Propaganda or Public Diplomacy?

An Analysis of American European Policy between 1947-1962

Faculteit Letteren

BA Werkstuk Amerikanistiek

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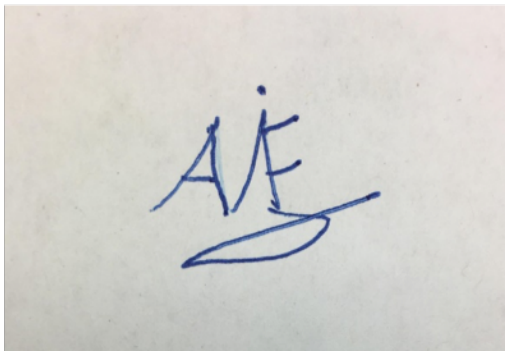

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Page of contents

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to refocus on the soft power terminology of propaganda and public diplomacy that have been coined and developed over the past three decades and have been used interchangeably. This will be done by analyzing American European policy between 1947-1962 using Dr. Cull's six elements with which to distinguish propaganda from public diplomacy: the element of agenda, influence, information, listening, prejudice, and truth. This thesis will analyze at three different originators and a specific but important unit of analysis. This thesis will look at the United States Information Agency and their sports campaigns, the Central Intelligence Agency and Radio Free Europe, and Hollywood and their film productions.

Keywords: Propaganda, Public Diplomacy, USIA, CIA, Hollywood, Dr. Nicholas J. Cull

List of abbreviations

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency

CPI – Committee on Public Information

FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

HNSF – Hungarian National Sports Federation

HUAC – House of Un-American Activities

IES – Institute of Education Sciences

NCFE – National Committee for Free Europe

OWI – Office of War Information

RFE – Radio Free Europe

USIA – United States Information Agency

USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

VOA – Voice of America

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Context

In 1990, Joseph S. Nye, Jr. introduced the term soft power in a *Foreign Policy* article. He worked on his theory further and finally published his book *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics in* 2004. The difference between hard and soft power is that hard power is the ability to coerce using economic or military means (Jones 37), while soft power is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment. "When you get other to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction." (Nye, *American Foreign Policy,* 256)

International relation studies distinguish between two types of power; hard power and soft power. Although not having received its official term until Nye contributed to the field in the early 2000s, hard power has always been acknowledged in academic works and studies pertaining to the Cold War usually applied frameworks based on hard power; this entails a country's use of military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions which forces its subject to act in a way that it would not have otherwise (Wilson 114).

This thesis will analyze American European policy during the timeframe of 1947 and 1962. While it is still debated on, 1947 is generally considered to be the starting point of the Cold War and from that point on, one can observe American government public diplomacy projects. 1962 was the year of the Cuban Missile crisis, which brought tensions to an all-time high. After the crisis was averted, the tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union eased and disarmament talks were initiated. The period 1947-1962 then was a period in which there was little talk or effort to improve relations from both sides, which made public diplomacy all the more important to focus on.

Was American European policy from 1947 to 1962 one of public diplomacy or propaganda?

Political academic works have shifted towards focusing on soft power use during the Cold War since Nye's contributions to the field. Many scholars have thus far described the ways in which the United States has attempted to influence the opinions of the foreign public through mass media. They predominantly use two terms for this phenomenon: public diplomacy and propaganda. Dr. Nicholas J. Cull explains that propaganda is selective of truth, a one-way monologue, listens in order to target, intended to influence target, has a tight agenda and assumes others are wrong. Public diplomacy is based on truth, often a dialogue, listens in order to learn, can influence the originator, has a flexible agenda and tends to be respectful towards others. Furthermore, he notes that propaganda is a form of public diplomacy and can be part of a broader public diplomatic strategy. (Cull 2013, as cited in Mull and Wallin, 3). Cull has expressed that there is a lack of in-depth analysis of the term public diplomacy in academic works (Cull, *Public Diplomacy; Taxonomies and Histories*, 31). This leads to the term being used interchangeably with propaganda in international relation studies.

Clarifying the distinction will provide us with two things. First, it will give a further clarified image of the concept of propaganda and its role in American history and especially, the Cold War. While most academic literature treats American soft power practices during the Cold War as propaganda, it usually fails to fully explain the terminology used, which leads to the term 'propaganda' being used interchangeably with the term 'public diplomacy'. The clarification of the terminology can help frame future American endeavors in foreign politics and relations Apart from the fact that proper academic literature requires correct terminology, there is a second, more important reason for the necessity of the clarification which this thesis will provide. As long as American practices during the Cold War are not

given a proper terminology, biased research can use terms that do not justify the possibly immoral extent to which American foreign policy makers went to influence the foreign public. The American Security Project, for example, published a so-called factsheet in which they attempt to euphemize American propaganda endeavors. Based on scarce quotes of historical figures, this organization, headed by American military and national security leaders, moralizes the United States' Cold War foreign policy (Mull and Wallin, 1-2). Framing propaganda and public diplomacy during the Cold War will hopefully prevent future academic works to run away with soft power terminology.

By providing an analysis of American foreign policy towards Europe during the early Cold War this thesis will answer the following question: Was American European policy from 1945 to 1962 one of public diplomacy or propaganda?

This thesis hypothesizes that American European policy leaned more towards propaganda.

1.2 Theoretical framework

The terms public diplomacy and propaganda are both forms of soft power. They are used to get others to want the results that its user wants. It is the ability "to shape the preferences of others" (Nye, *Countering the Authoritarian Challenge,* 95). Despite the fact that his recent literature has made it clear that the terms public diplomacy and propaganda are not to be intertwined, they are still used interchangeably in academic works. This occurs for one main reason only: the author of such an academic work does not grasp the distinction between them, although they more often than not they believe there to be one. Propaganda is associated with terms such as manipulation (Wood 381; Velychenko 23), emotion (Stanley 287) and subjectivity (Wimberly 102, 107). Public diplomacy is considered to be more objective and rational and for a while, it was considered to be a euphemism of propaganda

(Sletteland 13). These descriptions are too broad and do not accurately reflect the depth of the term they belong too.

Historian Dr. Nicholas J. Cull has dedicated a vast amount of his work to the study of both propaganda and public diplomacy, sometimes within the context of the Cold War.

Cull has coined six elements which can be used to distinguish propaganda from public diplomacy (Cull, *NATO Public Diplomacy Forum; Propaganda v. Public Diplomacy*, 21). These elements pose six respective questions, which will be answered in the following chapter's analyses.

- The element of agenda: does the originator have a tight or flexible agenda?
- The element of influence: is the dispersed information intended only to influence the target, or is the originator open to be influenced itself?
- The type of information: is the information one-sided or two-sided?
- The element of listening: does the originator of the information listen in order to target or in order to learn?
- The element of prejudice: does the originator assume the target is wrong or not?
- The element of truth: is the dispersed information selective of truth or based on truth?

It is important to note that the originator is not always the same person, entity, branch of government, etc. In fact, this is what makes the defining of propaganda-related activities difficult. Not every originator has the same intentions; which is why further investigation will provide a more rounded image of American foreign activities during the early Cold War. In his essay on the politics of Cold War, Tony Shaw highlights this and adds to it. He points out that oftentimes, people tend to have a conspiratorial view of Western Cold War culture. The fact is, however, that many artists, directors, athletes, actors, etcetera, contributed to the glorification of American values without realizing the state's involvement in their activities.

But although these actors in the United States' diplomacy were not all answering to one entity as puppets on a string, Shaw notes:

"*…the fact that so many people and groups were prepared, unprompted, to write an essay or perform in a play that extolled democracy's values or condemned the Communist way of life is one of the main reasons that official propagandists in the West in the long run held the whip hand over their Eastern competitors."* (Shaw 75)

1.3 Methodology

In the analyses, the overarching term public diplomacy will be used to indicate U.S. policies, until the point that it is clear that the term propaganda is better suitable. Please note that the academic works used or quoted in this thesis will use the terms propaganda and public diplomacy interchangeably to indicate U.S. practices, because, as Cull said, these terms have not been analyzed in depth in academic works.

Five of the six elements Cull uses to distinguish propaganda in public diplomacy deal with the originator. In order to make an apt analysis, we must first chart the originator of each theme of public diplomacy. The United States government was and is very complex in structure. It is not possible to chart the United States government as a whole; not every government department, committee, agency, bureau worked on the execution of foreign policy. This thesis will therefore look at the subsections of the government that have contributed a lot to American foreign policy during the early Cold War. Chapters 2, 3 and 4 will discuss three different originators of public diplomacy: the United States Information Agency (USIA), Hollywood and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In order to perform a clear and orderly analysis, every originator will be studied through a different unit of analysis. There are many areas in which the government implemented public diplomacy

strategies; popular culture, sports, radio, film, art, etc. Due to the limitations of a bachelor thesis, three of the most influential areas will be discussed respectively; sports, Hollywood films and radio.

1.4 Overview of chapters

The second chapter will discuss the USIA's utilization of sport campaigns in American foreign policy strategy. Sports culture and the Olympic Games during the early Cold War is a subject that has been extensively researched and written about in the last years. It will be highlighted because it is an example of a global event which the USIA itself has not orchestrated but has used to its own advantage. This chapter will answer the question: does the framing of the position of American sport meet the required elements with which Cull distinguishes propaganda from public diplomacy?

The third chapter will discuss the role of Hollywood in American foreign policy strategy. The analysis will illustrate the nuances that defined Hollywood's often ambiguous attitude towards public diplomacy. External forces played a major role in the dispersion of Hollywood productions. One of them is the House of Un-American Activities (HUAC); their role was to investigate rumored communist activities within organizations, especially Hollywood. This chapter will answer the question: did Hollywood film productions, dispersed to Europe, meet the required elements with which Cull distinguishes propaganda from public diplomacy?

The fourth chapter dives into the way the CIA performed foreign policy activities through Radio Free Europe (RFE). RFE was established by the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE), a CIA front organization, to broadcast radio programs to specifically Eastern Europe. The chapter will not only give an analysis of RFE's dispersion of information but will also provide additional insight into the reactions of the Eastern European public. This

chapter will answer the question: did the information dispersion by the CIA through Radio Free Europe meet the required elements with which Cull distinguishes propaganda from public diplomacy?

The final chapter will give a final summary and conclusion of the results of the analyses, in addition to a suggestion for further research.

Chapter 2: Celebrating Champions: USIA and American sports

In the second half of the 20th century, sports were a growing phenomenon that was popularized mostly because of sport event broadcasts (Edelman and Young 1-2). Radio and television made it possible for audiences to watch sports matches both national and international. Sports were globalized and developed further as a national pride for many countries. The Olympic Games became more and more popular and for the first time, Cold War rivals USSR and the United States met each other's top athletes in the Summer Games of Helsinki in 1952. In recent years, scholars such as Toby Rider have studied the USIA's activities in the sports world. By using his academic work and that of other authors, this chapter will analyze the origin of the USIA and the public diplomacy practices which they used in the area of sports. This also implicates the USIA's state-private network, which included the National Committee for Free Europe (NCFE) and the USIA-funded Hungarian National Sports Federation (HNSF). This was a sports group where Eastern European athletes could find their refuge and whose goal it was to "deal the greatest possible blows whenever and wherever possible to the communists in the field of sports" (Twilight Warzone, Rider 36).

2.1 The USIA and the state-private network

The roots and techniques of United States Information Agency (1953-1999), the vastest information program of its time, can be traced back to the beginning of the First World War. In 1917, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was founded to gather national and international support for US participation in the war. They used posters, motion pictures, printed and spoken word and campaign tours to gather support. After the war ended, American public reflection led to the dislike and distrust of CPI propaganda. In *The*

Committee on Public Information and the Birth of US State Propaganda, Nick Fischer links the CPI's use of bloody and guilt-inducing imagery to American distrust of both propaganda and the government itself (Fischer 69-70). The Roosevelt administration's approach to war campaigns showed that the administration had heeded the lessons of the CPI's shortcomings. It was essential that the public did not conceive war campaigns as propaganda, especially since propaganda was associated with totalitarian regimes such as Nazi-Germany at the time. The newly established Office of War Information (OWI) therefore believed that the propaganda campaign of the Nazis had to be countered with "the strategy of truth" (State-Private, Rider 4). In order to achieve this, they undertook their "vast educational campaign" in the field of radio and motion pictures, as they believed that would be "immune from criticism" (Fischer 72). In other words: they believed it was harder to detect propaganda messages in radio shows or movies. The OWI campaigns proved to be successful and were hailed by many, among which army General and future president Dwight D. Eisenhower: "without doubt, psychological warfare has proved its right to a place of dignity in our military arsenal" (State-Private Rider, 5). After WWII ended, the information apparatus was dismantled, only to be gradually put together again in 1946, when tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States started to rise again. This time, they were harbored within the State Department under William Benton, the assistant secretary of state for public affairs (5). From 1946 until 1953, the State Department was the main originator of the dispersion of information to Europe, until it was criticized by internal investigators, who advised the recently elected president Eisenhower to adopt a "more measured, positive and honest approach." They also proposed that the State Department work on propaganda projects with private groups, so that the government could not be held responsible. In response to this, Eisenhower moved all operations to the newly established and independent USIA (11). During the Cold War, the USIA worked with multiple private institutions, organizations,

businesses, etc. Acting assistant secretary for Public Affairs noted in 1948 that the US found itself in a battle, which meant that a "total effort" was necessary (12). Rider refers to this as the 'state-private network. This included both existing companies, and front organizations that the State Department and later the USIA had set up themselves. One of the most prominent organizations was the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), a front organization for the CIA. The NCFE took care of some of the political refugees and émigrés that came from Eastern European nations and tried to use them to undermine the Soviet Union. The nature and goal of the committee was quite vague; the first chair of the committee, Joseph Grew, explained its mission in line with the Truman Doctrine: the committee was to help leaders "to continue their stance against communism, anticipating the day when the Iron Curtain will fall and Eastern Europe will be ripe for democratic remaking" (13). Rider offers a different perspective: this private organization was a way the government to fund operations and projects in order to avoid the "restrictions and accountability" that could limit their work's effectiveness (13). Glenn A. Crowther sums up the official goals of the USIA in terms of understanding, informing and influencing foreign public "in promotion of the national interest" (110). It is important to keep in mind that the information programs were part of a campaign of warfare. While the USIA was given the single task of "informational political warfare", the Eisenhower administration was building a far larger campaign including covert actions, diplomatic political warfare, military political warfare and economic political warfare (109).

2.2 Analysis

In the overview of the USIA and its origin, it is clearly demonstrated that the agency was part of a program of warfare. The fact that the information programs were weapons of warfare eliminates the possibility that the USIA was open to be influenced itself. This was

not even possible; there were no European information agencies that dispersed information to the United States. The warfare argument is also applicable to Cull's element of agenda. The agenda was simply to conduct this type of warfare. As a government analyst noted: "…the realization dawned that here was a weapon which could be used in this twilight warzone in which we found ourselves living" (Rider, *Twilight warzone,s* 30). The same then goes for the HNSF, the private organization with which the USIA worked. As stated previously, their goal was to damage Soviet sports. This goal leaves no room for either being influenced or having a flexible agenda.

What about the element of listening? The USIA's aforementioned statement declares that one of their activities is to listen to the foreign public. There is however no academic evidence that the USIA listened to Europe in order to simply learn, without an agenda. Again, the USIA was created with informational warfare in mind. Laura Belmonte paints the following picture in *Selling the American Way:* "U.S. information experts were also quite good at gauging what aspects of American life and culture resonated most with foreign audiences. They carefully tailored their methods and tactics to appeal to different countries and meticulously described aspects of American political, cultural, social and economic life" (6). This demonstrates that the USIA studied and listened to Europe in order to target them effectively. The message with which they targeted was carefully constructed. The USIA's output did not address Europe specifically in their message, but they focused on the differences between American and the Soviet Union.

So how did the USIA handle truth in their sport campaigns? While one of the USIA's official objectives was to tell foreign audiences the "truth", Rider notes that its truth was often flexible (Rider, Twilight Warzone, 4). For example, "US propagandists took great care to explain that the United States Olympic Committee was "self-governing" by soliciting charitable donations from the American public" (32). It was important for public audiences to

perceive American sport as performed recreationally by individual citizens without government interference. Promoting this idea would contrast the image of Communist state-sponsored and monitored sport. Although the U.S. government did not technically interfere with domestic sports, they did fund operations to hurt the performance of Communist sports. This happened mainly through the government-funded NCFE. These operations included helping Eastern-European athletes escape to the west for publicity purposes and funding the HNSF to help them "deal the greatest possible blows whenever and wherever possible to the communists in the field of sports (36)". By 1956, US politicians countered the USIA's claims; they proposed subsidies for US Olympic athletes. While this proposal did not win approval, the government did invest more money in the exposing of corrupt practices of communist sports (Gleaves and Llewellyn 55-56). The many efforts that were taken by the USIA and the state-private network to discredit Communist sport and thus strengthen the image of American athleticism go directly against what the USIA claimed about American sport: "…the information program was particularly keen to demonstrate that the United States was an upstanding affiliate of the Olympic Movement. Propaganda strategists acknowledged that the Games were a globally admired festival driven by a compelling, if largely mythical, mission to make the world a better place through "friendly" athletic competition" (Rider 34).

The USIA went even further in selecting the truth they wanted to present when it came to racial diversity within American sports. One of the Communist's most persistent themes of propaganda was the racial division in the United States. Rider demonstrates how the USIA created "a selective approach to presenting race and sport in American society." In 1957, the USIA released a documentary on African American tennis player Althea Gibson, the only popular black female tennis player in a field that was dominated by white middle-class women (Brown 298). The documentary glanced over her race and the struggles that

came with it and simply focused on her hard work and her achievements, as if they "were a normal by-product of the American way of life" (33). This on-screen ode to African American athletes did not stand alone; the USIA released cartoons, articles and other features portraying African American athletes, including their wealthy income and their bright futures in the United States. "According to US propaganda, sport was in the vanguard of ending racial inequality in America," Rider concludes (Sports, Culture and the Cold War, Rider 21). Melinda Schwenk notes that during the making and presentation of films that promoted black athletes, there were no African Americans involved in the making of the documentaries, nor were African Americans employed by USIA in any major position (118). And of course, the history of African American athleticism tells us a different story of the African American athletic experience. Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, many African American players were (legally) discriminated against in the sports world. Famous tennis pro Arthur Ashe was not allowed to practice or play with white students, nor was he allowed to use the indoor tennis field. Jackie Robinson, the first African American baseball player to participate in the majors, was constantly booed by opposite teams and spectators. In *Race, Riots, and Roller Coasters: The Struggle over Segregated Recreation in America,* history professor Wolcott has described the segregation and bans of swimming areas, which prevented African Americans from practicing swimming, let alone practicing it professionally. Even Althea Gibson herself described her negative experiences in the African American world of sports: "Suddenly it dawned on me that my triumphs had not destroyed the racial barriers once and for all, as I had—perhaps naively—hoped. Or if I did destroy them, they had been erected behind me again" (Gibson and Curtis 76). On State Department-sponsored foreign tours, she found herself in a constant state of self-censoring. She found it a strain "being a Negro with a certain amount of international significance…always trying to say and do the right thing, so that I wouldn't give people the wrong idea of what Negroes are like" (Brown 303).

The glorification of African American athletes without the acknowledgement of the struggles their own country brought upon them perfectly demonstrates the one-sided message that the USIA dispersed to Europe. According to George E. Belch, an advertisement or message is one-sided if the advertiser (or in this case, the originator) does not recognize the inferior attributes of the thing they advertise (Belch). Furthermore, the extensive use of documentaries, feature films, and radio (in the forms of live sport event coverage) is based on the OWI's idea that the use of these aforementioned media are immune to criticism. It is harder to argue the validity of footage of a black woman playing tennis and winning a golden medal than the portrayal of the USSR as a monster on a pamphlet. The use of these media in itself indicates that there is no room for response. The USIA's tendency to push one-sided information is the reason the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) did not want to hand over control of their educational and cultural exchanges to the USIA. Matt Loayza's study of information programs during the 1950s contrasts the hard-lined USIA with the IES. IES officials often ridiculed the USIA's "pre-arranged texts and preferred their own method of allowing foreign contacts to come to their own conclusions. "In their view, the USIA's "informationist" strategy employed static, unsophisticated methods that would inevitably fail" (957).

The element of prejudice is the only element of Cull that cannot be met with an adequate response. While Europe was the target of the information dispersion, the target of the information itself was the USSR. History shows that Europe was simply the recipient of campaigns and information by both the United States and the USSR, whose respective goal was not to judge, but to convince. There are no sources that can tell us about how the USIA regarded European sports, let alone if they were prejudiced against it.

The analysis shows that the fact that the USIA was part of a warfare program resulted in its strict agenda and their inability to be influenced itself. The warfare argument, along with evidence that one of the USIA's core strengths was their ability to develop strategies for specific European countries, lead to the conclusion that the USIA listened in order to target, not in order to learn. The USIA's presentation of moralistic American sports does not paint the full picture when one takes a look at U.S. covert operations to hurt communist sports, and the hardship and disillusion that African American athletes faced. The selective truth presented by the USIA thus leads to the additional conclusion that the information the USIA dispersed was one-sided. Finally, there is not much to be said about the element of prejudice; there is no indication that the USIA treated Europe and European sports with some sort of prejudice.

Chapter 3: Entertaining and Educating the Masses: Radio Free Europe and the CIA

A short research into the actions of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) during the Cold war quickly results into stories of which it is hard to determine whether they are applicable to a thesis project. Over the years, many ex-CIA employees have written accounts of the tasks they performed that would immediately qualify as propaganda activities, such as the planting of fake news (McGehee 180-181). Further investigation into the CIA's foreign policy activities demonstrates that even today's CIA is reluctant when it comes to sharing early Cold War documents. Even though the number of restrictions for accessing CIA files has been reduced, documents on CIA operations "remain episodic, heavily sanitized and fragmentary" (Osgood 86). Without disqualifying similar accounts of CIA stories, the lack of evidence and/or the obstacles the CIA placed before academics to restrict access to CIA documentation force this thesis to only focus on the information that qualifies as academic work. That being said, this chapter's required research did provide valuable analyses and findings, especially when it comes to CIA operations in the field of radio broadcasting.

One of CIA's most successful foreign policy projects, Radio Free Europe (RFE), was transmitted to European countries, particularly in the east of Europe. This chapter will discuss the extent to which the CIA's public diplomacy goals were pushed into the RFE and will analyze the station and its output using Cull's requirements.

3.1 The CIA and Radio Free Europe

In 1947, the US government implemented a structural change that reorganized the foreign policy and military establishment through the National Security Act. Through this, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was established. While their official goal was to gather intelligence to help shape American foreign policy, the CIA was often working behind

the scenes of major public diplomacy projects (Becker 26). In his book, Gregory Mitrovich cleverly notes that the CIA is oftentimes considered to be "rogue", as if operating outside of the US government's control (178). This notion partly stems from CIA controversies that have shocked the public; the human rights violations at Guantanamo Bay or Project MKUltra, popularly known as the CIA's "mind control experiments". The latter included the enforcing of psychoactive drugs and electroshocks upon unwilling candidates, some of whom were American citizens. The revelation came in 1975, but most of the incriminating documents had been destroyed by then during Watergate. Of course, any organization whose livelihood depends on secrecy naturally sparks the imagination. Mitrovich thus emphasizes on the fact that the CIA was part of the central government and its covert action and psychological warfare played essential parts in the execution of American foreign policy. For example, almost all of the security strategists of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations were eager to implement certain CIA techniques into their foreign policies (10).

Most of the public diplomacy efforts the CIA performed was the covert funding of so-called front organizations that were established to combat communist influences in Europe. Radio Free Europe was one of the most successful of these projects. The RFE was established by the National Committee for a Free Europe (the CIA front organization) in 1949. Because one of the NCFE's priorities were Eastern-European émigrés, the RFE was mostly focused on and broadcast to Eastern-Europe. The RFE's programs would often feature Eastern-European refugees that had defected to the United States to inspire anti-communism among Eastern-Europeans. While the RFE claimed to be a private and independent radio station, it was founded by a CIA front organization and it was secretly funded by the CIA as well. NCFE officials went far to maintain the illusion; from 1950-1952, they organized the so-called Crusade for Freedom to ask the American public for money. Americans were asked to pay "Truth Dollars" to help free the countries that were pressured by the Soviet rule. The

total collected funds of 2.5 million dollars were not even enough to cover the costs of campaigning. Not that it would have mattered; the NCFE remained covertly sponsored by the government.

Although the policy of RFE was to not incite any revolt within the Soviet Union or its satellite states, tensions rose high when the Hungarian Revolution came about in the fall of 1956. During the first half of the 1950s, the CIA had used the NCFE to fund Eastern European émigrés (Osgood 93). The rebel leaders of the Hungarian Revolution claimed that the broadcasts of especially the RFE had incited rebellion against the Soviet Union, despite what the radio station may have claimed otherwise (74). In any case, this incident confirmed what the US government had begun to realize: a possible war with the Soviet Union was not worth the possible independence of Eastern Europe. By the end of 1956, the United States government had started to move away from a liberation policy towards a less controversial promotion of "peaceful evolution" (Belmonte 73). This example does demonstrate the effectiveness of Radio Free Europe, at least in the eyes of Soviet leaders. The fact that the KGB spent much time and money in trying to jam RFE broadcasts in Eastern Europe demonstrates this as well.

Another radio station with which the CIA and RFE collaborated was The Voice of America (VOA). It was founded during the Second World War in a first-time American effort to influence foreign publics overseas by radio in order to combat Nazi propaganda. Its position was more centralized within the US government; it was created by the Office of the Coordinator of Information in 1941, transferred to the Office of War Information (OWI) in 1942 and transferred to the USIA in 1953. The VOA was funded directly by the US government, unlike Radio Free Europe, and had therefore certain governmental restrictions. The VOA was not controlled by CIA funds but was still part of the CIA's foreign policy strategy. Belmonte demonstrates the "fluidity" of the radio networks by showing that many

officials had worked for both the USIA and CIA front organizations (41). The analysis of the CIA's foreign policy will however be performed using the RFE as unit of analysis, but the background information on the VOA will help paint the picture of the relationship between radio and the CIA. For example, the VOA and the RFE secretly collaborated to undermine any unpleasant changes within domestic politics that effected the VOA (43). The most extensive collaboration between the CIA, RFE and the VOA, was based on the idea of Jazz Diplomacy. Famous jazz musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong were broadcast on the VOA and the RFE to "bring the sound of freedom" all over the world. Promoting jazz music to Eastern Europe had two benefits; the United States would display their rich cultural heritage and would counter the Soviet Union's claims that the United States was dealing with immense racial issues (Dillard 39).

The RFE remained funded by the CIA after 1962, until an exposé by *The New York Times* and *Ramparts* exposed the covert funding to the public and sparked outrage. The scandal led to questions; was the RFE an independent station or a tool of propaganda? (Byrne 213)

3.2 Analysis

Of the three originators discussed in this thesis, the USIA, Hollywood and the CIA, the CIA has spent the most effort in listening to the public reaction and analyzing it. This proved to be most difficult during the early Cold War, when physical access to the USSR was at its most limited. The department of Evaluation and Research within the RFE developed fully during the 1970s, but even then, the restrictions limited the extent to which the RFE could analyze listeners' reactions (Siefert 368). While the newly established RFE tried to learn about Eastern Europe through government intelligence (Nickels), most information about the respective countries would come from the émigrés that joined the NCFE. They had the knowledge of their countrymen's background, idiom and psychology and used it when

they worked at or hosted RFE broadcasts (369). The collaboration between American radio makers and émigrés made for an interesting program; the station was careful not to come across as "Americans broadcasting to the Eastern Europeans", unlike the typically American "feel and sound" that characterized the VOA. Eastern European listeners were supposed to be able to identify themselves with the programming. This way, the RFE could establish a trustworthy image in countries where the Soviet Union spread an image of untrustworthy Americans. Anna Grutza, scholar of media and culture, therefore defined the RFE broadcasts as "American in form, but national in content" (483). One of the themes that RFE used to attract the Eastern European public with was religion; in *Religion and Public Diplomacy* (2013), Daniel Hall describes the collaboration between the Catholic Church and the Polish section of Radio Free Europe. RFE would air faith-based programs with masses and sermons, with a Polish priest functioning as RFE's "spiritual director" (29-30). The music that was aired was also different for the respective countries. The RFE section of Czechoslovakia, for example, created an orchestra with the help of Czechoslovakian émigrés to play specific genres of classical and folk music. The goal here was to "build a sense of patriotism" to inspire the nation's sense of unity under the Soviet reign (Pospíšil 132-133).

The use of this specific musical genre demonstrates the difference between RFE and commercial radio stations. Listening in order to gauge commercial success is common practice within the regular entertainment industry. The RFE, however, was a non-profit organization (Crosby 357). They listened in order to target; they wanted to specifically target the older, educated Czechoslovakian audience in order to create the sense of nationalism (132).

A further look into the organization of RFE, as far as is in compliance with current CIA regulations, gives insight into the agenda of RFE. In chapter two, the analysis showed that the USIA had a strict agenda during the early Cold War. As mentioned before, many

officials circled around among the NCFE, RFE and the USIA. This accounts for the similarities between US propaganda strategies (Belmonte 41). This already indicates that the CIA and the USIA conducted public diplomacy strategies with a similar agenda. After all, they were both US government institutes. On top of that, the head of RFE in its early years was Eisenhower's personal advisor on psychological warfare, C.D. Jackson. President Eisenhower considered the RFE to be a tool of warfare, as he did the USIA. The Jazz Diplomacy program, for instance, he viewed as a form of national security (Carletta 126). The question whether the RFE was open to be influenced itself can thus be answered in the way this question was answered for the USIA. Because warfare is part of the reason why the RFE was created (by a covert agency known for its psychological warfare operations), this does not leave much room for being open to influence. There is no further evidence that would lead to believe that the RFE was open to be influenced by the Eastern European public, let alone the Soviet propaganda that tried to counter its credibility. Even during the remainder of the Cold War, the RFE would only adopt Eastern-European music that resonated within youth culture (Pospíšil 127-128) and did not show signs of being open to Soviet ideology.

Part of the reason the RFE was established is because of the American belief that Eastern Europe did not have access to factual news. There is truth in this; domestic news media had become biased. According to Feinberg, the RFE believed that the reason Eastern Europeans tuned in to the station was to have access to the facts, which could help them "sorting truth from lies and fact from fiction." (Feinberg 108). But that does not mean that the RFE itself always gave all the facts in their broadcasts, let alone show signs of bias. The best way to approach the question if the RFE was selective of truth and/or gave one-sided information is to look at the Eastern European public's reaction to the broadcasts. RFE employees assumed that the station was a pillar of truth, spreading values of liberty and

democracy to Eastern Europeans, who were eager to absorb them. Karl Brown, who has studied Eastern European and especially Hungarian listeners' reactions, shows a more realistic Eastern European attitude. Many listeners found the tone of RFE itself propagandistic (89) and did not experience much objective or reliable journalism. In fact, some tuned in to other Western radio programs "specifically in order to gain perspective on Radio Free Europe's biased content" (92). The many listener's accounts that Brown shows do not only reflect RFE's one-sided dispersion of information, but also their prejudiced attitude towards the Eastern European's mindset and level of intelligence. They believed the satellite states to be hungry for democracy, when the reality was much more nuanced. While most Hungarians, for example, did not approve of the Soviet Union's oppression, they were quite objective about communism as a concept and were not necessarily ready to adopt a capitalist system (94).

In her study on the Slánský trail in Czechoslovakia, Melissa Feinberg accuses the RFE of telling "fantastic truths and compelling lies" in their coverage of the trails (107). She sketches an image of an RFE that is trying to put its own spin on the controversial trials and the Czechoslovakian reactions to them, which did not accurately reflect reality but instead tried to have it correspond with the American image of communism and the Soviet Union (124-125).

Another interesting element to analyze if and how the RFE was selective of truth is the aforementioned Jazz Diplomacy strategy that was adopted by the US government. Eisenhower believed that jazz music could be important in cultural foreign policy (Carletta 120). Jazz music was played a lot more on VOA and RFE. The RFE even dedicated a special time slot to jazz: *49 Minutes of Jazz.* The problem with Jazz Diplomacy was its narrative of racial issues in America. African American jazz musicians had to tell the same story that Althea Gibson had to tell; there were instances of racial discrimination in the United States,

but these were being dealt with and would soon be a thing of the past. For this reason, African American dancer and choreographer Katherine Dunham was not allowed to go on State Department tours; in her ballet performances, she had criticized Southern lynching (Dillard 42). On top of that, the overall message of the Jazz Diplomacy was that any hardship could be overcome in America if you were "a talented and motivated individual" (Carletta 121). As demonstrated in the first chapter, and many other accounts, academic and otherwise, the reality of being black in America during the early Cold War was often down near brutal and the US government's narrative was not reflective of reality. The jazz campaign sparked criticism and boycotts from American conservatists and Southerners (Dillard 42). Dizzy Gillespie, one of the most popular jazz musicians of his time, purposefully did not hesitate to tell the foreign public of the racism in the U.S. when he had the chance, much to the annoyance of the State Department that organized his tours. Still, participating musicians were enthusiastic about the opportunity that was granted to them. They knew little about the full extent of the political agenda of Jazz Diplomacy, nor of the fact that their music was used to usher in the sound of democracy in the specific countries where the CIA performed covert actions, such as the overthrowing of the Iranian prime minister (43-44).

Cull's element of listening in order to target can be observed extensively in the CIA's Radio Free Europe. Multiple authors have highlighted different events that show the CIA's research in the field of Eastern European culture, religion, and psychology. The warfare argument mentioned in the second chapter similarly accounts for CIA's agenda and their inability to be influenced. The RFE was also known to sometimes disperse one-sided information and selectively choose truth when it came to the narration of certain political events in Eastern Europe and the promotion of jazz in these countries. Especially the dispersion of one-sided information reveals some form of prejudice against Eastern European

citizens; RFE broadcasts did not evoke the love for capitalism and democracy which they thought it would.

Chapter 4: Diplomacy on screen: Pressuring Hollywood

The elegance and glamour of 1950s Hollywood stars, starlets and pictures depicted an exciting America in the eyes of European audiences. Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood described Hollywood in hearts and minds of the West as an "apolitical dream factory with only profit in mind" (15). Their book, which will be consulted in this chapter, nuances this particular image. The Hollywood of the early Cold War and the information apparatus had an interesting relationship, whose nature changed during the development of the early Cold War. Hollywood filmmakers were independent in theory, but experienced pressure from US government organizations such as the HUAC. This chapter will look at the relationships between the external forces and Hollywood and will analyze Hollywood's output to European audiences using Cull's requirements.

4.1 Hollywood, HUAC and other external forces

Contemporary Hollywood loves a good Russian spy story. Jennifer Lawrence as Dominika Egorova in *Red Sparrow* (2018), Angelina Jolie as Evelyn Salt in *Salt* (2010) and Scarlett Johansson as the Black Widow in *The Avengers*; all of them played a Russian spy who turns against the Russian or Soviet regime after having experienced American culture. This narrative and many other stereotypes about Soviet officials date back to the Cold War cinema, and partly back to the Red Scare of the 1920s (Shaw and Youngblood 16). Ever since the Russian revolution of 1917, there has been a tradition of criminalizing, ridiculing and overall negatively portraying Bolsheviks, Russians or Soviets on screen. American capitalism was of course the protagonist to the communist antagonist. Ernst Lubitsch's romantic satire *Ninotchka* (1939), for example, showed a female Soviet official, played by Greta Garbo, defecting to the United States after having experiences the pleasures of capitalism (17). Around 1947, Hollywood productions pick up the tradition of negatively

portraying communists where they left off before WWII. This time around, the narratives were constructed more carefully, and filmmakers portrayed communism in a scary rather than ridiculous fashion. Academics distinguish between two periods in early Cold War cinema. The first period was one of unsubtle movies on the threat of communist subversion within the United States, which peaked between 1947 to 1953. Shaw and Youngblood dub it the "declaring war" period, which was defined by the output of "hardline negative propaganda" (18-19). This included the portrayal of heartless, murderous communists who have no loyalty to fellow communists. Actors would walk in a certain determined manner because their communist character was only focused on the communist cause. If they were caught by American law enforcement, they would go berserk and act maniacal. On top of that, some Hollywood productions used the so-called "Bad Blonde" type: a beautiful Soviet lady who lured impressionable American man into communism by seducing them (Sayre 58). All of these stereotypes were imbedded in the fear of the unknown: what was behind the Iron Curtain? This, and American understanding of Communism, led to the fear of a Communist take-over from within American government and society (Shaw and Youngblood 23). *I Was a Communist for the FBI* (1951) is one of these quintessential McCarthyistic movies, in which the leading man infiltrates the Communist Party in the US and observes their violent and racist tendencies. Despite some box-office successes, some film critics did not care for the undeniable lack of subtlety and depth. These anti-communist movies were later categorized as "agit-prop", because of their resemblance to the Soviet Union's "clumsy style of mass persuasion" (21).

What is interesting is that there were only a few dedicated anti-communist filmmakers in Hollywood at the time. Most of them, as Daniel J. Leab describes, were simply "box-office capitalists" (82). It was then fear that motivated the production of agit-prop, the fear induced by external forces that put pressure on Hollywood. The Catholic Legion of Decency and the

Production Code Administration scanned film material for content which they claimed to be proof of subversion, such as sexual or very violent content. The Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals was committed to advising filmmakers on how to make their content more patriotic. The most notorious and damaging of these conservative forces was the House Un-American Activity (HUAC), a committee of the House of Representatives. Founded in 1938, the committee was dedicated to the investigation of organizations and citizens of which it was believed they were communists. Their legacy lies in their prime objective to uncover evidence of communist subversion on screen and within the Hollywood industry; something which they were never able to give hard proof of. Still, HUAC chairman J. Parnell Thomas had been convinced that Hollywood had become a "Red propaganda center" (Shaw and Youngblood 19). The committee established a blacklist with suspected Hollywood communist based on the information the FBI provided them with, for the FBI surveilled Hollywood productions with the help of informers. Here, the goal was to prevent that movies would be used as "weapons of Communist propaganda" (21). HUAC blacklisted about 300 people with a career in Hollywood. HUAC activities were not welcomed by all of Hollywood. During the infamous public HUAC hearings of 1947, ten Hollywood artists, mostly screenwriters, refused to give private information on their political affiliation out of principle. They paid the price by becoming the first ten people to make the blacklist; during the following decade, they were barely able to find work in Hollywood. (Eckstein 424).

HUAC's influence reached even further. Right after WWII, some Hollywood filmmakers addressed social and economic issues in their films. Their liberal tone was one of concern; people feared the pre-war depression and recession. In 1947, HUAC cut this stream of output short, because they were not "reflective of American values" (Briley 20).

While agit-prop movies were still made well into the late 1950s, the overall tone of Hollywood productions changed. Shaw and Youngblood call it the period of 'accentuating

the positive', which took place roughly from 1953 to 1962. During this time, Hollywood Cold War output focused more on American values. While the shift occurred gradually, the discredit of McCarthy in 1954 as a result of the Army-McCarthy hearings and an overall ease of Hollywood's fear of subversion contributed to the change (25). On top of that, "the studios' often unconscious support for individuality, freedom of choice, material abundance, cultural vibrancy, and political moderation dating back to the 1920s" to the shift in tone (Shaw and Youngblood 25-26). *How to Marry a Millionaire* (1953), starring Lauren Bacall and sex symbol Marylin Monroe, is an example of "American glitz, prosperity and spiritedness" (27). The science fiction genre used allegory to depict communism in a negative yet more covert fashion. *Them* (1954) depicts the attempt of monstrous ants who invade the United States through the Los Angeles sewage and drain systems. In the end, this leads to a battle between men and ants. This plotline plus the added theme of resizing and the "big bug" feature make the comparison to anti-communist films quite easy. In his essay, Ronald Briley even argues that the use of allegory and science-fiction actually had a stronger effect on its audience than any obvious anti-communist film (21). Another example of this genre is the film *The Invasion of the Bodysnatchers* (1956), whose title leaves little to the imagination. The plot deals with a small-town doctor who finds out that the townspeople are being taken over by emotionless aliens. The covert theme of communist infiltration, whether intended or unintended is easily observable. Arthur LeGacy offers another explanation as to why this film is considered to be a horror film: "As treated in the *Body Snatchers,* the theme of being taken over – invisible, collective depersonalization – draws its impact from an anxiety not consciously experienced by most people, an anxiety caused by the knowledge that, in an atomic world, collective extinction, with virtually no warning, is possible. Social science fiction can detoxify, make routine and explain what is invisible but psychologically unbearable." (291).

4.2 Analysis

What can we conclude with regard to Cull's requirements based on this information? While Hollywood is the originator, their output had to go through the Production Code Administration to be screened. Hollywood films were censored by government institutions and the HUAC's blacklist could have filmmakers lose their career if their films were considered to be 'red'. Social issues were not to be addressed; the American dream was the image that needed to be depicted on the white screen. Based on Cull's requirements, the output is thus one-sided in nature. President of the Motion Picture Association, Eric Johnston, confirms that film material in itself leaves no room for response during a U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations hearing in 1953: "Pictures give an idea of America which is difficult to portray in any other way, and the reason, the main reason, we think, is because our pictures are not obvious propaganda" (U.S. Congress). That being said, it cannot be claimed that Hollywood's agenda was strictly to influence foreign audiences. Most producers simply wanted to make money and did not intend to use their films as part of an information program. Censorship that tried to employ Hollywood productions in this way came from external forces.

Determining whether the content of Hollywood films was selective or based on truth is difficult to execute. Most films were fiction; the stories that are told hold no truth. It is, however, interesting to look at how Hollywood output represented the American life and the Cold War 'fight' between the US and the Soviet Union. The representation of American life was clearly selective of truth; social issue pictures were discouraged ever since the HUAC became a powerful force within the industry. The capitalist wealth and stories about the strength of individualism were instead encouraged to be shown on screen. So, what about the Cold War fight? Despite the many accounts we hold of covert CIA operations and espionage,

Hollywood did not touch the subject. Simon Willmetts explains that early Cold War filmmakers did not want to imply that the US government performed foreign espionage (128-129). This lack of representation had three reasons. First of all, the CIA refused to cooperate with filmmakers, which resulted in a form of censorship on the subject of the CIA in Hollywood. Secondly, there were legal constraints in place up until the late 1960s that made it difficult for filmmakers to show public officials on screen. Thirdly, there was censorship from the Production Code of Administration that prevented showing of the government and the CIA specifically (129). While today Hollywood loves using the CIA in their movies, the intelligence agency was not familiar to the American public during the early Cold War. Willmetts explains that the reasoning behind the CIA's desire to remain anonymous to the public lies in the fact that anonymity "allowed them to evade questions about accountability or excessively presidential aspects of foreign policy during a period in which they were frequently involved in controversial covert activities" (132). The lack of American espionage on screen during the early Cold War hides a defining part of the fight. Exclusively showing Soviet espionage on screen creates a distorted image of America fighting a secretive and hidden enemy. Much like the protagonists in *Them.*

Most Cold War films were set in the United States and dealt with Americans and American storylines. There were some movies that did take place in Europe. While there is no definite answer to the question of Hollywood was prejudiced against Europeans, the classic Audrey Hepburn picture *Roman Holiday* (1953) does depict a stereotypical image of European mentality towards freedom and the monarchy. Audrey Hepburn plays a European princess who finds love and freedom in Joe Bradley (Gregory Peck). According to Shaw and Youngblood, *Roman Holiday* portrays "a cosseted and emotionally imprisoned European monarchy being temporarily 'liberated' by classless consumerism and American democratic values" (100). Monarchy and European conservatism were shown to constraining, yet

something to be treated with respect (104). That is the most prejudice towards Europe in early Cold War Hollywood there was to be detected. Europe was overall portrayed as "almost equal…far from powerless" (104).

The second to last question to be answered is whether the dispersed information was intended only to influence the target, or was Hollywood open to be influenced itself? In the case of Hollywood, this is a tricky question. As concluded earlier, it was not Hollywood's intention to solely influence foreign audiences; there were only a select few filmmakers with this goal. At the same time, there is no evidence that Hollywood was open to be influenced. This then also applies to the element of listening; filmmakers did not listen to European audiences to target them on an ideological level. While there is nothing written on the subject, it would make sense to assume that any company with monetary goals would listen to learn about their consumer's interests. And around 1953, 50% of Hollywood consumers were foreign, most of them being European (107).

The nature of Hollywood's output is different from that of the USIA and the state-private network, as discussed in the previous chapter. Part of the reason stems from the fact that Hollywood was not a political originator but was often used for public diplomatic goals. Hollywood Cold War productions were selective of truth, especially during the "declaring war" period, gave one-sided information and were perhaps even prejudiced against the European audience. They however did not have a strict political agenda, nor did they listen in order to target. The role that the element of influence played in their productions remains questionable. This chapter therefore coincides with Shaw and Youngblood's conclusion that to definitively call Hollywood's Cold War output either entertainment or propaganda is misleading (16). Hollywood was not the originator of public diplomacy, but the outside forces tried to influence the productions in such a way that they could be used in their American European policy strategies.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis has been dedicated to answering the question: was American European policy from 1945 to 1962 one of public diplomacy or propaganda? In order to do this, Nicholas J. Cull's elements with which to distinguish propaganda from public diplomacy were used; the element of agenda, influence, information, listening, prejudice and truth. The answer to the research question is more nuanced than either propaganda or public diplomacy.

The origins of the Unites States Information Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency lie in a bigger governmental structure of warfare against communist ideology. The USIA was a follow-up of the Office of War Information and the CIA was created from a foreign policy and military perspective combined. The warfare element has consequences for both the element of agenda and the element of influence; the agenda of (psychological) warfare was strict for both the sport campaigns and Radio Free Europe and left no room for influence. It also rules out that the USIA and the CIA listened to European audiences in order to learn without wanting to target them. The CIA especially attempted to target the European audience through Radio Free Europe, although limited access to the USSR prevented great success during the early Cold War. The issue of race laid bare the vulnerability of the manner in which the USIA and CIA constructed the perfect American narrative. Contrasting the way African Americans were portrayed with the reality of their circumstances reveals that the USIA and the CIA oftentimes selected their own truth and dispersed one-sided information to the European public. The element of prejudice remains underexposed in both analyses, especially in that of the USIA. There is not much information about how both agencies looked at Europeans' respective mindsets and if there were prejudiced against it. This is an interesting aspect of public diplomacy that could be studied further, although scholars will most likely face some difficulty in trying to access USIA and CIA files. Based on the performed analyses, this thesis concludes that the foreign public strategies of both the USIA

and the CIA lean more towards propaganda. The way in which foreign policy was executed through Hollywood productions is a bit more complex than that, for one because Hollywood itself was not an originator of public diplomacy. The outside forces of committees such as the HUAC or the Production Code of Administration influenced Hollywood filmmaker's fear of being branded a communist, and consequently influenced their output. Hollywood films during the early Cold War were selective of truth when it came to the depiction of American life and the Cold War struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union. By ignoring social issues in their movies on purpose, the films gave a one-sided image of the United States. One of the discussed movies did show American prejudice about Europe, but it does not necessarily speak for the rest of the filmmakers. On top of that, the analysis shows that Hollywood had neither a strict agenda, nor did they want to target the European audience on an ideological level. Hollywood productions do not meet the majority of Cull's propaganda requirements and are therefore not propaganda material, although they do show propagandistic signs at times.

Throughout the research process of this thesis, most academic works that were discussed did not explain their definitions of propaganda or public diplomacy. The importance of a clear definition is needed not only to analyze past foreign policy strategies, but current foreign policy strategies as well. Any contemporary use of propaganda by governments should be reconsidered. The example of the CIA and the RFE shows the consequences of using propaganda; it discredited the information to the audience. In today's world, propaganda as a form of public diplomacy does not seem to be an option. Although some countries still experience government censorship, most people no longer find themselves in a vacuum in which their only source of information and news is the local newspaper or their favorite radio station. The variety and quantity of information is overwhelming to today's individual and the recent flow of fake news had made more people

wary of the information they consume. This makes it more difficult for governments to put their own spin on information, let alone employ information agencies. Implementing a strategy of transparency in the use of soft power would thus be much more beneficial in winning hearts and minds.

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