1947, box 113, Waldo Gifford Leland Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. [hereafter, Leland Papers, LC.]

abroad, and he further agreed that “these informational services are and should be an instrument of state policy.” He also asserted, however, that “there is a legitimate place in the Government for cultural cooperation but it is of a different order. Activities in this field are essentially of a long-range character. Cultural activities should be reciprocal; there should be no imposition of the culture of one country upon the people of another.” Cherrington thus contended that there should be an administrative and substantive dividing line between public sector cultural and informational activities.<sup>38</sup>

Despite these concerns, Cold War politics infused even the most explicitly traditionalist cultural diplomacy efforts, such as UNESCO and the Fulbright program. The former sought to strengthen the educational, scientific, and cultural resources of the world as a means toward peace and security. Structured as a federation (similar to the ACLS), its members participated through a system of national commissions. (The American National Commission included one hundred organizations, mostly private scholarly associations such as the Council, as well as public representatives from the State Department.) One of the lessons drawn from the period following World War I was that cultural diplomacy, if it were to succeed, would have to be more aggressive. Akira Iriye explained that in the years following the First World War, the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation had been too focused on tools for intellectual and artistic life and not on the nature of life itself and that there was then “a determination to broaden the scope of cultural internationalism, to cover wider circles of people, and to engage in a greater variety of activities than the Intellectual Cooperation Organization and its affiliates.” He concluded that “intellectuals and artists would now have to concern themselves with much more

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<sup>38</sup> Ben Cherrington to Howland Sargent, 20 June 1947, folder May–July 1947, box 113, Leland Papers, LC.

than an ethereal pursuit of truth and beauty; they would have to broaden the scope of their activities and embrace the mass of people as well as civilizations other than that of the West.”<sup>39</sup>

The Cold War, however, generated conflict between UNESCO traditionalists and public sector participants in the State Department. While the former wanted to focus on cultural issues, the latter wanted UNESCO in general, but especially the American National Commission, to promote American values and foreign policy goals. Debate between these two camps erupted over a wide range of issues, including election of top UNESCO personnel, relations with the United Nations, and the criteria for selecting American and Soviet cultural participants, such as artists and intellectuals.<sup>40</sup>

Another traditionalist cultural diplomacy initiative was the Fulbright program, the spearheaded by Senator William Fulbright, a Rhodes scholar and advocate of academic internationalism. The Fulbright Act allowed wartime loans to be repaid through a system of cultural and educational exchange in which U.S. credits in foreign currencies would be used for educational interchange. It provided that payments on these credits be employed for financing studies, research, instruction, and other educational activities of Americans in foreign countries and vice versa. Agreements were initially signed by twenty nations, and, by 1962, the number of participants had jumped to forty-four.<sup>41</sup> The Fulbright program combined prewar and postwar characteristics. On the one hand, program architects created a complicated bureaucratic and administrative infrastructure to preserve scholarly independence. A presidential commission (the Board of Foreign Scholarships), operated by the ACLS, the Social Science Research Council, the

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<sup>39</sup> Iriye, *Global Community*, 45.

<sup>40</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 139–67.

<sup>41</sup> Thomson and Laves, *Cultural Relations*, 60.

American Council on Education, and the National Research Council, was responsible for the selection of individuals and institutions to be funded under the Act. Moreover, the legislation mandated the creation of an analogous foundation or commission within each participating country to administer the selection process, to submit an annual budget, to recommend the number of appointments for students, teachers, and research workers, and to define acceptable standards for participating institutions. On the other hand, however, the Fulbright Act provided the State Department—and not private educational associations—with decisive authority to confirm or deny recommendations of the Board at any stage in the process and without explanation.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Fulbright program was effectively operated by private sector academic organizations, its association with the federal government ultimately undermined its credibility and politicized the initiative. Frank Ninkovich explained that the Iranians argued with the U.S. over the need for an American-style Fulbright foundation and its appropriate name; the Italians insisted on a signed bilateral agreement instead of an executive order to regulate the exchanges; and U.S. and Chinese officials disagreed about the foundation's name and the program participants' futile attempts to influence the Chinese Civil War. There were several instances as well in which the program's goal of mutual cultural understanding chafed against new Cold War tensions. For example, the Board of Foreign Scholarships wanted to negotiate agreements with communist nations, but the State Department opposed the idea. In October 1948, this disagreement was referred to the newly created Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange. A compromise was reached that satisfied the State Department's political and ideological needs but maintained the fiction of informal internationalism: although the Department would stop

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<sup>42</sup> Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas*, 140–7.

promoting cultural relations with Eastern Europe, it promised not to hinder private cultural contacts, provided that it retained the right to evaluate critically such exchange experiences with communist nations.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the postwar histories of area studies and cultural diplomacy shared some similarities: both received new funds and expanded through public–private partnerships. In a certain respect, both received what traditional advocates had always wanted: a larger role in governance and the opportunity to make intellectual understanding and cultural exchange an element in policymaking and the diplomatic process. Their histories, however, were significantly different. Area studies expanded in ways compatible with its prewar intellectual and institutional commitments, as scholars and universities continued to play a dominant role in both the management and distribution of public and private funds. Ironically, the greatest strength of area studies—its intellectual independence—was also its greatest weakness, as critics today remark that it failed to deliver the strategically relevant knowledge that public and private funders had hoped that it would. Cultural diplomacy, by contrast, gradually grew increasingly politicized. It became linked to the public sector in the 1930s and continued to be dominated by political concerns through the war and postwar period. The State Department’s administrative and intellectual strength provides a partial explanation for cultural diplomacy’s early and continuous use as a political tool. The very different postwar histories of area studies and cultural diplomacy suggest that the impact of the Cold War on intellectual and institutional relationships was not monolithic, but historically specific and contextual, and that the role of nongovernmental organizations in public program initiatives was far from uniform.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 147.

## **The Council's Postwar Crisis and Reorganization**

The postwar institutional history of the Council provides insight into how the Cold War shaped the development of knowledge and knowledge-producing organizations. The issue which dominated the affairs of the ACLS in the early Cold War period was its evolving relationship with both the public and private sectors. During the interwar years, when funding was modest, the Council operated with relative autonomy because foundations were not generally involved in matters of internal administration. With the proliferation of public-private initiatives during the initial years of the Cold War, however, these foundations became increasingly involved in the internal politics of bureaucratic administration. The transition from prewar independence to postwar politicization created unprecedented challenges for the Council as an institution. The effects of the transition manifested themselves in the Council's internal institutional history, which can be divided into two general stages: the first period leading up to the 1947 reorganization, and the second period leading up to the 1957 reorganization. The Council's postwar history highlights the tensions underlying the transition to more professional, bureaucratic postwar organizational management.

As the Second World War came to a close, a contest for administrative control of the ACLS developed in response to concerns about the organization's institutional credibility. The internal battle lines were clearly drawn between two competing groups. On one side were Waldo Leland, Mortimer Graves, and other area and language specialists of the old guard; on the other was a new group of Council members critical of their predecessors, including Richard Shryock from the University of Pennsylvania, Samuel Cross and William DuVane (who was also an expert on the humanities for the Ford Foundation) from Yale, Richard McKeon from the University of Chicago (and also a member of the American National Commission on UNESCO),

and Harvey Branscomb from Duke University.<sup>44</sup> Branscomb was the chancellor of Vanderbilt University, and then chairman of the Commission on Education and International Affairs of the American Council of Education and then chairman of the United States American National Commission of UNESCO.<sup>45</sup>

This new group of critics argued that the Council would be unable to provide intellectual leadership in the postwar era because its traditional commitment to the scholarly community came at the expense of attention to current pressing issues of national concern. Samuel Cross and Richard McKeon—both of whom were constituent members of the Medieval Academy of America, served on the Council’s advisory board, and had close ties to the Rockefeller Foundation—argued that the ACLS was rooted in an antiquated notion of the humanities that addressed narrow academic interests rather than contemporary practical concerns of wide interest. The Council “has directed its energies more to the advantage of the scholarly specialist than to the encouragement of the intellectual.” Such critics further contended that the Council must now “bridge the gap between these extremes, or resolve to concentrate its attention on outstanding intellectual problems of the post-war period.” In other words, the Council “should hear less about something like the Intensive Language Program, less about costly encyclopedic compilations of the accumulated knowledge of the remote or recent past” and should instead “devote itself to perfectly concrete if perhaps wider problems of American intellectual life.” For example, critics asserted that the organization should address a broad range of technical,

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<sup>44</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, “CD Notes on the Meeting of the Advisory Committee of the ACLS,” 30 April 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>45</sup> William H. Honan, “Harvie Branscomb, a Shaper of Vanderbilt U., Dies at 103,” *New York Times*, 1 August 1998, sec. D, p. 16.

vocational, and professional problems, such as “the critical study of literature as against philology; a revaluation of methods of appraisal of instructional technique at the college and university level; a revitalization of current methods of teaching history and a possible revision of modern concepts of historical motivation; the character of knowledge in the fields of the humanities and of science; the function of philosophy in modern life; and finally, the teaching of American civilization. All these are topics of wide scope and deep immediate significance.”<sup>46</sup>

Another criticism which the ACLS faced in those years following World War II was that its small, loosely organized executive committee (which was responsible for all elements of program operations, from fund management and administration to the development and implementation of new initiatives) reflected the individual personalities of its founding members, figures like Waldo Leland and Mortimer Graves, rather than a representative cross section of American humanities leaders. Leland, for example, had dominated the executive committee for twenty-five years. The Carnegie Corporation argued that the Council’s intellectual weakness resulted from “the predominance...in the past of one figure—Leland—who...did not build the organization solidly for the future.”<sup>47</sup> Cross and McKeon complained to the Rockefeller Foundation that the “Director [Leland], however gifted, cannot be expected to sit on innumerable government committees and consultatory bodies or go on foreign missions and still effectively oversee the routine operations of the Council or maintain effective contact with American learned bodies from coast to coast.”<sup>48</sup> Graves was another dominant personality of the ACLS.

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<sup>46</sup> Samuel Cross and Richard McKeon, “Report of the Delegates to the American Council of Learned Societies,” *Speculum* 21, no. 3 (July 1946): 373.

<sup>47</sup> E. Annestad to John Gardner and Jim Perkins, “Confidential Report: American Council of Learned Societies,” folder 1950–1954, box 20, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>48</sup> William Berrien to John Marshall, 21 March 1946, folder 2528, box 262, series 200,

As Professor Milton Cowan from the Linguistic Society of America explained, for area and language specialists an “understanding of [the Council’s role] is colored by their experience with you [Graves]. They look to you as one sympathetic toward their interests...It is a very personal attitude. Mortimer Graves *is* the Council for them.”<sup>49</sup>

These concerns about the leadership and management of the Council were aggravated by additional institutional factors. First, the ACLS was dominated by elite Northeasterners who operated more under the terms of patrician rule than democratic representation. Harvey Branscomb, both a member of the organization’s advisory board and someone with close ties to the Rockefeller Foundation, noted that between 1920 and 1942,

there were 69 elections for the three offices of chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-treasurer. A total of 23 different individuals have held these 3 offices during this period. Of these only two were connected with institutions west of a line drawn from Ithaca, New York, to Washington, D.C. Each of these individuals served one year. The Executive Committee of the Council is composed of the three officers named and two additional members. Of the 46 one-year terms only six were west of the line.<sup>50</sup>

In fact, according to John Marshall, over half of the university representatives on the Council came from three northeastern academic institutions—the University of Pennsylvania, Yale, and Harvard.<sup>51</sup> As Cross and McKeon succinctly stated, “it can not be assumed that the only reputable and thinking scholars in this country are located east of Chicago.”<sup>52</sup>

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RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>49</sup> J. M. Cowan to Mortimer Graves, 8 January 1955, folder Humanities in the Next Decade, box E62, ACLS Papers, LC.

<sup>50</sup> Berrien to Marshall, 21 March 1946.

<sup>51</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal summary of Charles Dollard’s comments on the ACLS and its meeting at Westchester Country Club, 24 January 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>52</sup> Cross and McKeon, “Report of the Delegates,” 373.

Moreover, under-representation extended along gender lines as well geographic ones. Cross, for one, complained that the executive committee's "prejudice against competent female help" undermined the organization's overall effectiveness. Indeed, gender discrimination impacted not only the quality of the Council's institutional leadership, but its routine operations as well. As Cross noted, without additional administrative assistance, the "Executive Committee was snowed under by a mass of minutiae of detailed business."<sup>53</sup>

Finally, another institutional factor that aggravated the Council's leadership crisis was the consolidation of executive committee power, which was partially a byproduct of the wartime crisis. During the war, the executive committee had consolidated decision-making power at the top in an effort to rationalize and streamline program operation. The long-term result, however, was that the ACLS became even less representative of the humanities nationally than it had been prior to the war. Indeed, by 1945, the executive committee provided constituent members, who now largely viewed the ACLS as a means for self-advancement and a source of free funds, with little more than cursory reports of annual activities.

All of these criticisms coalesced in 1946 in a series of scathing memoranda exchanged within the Rockefeller Foundation. Charles Dollard, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation, complained that, with respect to the ACLS, "the total impression one gets is of a bunch of querulous old men operating in a never-never land of their own making." Dollard concluded that "there is no doubt that the Council needs shaking up but how it should be done or who should do it is a question."<sup>54</sup> John Marshall too asserted that the "Council is over-loaded

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<sup>53</sup> Samuel Cross and Richard McKeon, "Special Report of the Delegates to the American Council of Learned Societies Meeting of 20-21 September 1946," *Speculum* 21, no. 4 (Oct. 1946): 540; Cross and McKeon, "Report of the Delegates," 373.

<sup>54</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal summary of Charles Dollard's comments,

with old men and that as a consequence, its emphasis on the classics is out of proportion.” He further told Leland that “no more Rockefeller money [would be available] unless the Council became more representative of the humanities in America from the standpoint of both geographical spread and areas of interest.”<sup>55</sup> Internal Rockefeller Foundation memoranda (authored by Marshall and Stevens) in fact reveal that the foundation was “using the threat of radically decreased support to force the following changes: 1) early retirement of Leland whose executive committee has just reported that they have induced him to hold on through 1948; 2) general renaissance of the Council principally by the introduction of younger scholars; and 3) a better geographical spread of membership.” Marshall and Stevens argued that using financial leverage to force such changes would be effective because the Rockefeller Foundation’s financial contributions to the ACLS were three times that of the Carnegie Corporation, and, thus, “the Council is really an extension of the [Rockefeller] Foundation.”<sup>56</sup>

On May 7, 1946, Charles Dollard and the ACLS agreed to the following:

The [Council’s] advisory board would look immediately for an associate director whose main interest was in the development of the work in the humanities in this country; that this man should be offered the appointment with the clear understanding that he would succeed Leland not more than two years hence; that Leland would be asked to agree that for the balance of his tenure, he would devote himself to work with UNESCO and related activities leaving the ACLS program in the U.S. entirely in the hands of his new associate; that the new associate director would be assured that he had the backing of the

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24 January 1946.

<sup>55</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal summary of Charles Dollard and John Marshall’s telephone conversation, 18 March 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>56</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal summary of Charles Dollard’s comments, 24 January 1946.

advisory board in moving as rapidly as his judgment dictated to the reformation of the Council on a pattern roughly similar to that of the SSRC.<sup>57</sup>

To facilitate these changes, the advisory board completed a study of the problems facing the Council and the humanities in the postwar era. It concluded that the organization was “ill-suited to the formulation and execution of policies originating in discussion of intellectual issues or to the assumption of leadership in the training of personnel and the initiation of new directions in research.” The report also stated that the executive office was understaffed and focused on administrative and financial details rather than policy issues, that the advisory board was merely advisory and not accountable for formulating and implementing new strategic initiatives, and that the constituent societies had abandoned responsibility for program development and operation. If the ACLS were to succeed in the postwar era, it would have to do much more than simply represent the “interests” of the constituents. Rather, in order to effectively promote the humanities, it should be more like a federation that advances constituents but also “possess[es] the autonomy and responsibility requisite to treat the broad problems of the Humanities, to consider them by analysis of their subject matter and present predicament, and to formulate and execute policies designed to bring them attention more nearly in line with that now accorded the natural and social sciences.”<sup>58</sup>

With a view to remedy these internal structural and intellectual deficiencies, the advisory board drew up, and the executive committee approved, a new set of bylaws. These mandated that the advisory board be dissolved and replaced by a board of directors that included eight

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<sup>57</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal memorandum summarizing a conversation between Charles Dollard and Richard Shryock, 7 May 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>58</sup> Cross and McKeon, “Special Report of the Delegates, 540 and 538.

members elected each for a four-year term and responsible for managing policy development, operations, and fund management. The number of delegates was to be reduced from two to one and eight members-at-large would be elected, thus allowing humanities scholars to help guide the Council. This new structure was designed to ensure that ACLS's intellectual management would be highly fluid and decentralized. Cross and McKeon explained that "the institution of a board of directors would have the effect of delegating to a small group...the responsibility of determining a policy and, through its Executive Committee, putting it into effect." Cross summarized that such an administrative reorganization would result in a "concern with broad questions of policy [and] would make possible a new and closer relation between the Council and the Societies; [in the end] the representatives from the Societies might come to think of their function in the Council in terms of projects and ideas which they share with other Societies rather than merely in terms of safeguarding of the political and monetary interests of their Societies in the event that the Council continues to function and again acquires the disposition of free funds."<sup>59</sup>

Council members, however, did not give up their prewar independence easily and rejected attempts to control initiatives and internal operations. For example, Cross assured the Rockefeller Foundation that the ACLS would support the reorganization, stating that "there is not much doubt that the advisory board will go along with you very far, because I think they realize the truth of my old adage that the hand that pulls the purse-strings rocks the cradle." At the same time, however, he cautioned foundation trustees that Leland was revered and that the Rockefeller Foundation would be "ill-advised in pressing for Leland's immediate retirement

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 538-9.

without some intermediate stage.”<sup>60</sup> The advisory board would have to “sell these reforms to the full body of the Council...and I do not flatter myself that the job will be an easy one.” He warned,

Leland has just as many friends as Dave [Stevens, the director of the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division] has, and I am afraid in the Council, Waldo’s friends are rather numerous...Our notion was to set him off in his little corner on 16th St. [in Washington] or elsewhere adjacent to the Potomac, while all direction of policy and procedure gravitated into other hand.<sup>61</sup>

Only weeks later, Cross pleaded with Marshall at the Rockefeller Foundation to approve a Council request for \$30,000, so that Leland could continue internationalist activities. Cross asserted that,

I really ought to emphasize again the importance of this grant. You may, I fear, regard it as practically axiomatic that, if it is refused, the reform program will be as good as dished. There is always the danger that a bunch of scholars, frequently stalwart individualists in inverse ratio to their learned importance, will scent dictation and then take the bit in their respective teeth with grave consequences on all sides. I therefore hope very much that this grant can be favorably considered... For, if it is not so considered or if we cannot offer pretty firm guarantees of its acceptance, the task of putting the reform through will become difficult, if not impossible.<sup>62</sup>

David Stevens responded: “I cannot agree to any implication to the end that Leland’s continuing studies have any sort of approval from us in advance of the election of his successor. I will not propose a grant in his behalf, at whatever figure is useful, at the September meeting of our own

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<sup>60</sup> Samuel Cross to John Marshall, 8 June 1946, folder 2528, box 262, series 200, RG 1.2., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Samuel Cross to John Marshall, 15 July 1946, folder 2528, box 262, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

Executive Committee.”<sup>63</sup> Council members perceived such intransigence as a quid pro quo: embrace reforms or lose funding.

At the following ACLS meeting on September 20 and 21, 1946, Leland officially retired and members voted on the much-discussed administrative changes, which ultimately failed to pass by one vote.<sup>64</sup> Council members stood against the reorganization because criticisms had been implied but not stated and debated in detail, also because criticisms from foundations constituted an unfair “pressure” that jeopardized the organization’s autonomy and integrity, and, finally, because some feared that the influence of the constituent societies would diminish with the suggested board of directors. Cross wrote Marshall that after the proposed plan failed to pass, the meeting deteriorated into name calling. “What really was totally unexpected and extremely painful,” he went on to tell, “was a most unguarded exhibition by Mortimer Graves, egged on by the Linguists and Orientalists.” Graves attacked the advisory board and “generally endeavored to create the impression that all that is necessary is to make him Director and leave the Constitution as it is.” Cross explained: “It will take quite a lot to persuade some of the gentlemen of Mortimer’s present utility in any capacity.”<sup>65</sup> Shryock recounted to the Rockefeller president Charles Dollard that “the opposition centered in the orientalist group and was apparently involved with the do-or-die determination on their part to have Graves succeed

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<sup>63</sup> David Stevens to John Marshall, 20 July 1946, folder 2528, box 262, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>64</sup> Cross and McKeon, “Special Report of the Delegates,” 539–40. Also, see “Special Meeting, September 24, 1946,” *Bulletin—ACLS* 40 (March 1947), 24; Richard Shryock of the University of Pennsylvania and delegate of the History of Science Society was named Acting Director of the Council from October 1, 1946 until after its next annual meeting of 1947.

<sup>65</sup> Samuel Cross to John Marshall, 23 September 1946, folder 2529, box 262, series 200, RG 1.2., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

Leland. Graves contributed a surprisingly bitter statement to the proceedings, saying *inter alia* that the present organization of the Council was perfect and that he knew that this was the view of the foundations.” Shryock was confident that the reorganization plan would be approved at the January 1947 meeting since the absence of only five delegates enabled the opposition to prevent the three-fourths formal vote required by the constitution.<sup>66</sup>

When Graves realized that the foundations had advocated the administrative reorganization, he shot off a letter to Marshall stating that the Rockefeller Foundation “exhibited only that it does not understand what is the matter with the Council.” Such administrative changes would only “push the Council further down the very road to deterioration.” The Council’s troubles were due to the fact that it had not been encouraged, “nor even allowed, to do its own thinking. What the Council really needs is to be made to think for itself, to delegate its action, not its thinking.”<sup>67</sup> Several weeks later, Graves wrote Dollard that there was “a series of rumors and innuendoes alleging certain attitudes on the part of the foundations.” Graves reiterated that the administrative and constitutional changes were unnecessary. The “hysterical attempt to rewrite that document, i.e. the constitution, without first considering what were the Council’s shortcomings and how best they could be remedied” was, in his view, a grievous mistake.<sup>68</sup> He argued that,

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<sup>66</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, internal memorandum summarizing a conversation between Charles Dollard and Richard Shryock, 27 September 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>67</sup> Mortimer Graves to John Marshall, 24 September 1946, folder 2529, box 262, series 200, RG 1.2., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>68</sup> Mortimer Graves to Charles Dollard, 20 October 1946, folder 1946–1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

it is most important to realize that the opponents of the reorganization were precisely those members who have participated most actively in the operations of the Council, who have been responsible for what it has accomplished, and who have given most thought to the problem of making the Council function more effectively. On the other hand, the largest part of the support for the change came from the apathetic group which always votes as the regime directs and which has ever been the principal handicap to those of use who have been trying to make the Council amount to something.<sup>69</sup>

Graves concluded that the proposed administrative changes were,

based upon a completely fallacious formulation of the Council's shortcomings and that they would...accentuate rather than retard the Council's retrogression down the road to deterioration upon which it was already set. The Council's need is not to create a new brass-hat body [such as the board of directors] to do its thinking for it; one of its troubles is that it is already burdened with too many such bodies. The Council's need is to be brought back on the track of doing its own thinking for itself, delegating its action if necessary, but not its thinking.<sup>70</sup>

Charles Dollard responded curtly to Graves's letter, asserting that "our position has been and will continue to be this: the officers of a foundation have a responsibility to their trustees to know what is going on in the organizations which the foundation supports in order that they may fairly represent the case when they recommend renewal or continuation of such support."<sup>71</sup>

Proponents of the reorganization prevailed, successfully convincing constituent members to support the constitutional reforms by arguing that foundation criticisms were a "friendly act" and that the Council needed to know what the foundations considered "worthy of continued support." Cross chastised members that they had "failed to deal with precisely the questions concerning the direction of research in the humanities, concerning the recruitment of personnel for the humanities, and finally concerning the place of the humanities in education and life which

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Dollard to Mortimer Graves, 30 October 1946, folder 1946-1949, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

are now in the foreground and which constitute the greatest challenge to the continued functioning of humanistic scholarship and training.” Cross went on to argue that the defeat of the new by-laws in the September meeting was a major setback. He warned that,

delay at this time is grimly serious. When so many forces—governmental, industrial, popular, and educational—are looking to the intellectual disciplines for guidance and are providing funds, prestige, well-paying employment, and propaganda for training in them, it is important that some national agency plan and operate energetically for the humanities... This seems to your delegates a serious responsibility which has been undertaken by the ten delegates who voted against the amendment and by the one delegate who was unable to make up his mind.<sup>72</sup>

Although disgruntled, Council members passed the reorganization plan at the annual meeting in January 1947 when another vote was taken. Some members confided that although they did not embrace the reorganization, they also never thought it would actually fail to win sufficient votes to pass. Professor Cornelius Kruse became the new director, and the executive committee and advisory board were replaced by a board of directors consisting of twelve members.

Immediately following the reorganization, the new Council leadership explicitly sought to address the criticisms that had spurred the reorganization. To address the lack of West Coast representation, it established the Pacific Coast Committee on the Humanities, which sponsored West Coast conferences and a grant program, and helped to create the journal *Pacific Spectator*. It also established the Committee on Personnel Studies, which collaborated with governmental and private policymaking associations on personnel issues, such as the creation of a national registration for the purpose of recording and classifying the existing humanities labor force. It also created the Personnel Studies Committee and participated in the Defense Manpower Administration's task force on Specialized Personnel. The task force reviewed governmental

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<sup>72</sup> Cross and McKeon, “Special Report of the Delegates,” 540, 538–9, and 541.

and private research activities in the specialized manpower field, made recommendations for research projects, collected data needed for national mobilization planning, and advised on the National Science Foundation's National Scientific Register activities.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, the ACLS collaborated with the Conference Board of Associations (which included the SSRC and the ACE) and the National Research Council to examine personnel issues, such as the intellectual requirements necessary to achieve advanced training.<sup>74</sup> Together, these private organizations initiated a study to determine the minimum IQ requirement needed to "profit" from graduate training. Charles Fahs, the director of the Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Division, commented that "this is an illuminating report." Especially interesting was the fact that "there is a distinct possibility of encountering an upper limit of some sort in the not too distant future if the demand for highly trained personnel continues to expand at the present rate."<sup>75</sup> Fahs highlighted the report's "analysis of the intelligence level requisite for profit from a high level of training (Ph.D. or equivalent), the small reservoir of human material available with this intelligence, and our failure to utilize more than a fraction of this group because of lack of economic opportunity, lack of cultural incentive, and discrimination by race or sex." He noted that "it is obvious from this report that the greatest single source of waste of intellectual 'manpower' is the failure to employ women equally in intellectual work." Fahs complained that

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<sup>73</sup> Richard Shryock, "Report of the Acting Director, 1946-1947," *Bulletin—ACLS* 41 (March 1948): 46-9; H. T. Swendenberg Jr., "Pacific Coast Committee for the Humanities," *Bulletin—ACLS* 41 (March 1948): 51-2; J. F. Wellemeyer Jr., "The ACLS Personnel Program," *Bulletin—ACLS* 48 (May 1955): 43-50. (*Bulletin—ACLS* 48 provides detailed and useful committee summaries.)

<sup>74</sup> Shryock, "Report of the Acting Director, 1946-1947," 49.

<sup>75</sup> J. F. Wellemeyer Jr., "The Personnel Studies Program of the American Council of Learned Societies," *Bulletin—ACLS* 43 (Nov. 1950), 64.

“in my experience, the historians are the worst misogynists in the academic world. Have we [i.e. the Rockefeller Foundation] or the Council ever explored this question?”<sup>76</sup>

Despite the 1947 reorganization and the creation of new strategically oriented committees, the Council soon entered another period of financial and administrative crisis. In 1950, the Rockefeller Foundation announced it would gradually begin to reduce its annual support so that by 1954 it would be at about half of what it had been.<sup>77</sup> In a January 1950 letter, the Foundation explained,

as you know, the Rockefeller Foundation by its charter is permitted to spend either principal or income. Actually, it has been living beyond its income and at this juncture seems to be faced with the alternative of limiting its budget or deliberately consuming its principal. The present wisdom of our Trustees inclines us to the belief that while we should and do stand ready to look with unusual sympathy upon any compelling request we ought for ordinary purposes to restrict our activity within the limits of disposable income.<sup>78</sup>

The Rockefeller Foundation advanced several arguments to justify the decline in financial support. First, it emphasized the need for financial flexibility, particularly in terms of balancing domestic and international humanities initiatives. Fahs complained that the Rockefeller Foundation did not grant comparable continuing support to a similar national agency and that financial independence might further rejuvenate Council discussions. He concluded that “we should be much readier to recommend a capital grant to carry some of the basic general support of the Council if it had succeeded in enlisting other sources of support so that the

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<sup>76</sup> Charles Burton Fahs, internal memorandum, 29 September 1948, folder 2561, box 265, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>77</sup> In June 1946 the Rockefeller Foundation provided the Council with \$250,000 over five years for general support and \$150,000 over three years for fellowships.

<sup>78</sup> Rockefeller Foundation to Charles Odegaard, 21 January 1950, folder 2535, Box 262, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

Rockefeller Foundation share in the load could be brought down to fifty percent or below... The constituent societies on the whole take the Council for granted.”<sup>79</sup>

Second, foundation program officers argued that they served a different function from those of the scholar and university, explaining that “the humanities is more the responsibility of the universities than the foundations.” Too many university “departments and many individuals are extremely traditional in their approach to the humanities and...there are still many who regard scholarship as a means of escaping from the problems of decision in the contemporary world.” He concluded that “the situation of a faculty member in a university is not the same as the position of a foundation officer in the Humanities. We, fortunately, are able to move rapidly on occasion, whereas frequently, even with the best will in the world, the inertia of the academic organization prevents a rapid change of direction or a quick adherence to a new program.”<sup>80</sup>

Third, Fahs objected to the ACLS’s support for general and unrestricted research projects, which he believed, contradicted the Foundation’s goal to promote strategic interdisciplinary programs.<sup>81</sup>

Although the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Corporation archives at this point highlight financial, institutional, and intellectual concerns, evidence suggests that political concerns may have played a role in the decline of foundation funding. Prompted by conservative fears that foundations were using their tax-exempt status to promulgate subversive ideas, Congress investigated the Rockefeller and Ford foundations and the Carnegie Corporation.

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<sup>79</sup> Charles Burton Fahs, internal memorandum, 7 March 1952, folder 2537, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>80</sup> Rockefeller Foundation, Internal memorandum, 10 March 1952, folder 2537, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC.

<sup>81</sup> Joel Colton and Malcolm Richardson, “The Humanities and ‘The Well-Being of Mankind’: A Half Century of the Humanities at the Rockefeller Foundation,” unpublished manuscript (1985), see ch. 4, p. 5

Proponents and practitioners of foreign area and language studies were especially hard hit because of congressional fears that scholars and nongovernmental organizations were sympathetic to communism. Scholars of China like Owen Lattimore and John King Fairbank, who opposed American support of the Chiang Kai-Shek regime, and internationalist organizations like the Institute of Pacific Relations (IPR) were blamed for the success of communism in China. The McCarran and Cox committee reports in the 1950s held individual scholars and international organizations responsible.<sup>82</sup> The Republican-dominated 83rd Congress launched another investigation into foundations in 1953, headed by Carroll Reece, a Tennessee Republican and minority member of the Cox committee. The Reece committee described the Ford Foundation as “empiricist” and “inherently collectivistic” in its projects in the behavioral and social sciences and argued that the ideas for which Ford provided philanthropic support were incompatible with the American way of life.<sup>83</sup>

The Council was implicated in the congressional investigations primarily through its connection to Graves and the Committee on Far Eastern Studies. First, investigators noted that the IPR and the Council had an interlocking membership, which included Hugh Borton of Columbia’s East Asian Institute; Stephen Duggan of the International Institute of Education; Jerome Greene; Lynn White, president of Mills College; Edwin Embree; and Graves, who was an IPR trustee, from 1943 to 1949, and its vice chairman from 1946 to 1947. Second, investigators noted a memorandum, in which Graves asserted that from 1943 to 1949,

I have been asked by the Council of American-Soviet Friendship to call together a few people in Washington for discussion of a Washington Information Center on the U.S.S.R. I can’t spend any time on the matter myself but am quite willing to get a group together

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<sup>82</sup> McCaughey, *International Studies*, 159–62.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

for lunch. Does this conflict in any way with Russian War Relief plans or anything of that sort? If so, of course, I won't participate. Hope to write something on the other matter tomorrow. Currie [who was a top aide of Franklin D. Roosevelt] is waiting to see John Carter Vincent, just back from Chungking.<sup>84</sup>

Louis Bundenz, an ex-communist, testified that the American-Soviet Friendship organization was "a Communist Front. That [it] was a duplicate...of many other organizations...founded by the Russian apparatus all over the world. They were first known as Friends of Soviet Russia and then became the Council of American-Soviet Friendship, completely controlled by the Communists, as it was created by them." When asked whether the communists organized the staff of the Russian War Relief, Bundenz asserted that it was in fact "organized under orders of the Soviet Embassy." Graves was also cited in connection with an IPR Advisory Committee meeting on March 25, 1946, at Owen Lattimore's home.<sup>85</sup>

Graves was indeed cited numerous times independently of his relationship with the IPR. He was listed as serving on the board of directors of the American Russian Institute, and also because in September 1939 he signed an open letter in *Soviet Russia Today* which called for greater unity of the anti-fascist forces and strengthening of the front against aggression through closer cooperation with the Soviet Union.<sup>86</sup> In addition, investigators cited his role in the

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<sup>84</sup> United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *Institute of Pacific Relations Hearings*. 82<sup>nd</sup> Cong., August 1951 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1972): 630.

<sup>85</sup> John N. Thomas, *The Institute of Pacific Relations: Asians Scholars and American Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1974); also see United States Congress, *Institute of Pacific Relations*, 631; United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *Institute of Pacific Relations Hearings*. 82<sup>nd</sup> Cong., January 1952 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1972): 2248.

<sup>86</sup> United States Congress, Senate, Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws, *Institute of Pacific Relations Hearings*. 82<sup>nd</sup> Cong., March 1952 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1972): 4019 for

organization of financial support for the legal defense of John Carter Vincent, who was considered a Marxist Asian scholar, and for his connection with John King Fairbank, the pioneer of Asian studies in the U.S. and a critic of U.S. policy in the Far East. Finally, he was cited as a sponsor of the Citizens' Committee to Free Earl Browder, a member of the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship, and the chairman of the Washington Committee for Aid to China.<sup>87</sup> While these organizations included some communist sympathizers, they were dominated by liberal critics of U.S. wartime and postwar policies. Throughout the 1940s, many internationalists both within and outside of the Washington policymaking establishment, advocated stronger alliances with the Soviet Union and Chinese communists, who many believed had a stronger commitment to civil reform and democracy than Chiang Kai-Shek.

Dean Rusk, the president of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1952, was forced to justify foundation funding of Graves and the Council. Rusk testified that grants administered through the Council, but earmarked for Graves, included the following: a 1935 grant for a report on how to increase American understanding of the Far East, a 1936 grant of \$2,750 to allow Graves to study the role of the humanities in international understanding, a 1947 grant of \$1,287 to travel in Great Britain and report on Far Eastern studies there, and a 1948 grant of \$4,000 to travel to Near Eastern countries with a view to formulate a program of Near Eastern studies. Rusk explained that he knew Graves during the Second World War, when he participated in military intelligence and there were intense government efforts to locate expertise in the "weird

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reference to ARI; and 4259, Exhibit 732 for reference to Open Letter.

<sup>87</sup> Dean Rusk, excerpt from Hearings before the Select Committee to Investigate Tax Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations, House of Representatives, 9 December 1952, folder 2538, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2, ACLS Papers, RAC.

languages.”<sup>88</sup> Graves was an expert in area studies and therefore a resource. Rusk focused on the Rockefeller Foundation’s and Council’s long history and important work, explaining that the Council policies were determined by a board of directors, who were themselves responsible to the constituent societies and organizations which composed the Council, and that Rockefeller Foundation’s support grew out of its commitment to the humanities.

Foundation officers were shocked and concerned by repeated inquiries into Graves’s political reliability. Fahs suggested that the Council “adopt a responsible position on the basis of an inquiry into them, the thoroughness of which was not open to question” and emphasized the need for the learned societies, and not the Rockefeller Foundation, to be associated with determining the Council’s policies and agenda. Fahs explained to Rusk and others that “it was not in the long run a desirable policy for the Foundation to have an organization like the Council wholly dependent upon it and yet technically independent.” He concluded that “if there was no interest from the learned societies and elsewhere to provide a financial basis for [Council] independence, it would be wiser in the long run for the Foundation to expand its own staff in the humanities.”<sup>89</sup>

In a telephone conversation in early 1953, Rusk informed the ACLS director, Charles deKiewiet, that the Rockefeller Foundation needed assurances of Graves’s “political reliability,” asserting that “further consideration of a Foundation grant to the Council would necessarily involve questions about Mr. Mortimer Graves to which we do not have answers.”<sup>90</sup> DeKiewiet

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Charles Burton Fahs, internal memorandum a summarizing conversation with Dean William DeVane, 28 October 1952, folder 2538, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2, Rockefeller Foundation Archive, RAC.

<sup>90</sup> Dean Rusk to [?] Chauncey, 18 June 1953, folder 2538, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2.,

responded that, after some investigations, "I am now in a position to state that the board of directors of the Council has entire confidence in Mr. Graves, in his political reliability and in his integrity towards those scholarly and political values for which the Council stands in the same manner as the Rockefeller Foundation. Mr. Graves has been a pioneer in many fields. The Board considers that Mr. Graves's motives have been constructive and clear."<sup>91</sup>

The McCarthy era investigations and the overall pressures of the Cold War convinced foundations of the merits of a cautious, conservative, and deliberate program of philanthropic support. The Council's fluid and independent approach to intellectual management, characteristic of its interwar programs, was not viable in the postwar years, as the public and private sectors expanded and politicized intellectual administration. The dilemma facing the foundations hinged on how to manage the Council's future. At first, the strategy focused on withholding funds and, between 1952 and 1955, the ACLS's income dropped from \$809,000 to \$122,000.<sup>92</sup> Annual meetings were depressing forums lamenting the state of the ACLS and the humanities in America. Frank Knight, a delegate from the American Economic Association to the annual meeting in 1954, explained that the meeting's primary subject was financial survival. He noted that "the Council's existence is in jeopardy for lack of financial support. At the present meeting there was considerable discussion of the functions of the Council and methods of

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Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. In this memo, Rusk summarizes his phone conversation with de Kiewiet.

<sup>91</sup> Charles de Kiewiet to Dean Rusk, 12 June 1953, folder 2538, box 263, series 200, RG 1.2., Rockefeller Foundation Archives, RAC. This letter also summarizes the phone conversation stating Rusk's request that the Council find answers to the questions raised by Congressional investigators.

<sup>92</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York, "The Long Range Financial Needs of the Council," 23 October 1964, folder 1960-1964, box 21, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

making the need for it appreciated by the foundations or other possible sources of support.”<sup>93</sup>

Benjamin Whiting, from the Medieval Academy of America, complained in 1956 that, at the annual meeting, the “complacent iteration of things well done and to be done is no longer possible.” He said that “of late discussion and soul searching has taken the place of reports, and the Council has asked itself what it ought to do, and what it can do and, perhaps above all, what it must do to make its function so clear to the intelligent and informed public that its value will be recognized and its place assured.”<sup>94</sup>

In the mid-1950s, the Carnegie Corporation created two initiatives aimed at assessing and rejuvenating the ACLS. One was an examination of the Council and the findings were presented in a report entitled “Confidential Report: American Council of Learned Societies.” The other was the creation of the Commission on the Humanities which attempted to develop a long-term strategy for the ACLS and the humanities.<sup>95</sup> The Confidential Carnegie Report was a candid twenty-seven page study of the ACLS and provides insight into the foundations’ perspective on the Council’s failures, successes, and future. It is interesting to note that the Report was generally enthusiastic about the Council’s initiatives. The authors asserted that several of the ACLS committees were regarded as highly “worthwhile,” including the committees on the language program, the history of religion, Slavic studies, American civilization, and musicology. Finally, it conceded that the organization should logically focus on fellowships and grants, but that “the Council in recent years has been so curtailed by lack of financial support that it is not

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<sup>93</sup> Frank Knight, “Report of Our Representative to the American Council of Learned Societies,” *American Economic Review* 45, no. 2 (May 1955): 692.

<sup>94</sup> B. J. Whiting, “Report of the Delegate to the American Council of Learned Societies,” *Speculum* 31 no. 3 (July 1956): 557.

<sup>95</sup> Annestad to Gardner and Perkins, “Confidential Report.”

now carrying on certain activities all unanimously regarded as essential to the functioning of a national humanistic organization. These include: fellowship program and grants-in-aid.”<sup>96</sup> The internal Carnegie Corporation report also suggested that the ACLS’s administrative structure was adequate:

The general opinion is that the diversity of membership, which at first glance looks irrational, presents both a problem and an opportunity. The problem is to find in this diversity enough common ground to develop [a] cohesive program. The opportunity is the influence that this broad membership provides against scholarly compartmentalization. In the main, opinion is that diversity of agency affiliation presents no absolutely urgent problem; that under certain circumstances this situation has many potential advantages; the exclusion of present affiliates would raise more problems than it would solve.<sup>97</sup>

The Report concluded that “the structure, agency affiliation, and constitution of the Council offers no present problem of seriously urgent priority.”<sup>98</sup> The board of directors received an equally positive assessment: it was noted that the senior participants were described as being “respected” and “conscientious,” and that “despite all the Council’s problems and discouragements, it has enlisted and maintains the active interest of able humanistic minds.”<sup>99</sup>

According to the Carnegie Corporation, the Council’s primary weakness was its executive committee, which was directed by Graves. The report concluded that “the views vary from extremely favorable...to extremely unfavorable as to [Graves’] leadership ability.” The author of the Report described Graves as “the embodiment of the accumulated frustration of the

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 18.

humanities.”<sup>100</sup> Frederick Burkhardt, the president of Bennington College at that time and a member of the advisory board, explained in his oral history that the Council’s executive staff was not “terribly competent” and that “Graves...had been with the ACLS almost since its beginning...The new phase that the country was entering didn’t, somehow, jibe with the function of the ACLS as of that period.”<sup>101</sup> Burkhardt argued that the foundations considered the current staff of the Council second-rate and stodgy, but that, with a personnel and administrative reorganization, there was the possibility that the Council could be revitalized.<sup>102</sup>

The 1954 Carnegie Corporation report concluded that an organization like the Council was necessary. After all, “scholarly societies require some instrument and voice for national representation and instrument for inter-communication” and “there is the practical need for a national humanistic organization in light of such concrete national problems as the Fulbright program and the intellectual manpower situation.” According to the Report, financial support for the Council, however, was not to be provided in 1956, but at the “target date of 1958, which is Graves’s retirement.” Carnegie Corporation officers concluded that “the Council should be otherwise enabled to limp along until the new leadership is secured. This new leadership should be assured of adequate central support for a minimum of ten years, and preferably should be provided with a small endowment equivalent to that possessed by the SSRC.”<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> *The Reminiscences of Frederick Burkhardt* (17 October 1968), p. 16, in the Oral History Collection, Rare Books and Special Collections, Columbia University Library, New York.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>103</sup> Annestad to Gardner and Perkins, “Confidential Report.”

The other Carnegie Corporation activity that laid the groundwork for a newly funded Council was the Commission on the Humanities, which was headed by Howard Mumford Jones. Burkhardt asserted that the Carnegie Corporation hoped Jones would “handle this crisis and get [the Council] out of it.”<sup>104</sup> The Commission included prominent figures from both the academic and nonacademic world, such as Pendleton Herring from the Social Science Research Council, Robert Oppenheimer, Francis Henry Taylor, Whitney Oates, vice chairman, and Harvey Branscomb and William DeVane both of Rockefeller Foundation.<sup>105</sup> The Commission participants agreed that something similar to the Council had to exist, but the question was who was to staff it.<sup>106</sup>

Perhaps Graves unwittingly sealed his fate in 1956, when he complained to the Carnegie program staff about the Commission and Jones. John Gardner, then president of the Carnegie Corporation, responded: “I think we should continue to recess our conversations until the Council’s internal problems are resolved. That is, only chairmanship should approach the foundation.” In response, Graves made the following statement:

when and how did anyone acquire the right to tell you whom you should see and whom you shouldn’t? That is your decision...If I were in your shoes, my first reaction to any attempt at a gag-rule would be to ask what it was that the boys did not want me to know...Personally, I really do not care very much. Anybody who proposes to do anything about the humanities and does not ask me is foolish; I’ve seen all the things that people think about in the first twenty minutes that they’ve thought about the subject. If my experience is not of any use to you, I have no desire whatever to urge it. I simply wanted to be certain that the decision is yours, not mine.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> *Reminiscences of Frederick Burkhardt* (17 October 1968), p. 17.

<sup>105</sup> Carnegie Corporation of New York to Howard Mumford Jones, 18 July 1955, folder Commission on the Humanities 1954–1955, box 19, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, for discussion on the Commission on the Humanities.

<sup>107</sup> Mortimer Graves to John Gardner, 24 September 1956, folder 1956–1957, box 20,

Within days of his sending this letter, the board of directors punished Graves by forcing him to take a sabbatical leave for one year beginning January 1, 1957, after which time he was to retire.<sup>108</sup> In the 1957 issue of *Bulletin—ACLS*, the Council leadership tried to minimize the conflict with Graves by asserting that “fully cognizant of Mr. Graves’s contributions to the Council, the Board wished to signalize its appreciation by honoring him with a year’s sabbatical leave at full salary preceding his retirement.”<sup>109</sup>

In January 1957, the ACLS held its annual meeting at the Hotel Roosevelt in New York City. There, the Commission on the Humanities issued a number of recommendations, which included moving the administrative offices from Washington, D.C. to New York City.

Burkhardt explained that,

we decided to move to New York—there again, down in Washington we were out of the stream. The only time we ever saw foundation people was when we wanted money, and this is not a good situation. It’s much better to live with them and know them, and talk about other things, until they get a notion of what kind of people you’ve got. So we moved into these quarters, and from that time on the ACLS budget was steadily increased each year. We’ve been able to get project money without too much difficulty.<sup>110</sup>

The strengthened relationship with the foundations, and the departure of Graves translated into new funds. The Ford Foundation provided the Council with \$2,600,000 to

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ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>108</sup> Howard Mumford Jones to John Gardner, 8 October 1956, folder 1956–1957, box 20, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.

<sup>109</sup> For the conflict between Graves, Council members, and the Carnegie Corporation see John Gardner and Jim Perkins, internal memorandum, 25 November 1955, folder 1955, box 404, ACLS Papers, CCNY Arch.; as well as folders focused on 1956–1957.

<sup>110</sup> *The Reminiscences of Frederick Burkhardt* (17 October 1968), p. 18.

operate area and language studies initiatives, while the Carnegie Corporation of New York contributed \$500,000 for fellowships and general.<sup>111</sup>

## Conclusion

The postwar history of area studies and cultural diplomacy, and indeed of the Council itself as a maturing bureaucratic institution, is rich in complexity. In the case of area studies, the public sector built upon the interwar intellectual and institutional efforts of foundations, universities, and academics. Although Cold War pressures increased both public and private funding, the decision as to what constitutes the intellectual content of area studies initiatives remained largely in academic hands. In the case of cultural diplomacy, by contrast, Cold War realignments intensified the political exploitation of a prewar internationalist ideal of mutual cultural understanding, further undermining the Progressive nonpolitical approach to internationalism advocated by the founding members of the Council. In fact, this first generation of institution builders and academic activists fell victim to the increasing intolerance toward intellectual and political diversity that emerged during the early years of the Cold War and the push to build a more professional, bureaucratic organization capable of administering large-scale academic initiatives.

The complexity of this postwar narrative is instructive on several accounts. First, it demonstrates that the principal difference which distinguishes the prewar organizational type from that which evolved in the early postwar era reflected less an intellectual shift than it did a political and institutional one. The administrative reorganizations of 1946 and 1957 hinged on

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<sup>111</sup> Warner Wellman, "Report of the Representative to the American Council of Learned Societies," *American Sociological Review* 22, no. 6 (Dec. 1957): 745–6; and Carnegie Corporation of New York, "The Long Range Financial Needs of the Council."

whether the ACLS could transition from a small-scale, patrician organization dominated by individual personalities to a more rational, bureaucratic institution with an executive leadership compatible with foundations and the political ideology of the era—which was not on the intellectual agenda of the ACLS itself. The Council’s original leadership was replaced; the informal *Bulletin—ACLS* was turned into the more professional *Annual Report*; and the organization moved its offices from Washington, D.C. to New York City, in order to develop closer ties with the foundations. But despite these changes, the ACLS remained focused on promoting scholarship at the graduate and post-doctoral levels and continued to participate in public internationalist initiatives, such as the Fulbright program and UNESCO.

Second, the postwar history of the ACLS highlights the fact that the expansion of public operations during the Cold War was, to a great extent, shaped by existing institutional and intellectual arrangements. The federal government’s administrative and intellectual lack of experience with the humanities, and particularly with education, allowed area studies to remain securely rooted in the private academic community, whereas the government’s relative strength in the arena of international relations left cultural diplomacy vulnerable to the shifting political winds of the public sector. Third, the postwar history of the Council illustrates that public–private partnerships were often temporary alliances to achieve particular aims (such as the development of linguistic expertise) and did not necessarily imply a larger symmetry of interests.

Finally, the Council’s history suggests something about the gradual transformation of higher education after World War II. Geopolitical strategic concerns spurred public and private financial investments in the humanities and sciences in the postwar period. Critics today are quick to emphasize the extent to which these new financial influences have retarded educational growth and compromised academic integrity. In “The Marketplace of Ideas,” however, Louis

Menand notes that, more importantly, these postwar investments fueled the proliferation of knowledge and the rise of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary intellectual trends, which in turn contributed to a breakdown of traditional academic disciplines, and a backlash against scientism and the vocabulary of facts and disinterested expertise.<sup>112</sup> These intellectual trends ultimately produced new knowledge and analytical critiques of American imperialism, racism, and capitalism. Undoubtedly the original postwar advocates for the expansion of higher education did not anticipate the rise of such critiques. The Council's history contributes to Menand's interpretation by demonstrating that interdisciplinary and multicultural trends were emerging among the modernizing, progressive, and forward-looking wing of the American academic community in the interwar years, but that the Cold War played a decisive role accelerating these intellectual realignments.

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<sup>112</sup> Louis Menand, "The Marketplace of Ideas," ACLS Occasional Paper, no. 49 (2001); available from <http://www.acls.org/op49.htm>, Internet, accessed 20 February 2003; Roger Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

## CONCLUSION

My intention in this study was to use the historical development of the American Council of Learned Societies as a means to explore larger intellectual and institutional changes from the 1920s through the early years of the Cold War. The ACLS emerged from the efforts of a fledgling group of marginal academics, who, over the course of several decades, ultimately succeeded in creating the nation's foremost humanities organization. Drawing on natural and social science paradigms, the architects of this federation argued that the humanities could be strategically employed to reform and improve American society. In so doing, they articulated a moral vision for the humanities—namely, that the humanities represented the collective history and wisdom of mankind, and that a positivist intellectual agenda (rooted in the nonpolitical private sector) would challenge the traditional discourse of power politics and promote international understanding and world peace. To achieve these ambitious ends, the ACLS cultivated a national network of forward-looking scholars and established the broad intellectual framework for area studies and cultural diplomacy, in order to develop sorely needed knowledge of the nonwestern world and to improve American relations abroad. Despite persistent struggles with financial stability, institutional leadership, and program development, the ACLS successfully served as the nation's most important representative of, and advocate for, the humanities, bridging the divide between academia and the government, as America was emerging as a leading world power in the twentieth century.

At the same time, the Council's history contributes to the study of public and private partnerships in the U.S. Although private individuals and organizations have contributed to public governance since the nation's founding, the character of public-private partnerships has

changed significantly over time. In the colonial era, charitable giving often tended to be parochial and small-scale, whereas, in the nineteenth century, it became increasingly systematic and oriented toward broader social advocacy. By the Progressive Era, reformers adopted a more professional approach, shifting from partisan advocacy to the promotion of scientific and liberal reform on a national scale. The interplay between governmental functions and specialized knowledge intensified between the interwar years and the beginning of the Cold War when public-private partnerships grew more complicated and entrenched. World War II led to an expansion of the role of academics in policymaking, increased funding for universities and colleges, and a broader interest in nonwestern studies and cultural initiatives. Instead of returning to interwar isolationism and limited government, the postwar period experienced rapid federal growth and the rise of a new cadre of professional organizations, think tanks, and lobbying groups. Whereas associations in the Progressive Era tended to reject partisan politics in favor of an ideal of disinterested expertise, these post-World War II nongovernmental organizations were often (implicitly or explicitly) more politicized and ideological.<sup>1</sup>

Detailed examination of the Council's early history up to 1957 serves several purposes. First, it provides an opportunity to examine this pioneering organization's institutional and intellectual legacy, particularly its role in moving the humanities away from a traditional focus on antiquity and high culture toward greater emphasis on contemporary social problems, underdeveloped academic fields, and diverse geographic regions. This transformation was

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<sup>1</sup> Donald Critchlow, "Think Tanks, Antistatistism, and Democracy: The Nonpartisan Ideal and Policy Research in the United States, 1913–1987," in *The State and Social Investigation in Britain and the United States*, ed. Michael Lacey and Mary Furner (Cambridge, England: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 279–322; and James A. Smith, *The Idea Brokers: Think Tanks and the Rise of the New Policy Elite* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

spurred in part by the intellectual ascendancy of the social sciences, the widespread search for practical knowledge, the changing needs of the federal government, and the efforts of internationalists, academics, and foundations to ground national political decision-making in advanced expert knowledge. Second, the history of the ACLS lends unique insight into the evolving relationship between the public and private spheres during the twentieth century, as well as into the intellectual, political, and institutional tensions underlying this relationship. Although the public and private sectors shared common interests in using area knowledge and cultural understanding to promote international peace, there was significant division about how to develop and implement specific initiatives. Finally, the history of the Council represents a historically informative backdrop against which to evaluate current scholarly approaches to the role of academics and nongovernmental organizations in governance, which too often criticize or blindly celebrate such public-private partnerships.

### **Historical Legacies and Lessons**

At first glance, the Council's legacy appears to be characterized largely by contradiction and failure. For instance, while the ACLS's rhetoric was consistently liberal and democratic, it remained a conservative academic organization: its leadership (and its membership) was dominated by northeastern white men with ties to elite universities and foundations, and its grant programs overwhelmingly benefited the same circle of elites. In addition, the ACLS emerged in the early twentieth century as an enthusiastic proponent of the Progressive Era ideal of building an independent class of experts who would use specialized, scientific knowledge to reform public institutions and civil society. This ideal, however, came under strain as the reality of governance, which involved partisanship and nationalism, clashed against the rigors of developing academic and scientific expertise, which mandated objectivity and political

independence. Activist humanities scholars experienced this tension first-hand. Academic members of the National Board for Historical Service, for example, were torn between their professional obligation toward scholarly objectivity and their desire to produce strategically useful knowledge during the First World War. Similarly, interwar internationalists failed in their pursuit of the Progressive Era aspiration to promote peace through mutual cultural understanding, in part because they remained too wedded to traditional academic paradigms. The ACLS leadership consistently defined the principal challenges of the twentieth century as intellectual (and hinging on Americans' lack of global knowledge) and seemed to ignore militarization of Europe and Asia in the 1930s. Rather than confronting these challenging global problems, the ACLS devised a program for creating academic tools for advanced research and defined the pursuit of practical and relevant knowledge so broadly as to include the study of Asian antiquities. As the world drifted again toward widespread conflict, the International Union of Academies, for instance, focused on the creation of scholarly dictionaries and encyclopedias, and the International Committee of Historical Sciences sponsored traditional academic conferences with a dizzying array of lectures and no overarching themes. Interwar internationalists' idealism about, and their blindness to the constraints of, a purely scholarly approach to promoting world peace undermined their efforts for following years.

Progressive Era ideals suffered the most significant strain during the Second World War, as government officials increasingly relied on academic and cultural organizations for expertise. The comingling of private academic activities with national public initiatives proved controversial and divisive—academics criticized the Army Specialized Training Program as ineffective because it lacked intellectual depth, whereas cultural diplomacy purists clashed with

the State Department over the definition of relevant knowledge, the character and function of academic programs, and the rising wartime pressure to adopt politically strategic initiatives.

Moreover, greater cross-over between public and private activities tarnished the reputation of academics earned in the Progressive Era as objective and nonpolitical. Postwar tension with the Soviet Union and debate over who lost China so politicized the nation's public discourse that, by the early 1950s, scholarly freedom was increasingly seen as serving as a cover for un-American ideas. The laissez-faire world of the interwar years, when academics, professional organizations, and foundations operated freely and independently, was replaced by a more cautious, savvy, and larger scale-network of public and private institutions. The ACLS experienced this change as dramatically as any institution. Foundations abandoned the ACLS because its institutional leadership represented an earlier generation of idealistic academic managers and because of its association with interwar internationalist institutions, such as the Institute of Pacific Relations and the American Russian Institute. In sum, the Council's survival hinged not so much on its intellectual agenda as on its executive offices. Finally, the Progressive Era ideal of the independent expert was undermined further in the following decades as critics of national policies increasingly argued the political (as opposed to the bipartisan and objective) nature of scholarly contributions to governance. Critics from the left argued that academic institutions were essentially conservative and promoted American nationalism, while those on the right charged the liberal academy with undermining American security, culture, and social values.

Despite these contradictions and inconsistencies, the Council's history highlights a number of important historical points. First, it demonstrates the importance of intellectual and institutional commitments in shaping larger bureaucratic relationships. The ACLS was

committed to the Progressive Era ideal of objective, politically neutral knowledge and embraced a scholarly (as opposed to a nationalist or policy-oriented) intellectual agenda. The ACLS was an early supporter of such traditional humanities fields as Renaissance and medieval studies, and even its area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives were more scholarly than practical. Despite the intellectual and political challenges posed by the Second World War and the Cold War, the federation continued to serve as a staunch advocate for the academic and humanities community. While today we might wonder whether greater practical academic intelligence might have averted the mid-century political catastrophes, the experience of Asian specialists during World War II and the early Cold War confirms that academic knowledge will be of little policy value if the political culture is corrupted by ideologues.

The importance of intellectual and institutional commitments in shaping larger bureaucratic relationships is also relevant to understanding the history of the humanities. Historian Winfried Fluck recently complained that the humanities have been “Americanized” by the competitive academic marketplace, and that the proliferation of knowledge is shaped less by a desire to contribute to understanding than by scholars’ individual pursuit of professional success. He concludes that America’s intellectual contributions are not in the form of high quality content, but rather in perfecting the competitive model for knowledge production. While Fluck examines the post-World War II professionalization of the humanities, and its negative intellectual and cultural consequences, the ACLS’s history suggests that the development of the humanities is tied to larger institutional and intellectual arrangements dating back to the nation’s federalist roots. The popular fear of politicized knowledge, the idealization of private sector

activities, and the federal government's need for expertise have allowed academic institutions to remain defiant about adopting more pragmatic and utilitarian approaches.<sup>2</sup>

Second, the Council's history demonstrates the extent to which the character and strengths of the state have shaped the role of nongovernmental organizations. The federal government's lack of experience in developing advanced academic knowledge made it more dependent on the Council, foundations, and universities, while its relative strength in the arena of diplomacy allowed it to play a more dominant role in cultural initiatives. The federal government's more active role, however, generated intense institutional and political conflict rather than greater clarity and leadership. Even before the Second World War, the Division of Cultural Relations became a site for competing definitions of the role of internationalism and mutual understanding. Traditionalists such as Waldo Leland argued in favor of more idealistic goals and against advocates of a political approach. Although Leland and others lost the struggle with the Division, their idealistic arguments continued to exert influence over postwar developments.

Third, the Council's history highlights the extent to which nongovernmental organizations have been an important component of public sector bureaucratic expansionism. The tradition of American federalism inhibited the growth of strong national bureaucracies and, when the public sector expanded, it did so through a process of collaboration and competition with existing institutional actors. The public sector relied on the Council's intellectual network and operational experience, and its initiatives (e.g., the Army Specialized Training Program, the Division of Cultural Relations, the National Defense Education Act, and the Fulbright program)

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<sup>2</sup> Winfried Fluck, "The Modernity of America and the Practice of Scholarship," in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of

drew upon the program precedents and the priorities of nongovernmental organizations. Thus, wartime and Cold War intellectual and cultural programs reflected the competing political values of Progressive Era internationalists as well as the short-term policy goals of the public sector.

The history of the ACLS also suggests that nongovernmental organizations provided viable intellectual and political alternatives to the dominant discourses of the twentieth century: in the interwar years, it challenged the prevailing American isolationism, while during the Cold War it struggled against rising nationalist pressures to politicize intellectual and cultural initiatives. Its role in articulating a dissenting discourse is linked to the fact that it dealt with precisely those issues that have historically fallen outside the scope of traditional commercial and public sector activities, which, in this case, are intellectual and cultural initiatives. The Council developed its institutional agenda through collaboration with academics, philanthropic foundations (which had a global perspective), and the international community, including European, Latin American, and Asian cultural and intellectual organizations. Its programs reflected the political culture of these diverse and often marginalized groups and, as such, it enriched and shaped American political discourse.<sup>3</sup>

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California, 2002): 343–66,

<sup>3</sup> Akira Iriye explores the role of nonstate actors in dealing with those issues that fall outside the traditional public and commercial arenas and persuasively argues that nongovernmental organizations ultimately play a vital and unexamined role in shaping political culture and policies. See Akira Iriye, “Internationalizing International History,” in *Rethinking American History in a Global Age*, ed. Thomas Bender (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002): 47–62.

## Historiographical Debate

The history of the Council also contributes to the current historiographical debate surrounding ways to interpret the increasingly close and interdependent relationship between the public and private sectors. The terms of the current debate are largely divided along political lines. On the left, critics make two interrelated but distinct arguments regarding the intellectual integrity of public–private collaboration. One argument lays out that because public and private sector elites alike seek to preserve status quo control over economic and political resources, the humanities represent simply another means to achieve these hegemonic ends. For such critics, the expansion of area studies and cultural diplomacy initiatives during the Second World War and the Cold War itself reflects the imperialist and nationalist origins of such public–private collaboration. The second argument articulates that, in view of the political roots of area studies and cultural diplomacy, both fields are intellectually tainted and thus neither is a reliable source for objective knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

Even liberal critics, closer to the political center, lament the expansion of public operations because in their view such political inroads compromise the intellectual integrity of program initiatives and their architects. Robert McCaughey argues, for example, that the modern concentration of intellectual authority within a tight-knit community of foundations, universities, and research institutes has undermined the more democratic elements of the nineteenth-century system in which knowledge about Asia was shared among a diverse, loosely organized community of missionaries, activists, intellectuals, and commercial interests. Similarly, Frank Ninkovich argues in his highly influential and important book, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S.*

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<sup>4</sup> A fuller discussion of left-oriented historiographical debates appears in the dissertation's Introduction citations, 10–13.

*Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950*, that cultural diplomacy has effectively been transformed into a political tool, while the agenda of interwar internationalists has been eclipsed.<sup>5</sup>

Leftist and liberal critics thus impugn public–private collaboration in the humanities by suggesting that scholarly participation in politics necessarily reflects political co-optation and intellectual corruption. As the history of the ACLS demonstrates, however, that simplistic position is problematic for several reasons. First, it ignores the extent to which private sector individuals and program precedents initially shaped public sector initiatives in area studies and cultural diplomacy. That is, the expansion of public sector operations relied on private sector initiatives. Second, it ignores the fact that area studies originated not from the Cold War or even World War II, but from Progressive Era ideals during the interwar years, when academic expertise, and particularly the humanities, were considered irrelevant to contemporary policy debates about democracy and foreign policy. Furthermore, early proponents of area studies and cultural diplomacy struggled against political inroads and successfully retained core elements of their academic roots. Third, the position of leftist critics hinges on an antiquated and romantic image of the turn-of-the-century public intellectual who operated independently from the small federal government. These liberal critics imply that academics—prior to their being tied to the public sector—were politically neutral and within reach of that noble dream of objectivity. This argument, however, cannot withstand scrutiny, as scholars have always been shaped by their intellectual and political commitments. Academic professional standards serve as vital

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<sup>5</sup> Robert McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); and Frank Ninkovich, *Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938–1950* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

safeguards—and not guarantees—against the use of academic knowledge for primarily ideological purposes.

Fourth, these critics have strategically avoided assessing the intellectual impact of collaboration among foundations, universities, and the federal government precisely because there is scant evidence that intellectual content has been dramatically impacted. Although public sector advocates clearly hope to achieve political goals, the content of area and cultural initiatives remains largely managed by the academic communities and continues to reflect—for better or worse—the interests of scholars. Avoiding rigorous analysis of program impact, critics of area and cultural initiatives focus on increasing collaboration between the public and private sectors over the course of the twentieth century, instead, they merely assume that this collaboration has resulted in political co-optation and intellectual bankruptcy.

The Council's history also challenges those scholars who argue that the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations (and collaborative public-private initiatives) simply reflect a logical response to increasing social, economic, and political complexity. Proponents of this approach downplay the extent to which area and cultural initiatives reflected the unique logic and priorities of the philanthropic and intellectual communities, but not necessarily the interests of the public sector. They ignore the heterogeneity of the nonprofit community, the fact that the public and private sectors had competing interests and philosophical commitments, and that they struggled over the substance and direction of their joint initiatives.

A third historiographical camp focuses on the relationship between American federalism and the development of nongovernmental organizations, arguing that private organizations filled the governing void left by the state's limited role. This historiographical camp is diverse: some emphasize federalism's ideological prohibition on public sector activities, while others focus on

the highly decentralized and fragmented federal structure which undermines the development of coherent and strong national policies. Despite the intellectual diversity of this interpretive camp, they would generally agree that the ACLS is an expression of a uniquely American political philosophy and system in which government operations rest significantly on public and private partnerships.<sup>6</sup> The Council's history affirms the importance of federalism as an ideology and political structure—after all, the ACLS was established in 1920 precisely to serve the kind of national role that the federal government did not, and, over the next five decades, it was involved in a range of public and private partnerships. At the same time, however, by analyzing a single institution over several decades, the dissertation demonstrates that public and private partnerships change over time, and that the character of such relationships is highly contextual and reflects the relative compatibility of their interests. Historical generalizations, therefore, must be carefully scrutinized as institutional and intellectual relationships are being constantly contested and reorganized. After all, the humanities were not utterly marginalized or co-opted, nor did nongovernmental organizations serve as loyal partners or zealous opponents of public sector initiatives.

### **Closing Remarks**

Future research in the field of nongovernmental organizations should explore the interrelations between ideas, institutions, and national policies. One possible research project might examine the post-1957 development of area studies. The federal government, foundations,

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<sup>6</sup> Stanley Katz and Barry Karl, "The American Private Philanthropic Foundation and the Public Sphere, 1890–1930," *Minerva* 19 (Summer 1981): 236–70; and Theda Skocpol and John Campbell, *American Society and Politics: Institutional, Historical, and Theoretical Perspective* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1995).

universities, and professional associations have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in area studies over the past five decades and, in doing so, have helped change the intellectual landscape of American universities. The question remains, however, whether this investment has indeed resulted in more effective national policies. If not, why? Some anecdotal evidence suggests that despite long-term financial investments, the relationship between area specialists and policymaking continues to be fraught with problems. Warren Cohen, in his seminal monograph *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, alludes to some of these problems in his description of various foreign policy strategies. Cohen observes, for instance, that by the early 1960s specialists in the State Department acknowledged that despite previous claims to the contrary, communist China would remain a formidable presence in Asia for the foreseeable future and that it was not on the verge of collapse, as some Americans had predicted. In an attempt to improve relations with China, the State Department recommended breaking the existing stalemate and implementing a "two-China" policy that recognized the existence of Taiwan (and Chiang Kai-Shek's exiled government) and the communist People's Republic. Both Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson rejected this policy strategy fearing it might be criticized by the public and members of the China Lobby, and might undermine attempts at détente with the Soviets. Instead, the executive branch opted to bolster its anticommunist credentials by pursuing an aggressive program of Chinese containment, typified by the decision to increase the American military presence in Vietnam. Several years later in the mid to late 1960s, China turned inward to focus on the Cultural Revolution and further diminished its already small role supporting the revolutionary forces in Vietnam. While many U.S. government officials agreed that Chinese imperialism and a coordinated international communist movement was not responsible for Vietnam's current political crisis, administration

officials resisted the revision of their foreign policy objectives. Driven by traditional political concerns, such as party loyalty, posterity and legacy, and power politics, they tragically elected to intensify rather than abandon the American military role in Vietnam.<sup>7</sup>

Another potential research project exploring the relationship of specialists to foreign policy decision-making might focus on American policy in Iraq. In a recent *New York Times* article, Eric Schmidt and Joel Brinkley explain that beginning in April 2002, the State Department convened over two hundred experts in seventeen working groups to study the possible aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's government. The State Department's findings included a dire assessment of Iraq's infrastructure and emphasized that the Iraqi people might respond "coolly" to U.S. attempts to rebuild civil society. Schmidt and Brinkley point out that Pentagon officials disregarded the State Department report because it was too "academic" and, as one senior defense official complained, because the Department of Defense has "blinders on" when it comes to policymaking.<sup>8</sup> This article raises the truly frightening specter that perhaps the relationship between intelligence and policymaking is so divided that even members of one political administration are unable to effectively collaborate. It is no exaggeration to view this problem as potentially grave.

This analysis of American policy in China, Vietnam, and Iraq is not meant to serve as an indictment of nonwestern studies or the public and private organizations that supported its proliferation. Rather, the point is to highlight the fact that the relationship between academic and policymaking communities is highly problematic, and to suggest that academic expertise in the

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<sup>7</sup> Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> Eric Schmidt and Joel Brinkley, "State Dept. Study Foresaw Trouble Now Plaguing Iraq," *New York Times*, 19 October 2003, sec. 1, p. 1.

U.S. has a long way to go in terms of informing national policies. Scholars of public–private partnerships, nongovernmental organizations, and the politics of governance must further explore the intellectual and institutional roots of policy debates, the extent to which public and private partnerships fail and why, and identify realistic, practical strategies for informing national policies. Such studies shift scholars away from the search for general laws and trends that govern public and private relationships, and instead focus on providing rigorous analysis of specific issues and problems, and assessing how different intellectual and political sectors are able to collaborate and why.

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ACLS	American Council of Learned Societies
AHA	American Historical Association
<i>Bulletin—ACLS</i>	<i>Bulletin—American Council of Learned Societies</i>
CCNY	Carnegie Corporation of New York
CCNY Arch.	Carnegie Corporation of New York Archives
CIW	Carnegie Institution of Washington
FF Arch.	Ford Foundation Archives
LC	Library of Congress Manuscript Division
NBHS	National Bureau for Historical Service
RAC	Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York
RF	Rockefeller Foundation
WHB	War History Board Archives

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