

**FOREIGN
RELATIONS
OF THE
UNITED
STATES**

1917–1972

**PUBLIC DIPLOMACY,
WORLD WAR I**



**DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE**

Washington



**Foreign Relations of the United
States, 1917–1972**

**Public Diplomacy,
World War I**

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN
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About the Series

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The staff of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, plans, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102–138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series, which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991. Section 198 of P.L. 102–138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State’s Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the United States Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the *Foreign Relations* series is guided by the principles of historical objectivity and accuracy; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The Foreign Relations statute requires that the published record in the *Foreign Relations* series include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. It further requires that govern-

ment agencies, departments, and other entities of the U.S. Government engaged in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support cooperate with the Department of State historians by providing full and complete access to records pertinent to foreign policy decisions and actions and by providing copies of selected records. Most of the sources consulted in the preparation of this volume have been declassified and are available for review at the National Archives and Records Administration (Archives II), in College Park, Maryland.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have complete access to all the retired records and papers of the Department of State: the central files of the Department; the special decentralized files ("lot files") of the Department at the bureau, office, and division levels; the files of the Department's Executive Secretariat, which contain the records of international conferences and high-level official visits, correspondence with foreign leaders by the President and Secretary of State, and the memoranda of conversations between the President and the Secretary of State and foreign officials; and the files of overseas diplomatic posts. All of the Department's central files are available in electronic or microfilm formats at Archives II, and may be accessed using the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) tool. Almost all of the Department's decentralized office files covering this period, which the National Archives deems worthy of permanent retention, have been transferred to or are in the process of being transferred from the Department's custody to Archives II.

Research for *Foreign Relations* volumes is undertaken through special access to restricted documents at the presidential libraries and other agencies. While all the material printed in this volume has been declassified, some of it is extracted from still-classified documents. The staff of each presidential library is processing and declassifying many of the documents used in this volume, but they may not be available in their entirety at the time of publication. Presidential papers maintained and preserved at the presidential libraries include some of the most significant foreign-affairs related documentation from White House offices, the Department of State, and other federal agencies including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Editorial Methodology

The documents in this volume are presented chronologically according to Washington time. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guid-

ance from the General Editor and the Chief of the Editing and Publishing Division. The documents are reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Texts are transcribed and printed according to accepted conventions for the publication of historical documents within the limitations of modern typography. A heading has been supplied by the editors for each document included in this volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words and phrases underlined in the source text are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations is included in the front matter of each volume.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted. Entire documents withheld for declassification purposes have been accounted for and are listed with headings, source notes, and number of pages not declassified in their chronological place. All brackets that appear in the original text are so identified in footnotes. All ellipses are in the original documents.

The first footnote to each document indicates the source of the document, original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarize pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provide references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the Foreign Relations statute, reviews records,

advises, and makes recommendations concerning the *Foreign Relations* series. The Advisory Committee monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation and declassification of the series. The Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 13526 on Classified National Security Information and applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this compilation, which began in December 2013 and was completed in March 2014, resulted in the decision to withhold 0 documents in full, excise a paragraph or more in 0 documents, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 0 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this compilation and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and editorial notes presented here provide a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of public diplomacy initiatives during World War I.

Adam M. Howard, Ph.D.
General Editor

Stephen P. Randolph, Ph.D.
The Historian

Bureau of Public Affairs
November 2014

Preface

Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, Public Diplomacy, 1917–1972

In 2007, historians at the Office of the Historian proposed a retrospective *Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS)* volume designed to augment the series' coverage of U.S. public diplomacy. While the series began to document the subject in a sustained and concerted way starting with the second administration of President Richard M. Nixon, previous *FRUS* coverage of U.S. public diplomacy efforts have been far less consistent. This retrospective volume will fill that gap, which stretches from the First World War to the early 1970s. Resource constraints and the statutory requirement to publish *Foreign Relations* volumes 30 years after the events that they cover mean that compilations in this volume have been researched and compiled piecemeal over a longer period of time than the typical *FRUS* volume. Fortunately, progress is being made, as evidenced by this compilation, which covers the U.S. Government's public diplomacy efforts from 1917 to 1919. Subsequent compilations, which will document up to the end of the first Nixon administration, will be published as they are completed.

This compilation focuses on the creation and overseas work of the Committee on Public Information (CPI). While the U.S. Government had engaged in public diplomacy before (such as with the publication of diplomatic correspondence during the Civil War), the CPI's overseas work constituted a sustained effort to educate a foreign public about the United States, and, in particular, its role in the war effort. Representatives of the CPI were sent around the globe to establish reading rooms, distribute translated copies of President Woodrow Wilson's speeches, work with local journalists to publish news stories, and show films demonstrating the United States' readiness to fight. This compilation documents all of these activities. While few planning documents from the time exist, this compilation includes numerous examples of how the CPI executed its work in the field, particularly in Europe, Asia, and Latin America. The chapter also includes examples of the types of information distributed by the CPI. The inclusion of these multimedia items is a new milestone in the publication history of the *Foreign Relations* series. Despite the CPI's extensive activity, the war's conclusion led the U.S. Government to shut down the Committee. However, future U.S. public diplomacy efforts could call upon the CPI as an example, even though it left no sustained bureaucratic legacy.

Adam M. Howard, Ph.D.
General Editor

Acknowledgements

The editor wishes to thank the staff at the Library of Congress and the National Archives and Records Administration facility in College Park, Maryland, for their valuable assistance.

Aaron W. Marris collected, selected, and edited the documentation for this compilation under the supervision of Adam Howard, General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series. The compilation was reviewed by Kathleen B. Rasmussen, Chief of the Global Issues and General Division. Stephanie Eckroth, Rita Baker, and Thomas Faith performed the copy and technical editing, and Kerry Hite coordinated the final declassification review under Carl Ashley, Chief of the Declassification Division. Joe Wicentowski provided technical assistance in creating the multimedia portion of this volume.

Aaron W. Marris, Ph.D.
Historian

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Sources

The Committee on Public Information (CPI) had both a foreign and domestic function. Records on the foreign function of the CPI are not extensive, but the National Archives and Records Administration has two record groups of primary interest. Record Group 63 contains the records of the CPI, which include director George Creel's correspondence. The 1910–1929 Central Decimal File in Record Group 59, the General Records of the Department of State, also includes CPI information in decimal files 103.93 and 103.9302.

At the Library of Congress, the private papers of George Creel do not offer extensive discussion of the foreign work of the CPI, although there is some material on the CPI's founding. The Papers of Woodrow Wilson offer key insights into the founding of the CPI and Wilson's stance on its work. Many of these documents have been reprinted in the comprehensive *Papers of Woodrow Wilson* published by Princeton University Press. Another key printed work is the *Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information*, which gives a thorough summation of the CPI's work.

Unpublished Sources

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Papers of George Creel
Papers of Woodrow Wilson

National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

RG 59 (General Records of the Department of State)
Central Decimal File 1910–1929
RG 63 (Records of the Committee on Public Information)
Correspondence of Arthur Wood
Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919
Director's Office of the Foreign Section
General Correspondence of George Creel
Manuals Giving Psychological Estimates of Foreign Countries, Prepared by the Military Intelligence Branch of the General Staff

Published Sources

Creel, George. *Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information, 1917, 1918, 1919*. 1920. Reprint, New York: Da Capo, 1972.

Culbert, David Holbrook, and Richard E. Wood, eds. *Film and Propaganda in America: A Documentary History*, volume 1, *World War I*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1990.

Link, Arthur, ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. 69 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966–1994.

Whitehouse, Vira Boarman. *A Year as a Government Agent*. New York: Harper, 1920.

Abbreviations and Terms

AEF, American Expeditionary Forces

Col., Colonel

Compub, Committee on Public Information

CPI, Committee on Public Information

GHQ, general headquarters

MIB, Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff

MID, Military Intelligence Division, Department of War General Staff

P.H.P., Philip H. Patchin

Rc'd, rec'ved, received

RG, record group

U.S., United States

Y.M.C.A., Young Men's Christian Association

Persons

Baker, Newton Diehl, Secretary of War from 1916 until 1921

Blankenhorn, Heber, Captain, USA; Military Intelligence Division, Department of War General Staff

Bullard, Arthur, unofficial representative of the Committee on Public Information in Russia from 1917

Churchill, Marlborough, Brigadier General, USA; Head of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff, from June 1918 (Military Intelligence Division after August 1918)

Clemenceau, Georges, Prime Minister of France from 1917 until 1920

Creel, George, Chairman of the Committee on Public Information from April 1917

Daniels, Josephus, Secretary of the Navy from 1913 until 1921

Francis, David Rowland, U.S. Ambassador to Russia from 1916 until 1917

Gibson, Hugh, Secretary at the Embassy in Paris from February 13, 1918

House, Edward "Colonel," adviser to President Wilson

Irwin, Will, Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information, from January 1918 until July 1918

Keeley, James, U.S. representative to the Inter-Allied Conference on Propaganda in Enemy Countries

Kerney, James, Committee on Public Information Commissioner in France from February 1918

Lansing, Robert, Secretary of State from 1915 until 1920

Lenin, Vladimir, President of the Soviet of People's Commissars from November 8, 1917

Lippman, Walter, journalist and adviser to President Wilson

Marion, Frank J., Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Spain from November 17, 1917

Mott, John R., International Secretary of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association

Murray, Robert H., Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Mexico

Page, Thomas Nelson, U.S. Ambassador to Italy from 1913 until 1919

Page, Walter Hines, U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom until November 1918

Patchin, Philip H., staff member, Bureau of Foreign Intelligence, Department of State
Perry, Paul, V., staff member, Foreign Press-Cable Service, Committee on Public Information, in 1918; Committee on Public Information Commissioner in the United Kingdom from July 1918

Pershing, John J., General, USA; leader of the American Expeditionary Forces

Polk, Frank Lyon, Counselor of the Department of State

Rickey, Harry N., Committee on Public Information Commissioner in the United Kingdom until May 1918

Rogers, Walter S., Director of the Division of Wireless and Cable Service, Committee on Public Information

Root, Elihu, U.S. Ambassador on a Special Mission to Russia from June 1917 until July 1917

Russell, Charles Edward, delegate on the Special Mission to Russia from June 1917 until July 1917; speaker for the Committee on Public Information from October 1917 until February 1918; Committee on Public Information Commissioner in the United Kingdom from May 1918 until July 1918

Sharp, William Graves, U.S. Ambassador to France until April 1919

Sisson, Edgar, Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Russia from October 1917; Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information, from July 1918

Smith, Guy Crosswell, Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Russia until March 1918, then Committee on Public Information representative for films in Scandinavia; Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Switzerland from December 25, 1918

Suydam, Henry, Committee on Public Information Commissioner in the Netherlands

Van Deman, Ralph H., Colonel, USA; head of Military Intelligence Section, Department of War General Staff from May 1917 (Military Intelligence Branch after February 1918) until June 1918

Whitehouse, Vira B., Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Switzerland from January 26 until April 12 and July 1 until December 25, 1918

Wilson, Woodrow, President of the United States from 1913 until 1921

Woods, Arthur, staff member, Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information

World War I

1. Editorial Note

Shortly after Congress's declaration of war on April 6, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson and his advisers discussed the need for what would become the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels recorded in his diary on April 9 that he and Wilson "talked about censorship. He will appoint George Creel as head." (*Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, volume 42, page 23) In an undated memorandum, Creel outlined his thoughts on a "Department of Publicity," which Daniels forwarded to the President under cover of an April 11 letter. The memorandum made no mention of foreign work, focusing instead on the need for a domestic publicity service that would include a censorship function. (*Ibid.*, pages 39–41) On April 12, Wilson responded to Daniels: "Do I understand that I now have the authority to designate Creel? If so, I shall be glad to do so. I like his memorandum very much." (*Ibid.*, page 43)

The formal request for the creation of the CPI came in a letter to Wilson dated April 13 from Secretary of State Robert Lansing, Secretary of War Newton Baker, and Daniels. According to White House staff member Thomas Brahany, the letter was "drafted by Creel after consultation with the President." Brahany also noted some disagreement between Creel and Lansing:

"When he [Creel] took it to Lansing for approval following its approval by Baker and Daniels, with whom he had talked fully, Creel was very coolly received. Lansing insisted that the letter be written on a State Department letterhead, and that his signature appear above the signatures of Baker and Daniels. Creel didn't want Lansing on the Board. It was the President's suggestion that Lansing be added. Creel was disgusted with what he termed Lansing's 'petty sensitiveness.' Baker and Daniels laughed heartily, Creel said, when he told them they would have to sign a second letter because Lansing wanted his name to appear first." (Diary entry of April 15; *ibid.*, page 71) Daniels also commented on the incident: "Creel went to L to sign letter whereupon L wanted it written on State Dept. paper & he sign *first*. Precedence!" (Diary entry of April 13; *ibid.*, page 59)

As with Creel's memorandum, the focus of the letter was on the domestic work of the organization. The three men argued:

"It is our opinion that the two functions—censorship and publicity—can be joined in honesty and with profit, and we recommend the

creation of a Committee on Public Information. The Chairman should be a civilian, preferably some writer of proved courage, ability and vision, able to gain the understanding cooperation of the press and at the same time rally the authors of the country to a work of service. Other members should be the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy, or an officer or officers detailed to the work by them." (Ibid., page 55)

Wilson authorized the creation of the CPI that same day in Executive Order 2594, appointing the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy as members of the CPI and Creel as the head. (Ibid., page 59) The Committee apparently met only once. In an undated note, Creel wrote:

"Mr. Lansing, a dull, small man, bitterly resented my chairmanship of the Committee, and made himself so unpleasant at the first meeting that I never called another. As a consequence, he refused to work with the Committee, and did everything that he could, in his mean, cheap way, to hinder and embarrass." The undated note is a typed addition to an excerpt of a letter from Wilson to Lansing dated June 29; the note is bound in a volume of collected letters with an introductory note dated March 21, 1931. (Library of Congress, Papers of George Creel, Woodrow Wilson and the Committee on Public Information, 1917–1931, Box 3, Vol. III, 1917–1918, 1931)

Although foreign work was apparently not part of the original conception of the CPI, in time the Committee would assume responsibility for distributing material in allied, enemy, and neutral territories abroad, as Wilson and his administration were soon urged to consider publicity work in foreign countries. Ambassador on Special Mission to Russia Elihu Root wrote to Lansing from St. Petersburg on June 17 that conditions in Russia were "critical." He elaborated: "The soldiers do not understand at all the importance to their country of maintaining the war and all along the line have simply been unwilling to fight. [Demoralization] has been aided by a tremendous German propaganda through fraternization of troops at the front and thousands of German agents throughout the country who swarmed across the border immediately after the revolution." Root notified Lansing that he was already beginning to distribute "information" and had spent \$100,000 for that purpose. He urged the expenditure of "at least \$5,000,000" and gave the following justification:

"That would be less than the cost of maintaining five American regiments and the chance of keeping 5,000,000 Russians in the field against Germany is worth many times five regiments. It will mean a supply of newspapers, printing and distribution of posters, leaflets and pamphlets, employment of numerous lecturers and moving pictures to go about the front. This work to be done with the approval of Russian Government and not to be conducted in the name of the United States.

We particularly recommend the establishment upon the Russian front of Y.M.C.A. stations similar to those on the French and English fronts, until recently on the Austrian front, just beginning on the Italian front, and in Mesopotamia, and along the lines planned for the American Army as authorized in Executive order signed by the President on April 27, 1917. These establishments have reading rooms, provisions for reading aloud to illiterate soldiers, lecture rooms, and temporary arrangements for moving pictures. There are two thousand of these establishments with the British Army all thronged by soldiers. They afford opportunities for access to the minds of the soldiers. These should be financed by the United States but that fact probably not made public until after they are established and understood. Mott thinks he can obtain twenty Americans now in Europe to inaugurate plan promptly pending the securing and training adequate number. Same sort of work is now being done on considerable scale in prison camps with great success. Very desirable indeed to send here immediately as many moving pictures as possible showing American preparation for war, battleships, troops marching, factories making munitions, and other things to carry to the mind the idea that America is doing something. These poor fellows have been told that no one is really fighting except Russian soldiers and they believe it. The British have recently been sending out similar moving pictures with very good effect, but everything has been done on too small a scale to deal with the great masses of people who must be assimilated." (Telegram 8; *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Russia, volume I, pages 121-122)

On June 27, Lansing responded to Root: "The matter of establishing an efficient agency for publicity is receiving careful consideration in view of your recommendations as to its desirability." (Telegram 1; *ibid.*, page 127)

2. **Letter From Walter S. Rogers to the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel)**¹

Woods Hole, Massachusetts, August 13, 1917

Dear Mr. Creel:

I have just reread the interview with Charles Edward Russell in the *New York Times* of last Sunday.² One paragraph especially appeals to me:

“Observe, now, the really critical point today is the security of the Russian line on the eastern front; take note next of the great fact almost universally overlooked in this country that the security of that Russian line depends solely upon the state of mind of the masses of the Russian people. Then, if you convince the masses of the people that the United States is not really in this war, that it will not prosecute it with vigor and resolution, that it is divided in its councils, that it is really seeking peace, you have done more to make that Russian line melt away than the Kaiser could do with ten million men and ten times as much artillery as he has now.”

Just the other day I talked with an experienced observer recently returned from Russia. He said he had talked with a great many Russians and that their expressed opinion was that the United States had made fabulous sums out of the war and now had entered into it to be in position to share the spoils. Not a single Russian that he had spoken with was familiar with the events and the line of thought that had led to our participation in the war. This tragic situation is only partly due to German propagandea; it is still more due to our own blindness and to our inability or unwillingness to realize that we have no case unless our case reaches the attention of the masses of the world. The Russians are not to blame. We state our case in Washington; then innocently expect the Moscow papers to have the story the next day! “Papers everywhere, please copy,” seems to be our motto.

It can not be said too often or too loudly that this war is being fought out in the minds of great masses of people as truly as it is being fought out on the battle fields of Europe. Stating our case, convincing the world that we mean business and that we stand for the common rights of men, is just as important a piece of work as that being done

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 90, 1917 July 31–Aug. 29. No classification marking. Also published in *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 43, pp. 456–459.

² “Russia Today,” *New York Times*, August 12, 1917, p. X1.

by our war and navy departments or by Hoover.³ We may lose the war or only partially achieve what we are struggling for, if we do not get our grievances and our ideas to the world.

Presenting our case to the world is no small job, it requires the same high degree of brains, technical skill and energy as goes into the actual prosecution of the war in its military aspects.

I am aghast at the situation. Take my own case. I went to China and Japan to learn what people there thought of us and to acquaint myself with Oriental newspaper and press association methods. I found that something drastic ought to be done at once to checkmate unfriendly propaganda and to get the American case presented. China was drifting into chaos. China needed news and truth from America. None was forthcoming—only German, Japanese and British selfishly directed propaganda. The American Minister⁴ clearly saw the situation and desired me to impress on Washington the urgency.

I reported to Col. House. He sent me to the State Department. Now I have been about the world and have had considerable journalistic, political and commercial experience. I think I qualify as a trained investigator. Mr. Lansing was too busy to see me. I have been home three months, have been in and out of the Department any number of times, but have not talked with the Secretary yet. I went to the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs. The Chief of the Bureau⁵ inquired about the weather, hotels and railroads, but asked me not a single question regarding conditions. I then turned to Mr. Polk, who gave me ten minutes and agreed to give consideration to certain suggestions. I then turned to Mr. Patchin, head of the Bureau of Information. We had several short talks. Mr. Patchin thought that possibly I wanted a job under him! Patchin partially has the idea, but is not a great person and has no independent authority.

Consider just two questions: What would be the situation now had the President's communications to the belligerents been actually printed textually throughout the world? We are making an appeal to the good sense and honor of the world, but most of the world has never had a chance to read our state papers!

One of these days a peace conference will be held. Will America be looked upon by South America, the Orient and Russia (not to mention the rest) as standing unselfishly for human rights? Or will America be considered merely as a butt-in-sky with a greedy appetite? Our

³ Herbert Hoover, head of the U.S. Food Administration.

⁴ Paul S. Reinsch.

⁵ Edward T. Williams.

standing at the peace conference, the measure of our influence, will depend largely upon what the world believes of us.

Of course, German propaganda will try to muss everything up, scatter dust about and blind the eyes. Of course, Japanese propaganda will not forget Nipponese aspirations. As to British propaganda—the late cock-of-the-walk is out to regain its lost prestige; for seventy-five years the British dominated the Orient because of the belief that they could lick the world any afternoon; now the British are not going to let the world believe that we are playing a decisive role and that we are the upholders of liberty. We preach our own message—democracy’s story—or it isn’t told.

I believe the President perceives this situation. I believe we have no greater problem or obligation. Personally I do not believe this task can be handled by the State Department; the Department is not suitably manned or organized. A year ago last June I went to Mr. Lansing and told him of the South American service inaugurated by the United Press—I knew all about it as, in a sense, it was my scheme—and suggested that the Department take advantage of this new service to explain systematically our attitude and actions. The Secretary told me in so many words that it was not one of the functions of the Department to see that the American case was presented to the peoples of other countries.

The President or the Department carefully prepares a statement intended to clarify a situation or to make us friends—the dissemination of that statement is not a matter of official concern! The dissemination is as important as the document. I thought we wrote documents and prepared statements with a view to getting results and not merely for filing purposes in official archives! I have never been a diplomat.

I see no signs of the Department getting the big idea. Certain things are being done grudgingly and parsimoniously. It is laugh-stuff to find the Department felicitating itself upon the idea of sending a million post cards to Russia—and a moving picture film too for good measure. From any big view of the task, such things are merely incidental details.

We have got to organize to spread the teachings and the purposes of our democracy and to show that democracy is a real thing that can have character and direction.

The undertaking is huge. One can not map out a policy, submit blue-prints or accurate estimates of cost. It is a new job which must be done under war-time conditions.

Would that the President might give this opportunity to some experienced man, make him virtually independent of the State Department and turn him loose to do his best?

To me our conversation with the President was not entirely satisfactory.⁶ The conversation went off into details. The President was tired. The problem of world wide publicity requires a broad consideration and then the leaving of details to experts.

In conclusion let me emphasize the vital necessity for our democracy to become articulate throughout the world.

Sincerely,

Walter S. Rogers

⁶ According to the editors of the *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, Wilson met Creel on August 2, "and it seems likely that Rogers was also present at this meeting." (*Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 43, p. 459, n. 2)

3. Editorial Note

Ambassador on Special Mission to Russia Elihu Root and other members of the Mission continued to urge the Department of State to conduct propaganda in Russia. On July 2, 1917, Mission member Samuel Bertron wrote from St. Petersburg to Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo at noon: "It is the unanimous opinion of commission that an extensive educational publicity campaign be undertaken in Russia with the approval of Russian Government and to be supervised by Ambassador Francis in order to offset extensive and very dangerous German propaganda. This is absolutely essential in our judgment and even though costly is the best possible contribution that America can make." (Telegram 12; *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Russia, volume I, page 128) Three hours later, Root wrote from St. Petersburg: "I beg you to realize that Germany is now attacking Russia by propaganda and is spending millions, at least a million dollars monthly, to capture the minds of the Russian people. Germany expects to succeed; can be prevented only by active and immediate counter attacks by the same weapons." (Telegram 13; *ibid.*, pages 128-129)

The August 1917 report of the Mission included a supplement entitled "Plans for American Cooperation To Preserve and Strengthen the Morale of the Civil Population and the Army of Russia." Portions of the report and supplement are *ibid.*, pages 147-153. Chairman of the Committee on Public Information George Creel responded to the proposals in the report in a letter to President Woodrow Wilson on

August 20. Creel summed up his recommendations for Russia at the conclusion of his letter:

“With regard to administration, I do not think that the State Department should have anything to do with it at all. The work lies entirely within the province of the Committee on Public Information, and would be merely an extension of activities already under way. I have not included Russia in my foreign campaign out of a desire to learn the findings of the Root Commission, but with its work concluded, I see no reason for further delay.

“While not yet ready to present a detailed plan, it is my thought to ask Charles Edward Russell to act for the Committee in Russia. He knows more about the Russian situation than any other, and in addition to his sympathy and understanding, he is one of the best newspapermen in the country and a writer of rare ability.” (*Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, volume 43, pages 529–530)

On October 29, Secretary of State Robert Lansing informed Ambassador to Russia David Rowland Francis that President Wilson, pursuant to the report of the Root Mission, had authorized the establishment of “(1) a war cable service from New York to Vestnik Agency, Petrograd, approximately 1,000 words daily, service already begun; (2) moving-picture service on large scale, 75,000 feet of films already prepared will be shipped shortly with machines and operators; (3) possible encouragement of lecture bureau and pamphlet lecture program on large scale; (4) extensive Y.M.C.A. program, 200 secretaries in all, of whom 70 already in Russia or *en route*.” He continued: “Sisson, representing Bureau of Public Information, now sailing for Petrograd to study conditions and report regarding immediate realization of three features as enumerated. He represents Creel, who has been personally charged by President with direction of this undertaking. Y.M.C.A. program under exclusive control of Mott at New York. Sisson should be assisted in every way to make his work effective and insure sound understanding on his part of existing conditions.” (Telegram 1808; *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Russia, volume I, pages 214–215)

4. Editorial Note

On August 24, 1917, Frances H.C. Burnett sent a night lettergram from San Francisco to Third Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long. She reported: "Good effect imperial Japanese missions visit here is being undone and anti-Japanese feeling seriously aggravated by film play called *Curse of Iku*. Influential Japanese feel they cannot protest personally in view of recent hospitality shown commission. Please use every effort to prevent further exposition of film in California." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 7527, 811.4061/215)

On August 25, Secretary of State Robert Lansing sent a telegram to William Stephens, Governor of California. He informed Stephens: "The Department is reliably informed that anti-Japanese feeling at San Francisco is being seriously aggravated by the showing of a film play entitled '*Curse of Iku*.' The Department is informed also that a Bill, Senate 509 Section 10A, was passed in April, 1917, by the California Legislature prohibiting the display of films calculated to create race hatred or international misunderstanding. The Department is not informed as to the exact nature of the '*Curse of Iku*' but the showing of any film which creates race prejudice is distinctly objectionable at this time in our international relations. I shall be greatly obliged if you will take such steps as you may deem expedient and advisable to suppress the '*Curse of Iku*' or any other film which you may have reason to believe is prejudicial to the foreign relations of this country." (Ibid.)

On August 30, Lansing sent another telegram to Stephens: "[F]urther investigation develops that the film '*Curse of Iku*' is '*Her White God*', for which picture the censor at Chicago denied an exhibition permit. Vigorous protest was made against the picture by the Japanese Consulate at Chicago. Subsequently the producers exhibited the film to representatives of the Japanese Embassy here and the Department of State. The film was found to be distinctly objectionable and the producers agreed to eliminate certain scenes before showing the picture. It appears that these modifications have not been made or if they have been made they have not been sufficient to remove the objectionable features from the picture. The change of name of the picture to the '*Curse of Iku*' does not in any way modify the attitude of the Japanese Embassy or of the Department. The action of the producers in showing this film in San Francisco at this or any other time deserves the severest condemnation and it is earnestly hoped that you may find means to suppress the picture." (Ibid.)

5. Report From the Embassy in Spain¹

Madrid, December 22, 1917

1. Three methods of propaganda are being employed in this country at the present time: publications, cinema and personal advocacy.

2. Propaganda by publication takes two forms—periodicals and pamphlets.

The periodicals are divisible into secular and Catholic press.

These papers are published in all the large cities, and even in towns which less thorough campaigners than the Germans might unwisely consider small enough to be overlooked.

Despite the high percentage of illiteracy, these papers have a very great influence in moulding the opinion of the people of Spain; what is written is read by those who can read, and recounted to those who cannot, and the printed word is given a credence in this country which it does not enjoy among better educated, and therefore more critical, peoples.

By those periodicals which are enlisted on the German side,—and unhappily this means, by most of the newspapers of Spain, both secular and Catholic,—the opinion of the people of Spain is being shaped up, without regard to domestic politics or religion, to oppose the Allies. To cultivate this opposition no appeal is left unmade; readers in southern Spain are eternally reminded that the English took and kept Gibraltar; readers in northern Spain are eternally reminded of what was suffered during the Napoleonic invasion; readers in all Spain are not permitted to forget that it was the Americans who bereft Spain of the last of her colonial glory. Catholics are incited against the heretic English, against the godless French, and the gross materialistic Yankee, without any regard whatsoever for truth, or even the common decencies of language.

On the other hand, Spaniards who know no better are permitted to believe that the Kaiser and most of Germany anyhow, are Catholic; or at least, even though Lutheran, they are deeply religious—and now defending the sacred fires of spirituality against a sordid horde of the heathen. Incredible as it may seem, these views are actually taught!

3. Against all this the Allies have offered little or no defense by counter-propaganda in publication. The idea seems to have been that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 111, Correspondence of Arthur Wood, Box 1, Commission in Spain and Italy Frank J. Marion. No classification marking. "Naval Attaché" is typed at the top of the first page. The report was presumably written by the Naval Attaché, Captain Benton C. Decker. The Ambassador to Spain was Joseph Willard.

the German campaign was too crude, and too wholly based on falsity, to succeed. A somewhat similar campaign of deception and vicious untruth did fail, for instance, in the United States, but the standard of education and information there is far higher than in Spain. In Spain, it has succeeded.

4. Which is not to say that there are not excellent periodicals in Spain which champion the Allies' cause,—such papers as *La Correspondencia de Espana*, and *El Liberal*—which represent the best journalistic thought of Spain, and have taken their stand because of that fact. Similarly, in the free forum of the Ateneo of Madrid, only the other night, a member of parliament was not afraid to inform his hearers that the Allies are fighting for the rights of humanity, not afraid to attack Germany by name, nor to denounce militarism there, and in Spain, not to urge this country to enter the war on the Allies' side for her honor and for her future's sake. Such papers and such speakers, nevertheless, are the minority.

5. The majority in Spain are pro-German—the aristocracy out of respect to their own interests, and the rest, out of ignorance and misconception fostered very largely by the pro-German press, secular and especially Catholic.

6. It has been said that the Allies should not attempt to remedy this situation because the enemy has been working a long time and has succeeded in fixing the views of the people permanently against us, so that to combat their propaganda now would be a waste of effort.

Whether or not such an effort would, or could possibly bring in adequate returns is a question which rests upon two premises; one, whether Spain could be induced or seduced into entering this war against the Allies, and, the other, whether if Spain did go in against us, she could injure the Allies seriously.

7. Those who seriously declare that there is no use in our making an effort to combat the enemy's propaganda, also assert that it is impossible for Spain to enter the war against the Allies, and that even if she did, she could not put up more than a feeble fight.

As for myself, I am of a contrary opinion, viz., of the opinion that Spain can enter the war against us, and that, if she does, it will be a serious matter for the Allies.

8. Therefore, it is my opinion that we should make an effort to combat the propaganda being carried on by the enemy in the newspapers of Spain.

9. I believe that we should by all means do so, because if Spain enters the war on the side of the enemy, it will be that Spain is convinced that the enemy is winning, and to bring this conviction home to Spain, and to obtain the consequent result, is the very object of much of the enemy's printed propaganda.

It is the object of all the articles setting forth the prowess of the invincible German army, the economic and industrial strength of that inexhaustible country, lauding the morale of the people, and the unbroken Christian spirit of its leaders. It is the object of all those other articles picturing England as starved and frightened by U-boats, France as prostrate, Russia in anarchy, Italy defeated and the United States too far away and too careful of her own interests to become of any account whatsoever in this war. These preachments are laid before the Spaniard every day, or twice a day, in his daily paper, for which he has a very great respect; so that it is no marvel that most Spaniards have come to believe these things to be true. If they are true, he argues, then the Allies are defeated, Germany wins; further—following what is the best of the Spanish mind,—it would therefore be very advisable for him to ally himself quickly with the winner that he may at least avoid the victor's wrath that he has not done so sooner. (One hears this line of argument set forth daily by Spaniards—and sometimes one hears it denounced by other Spaniards who understand, and lament, but never deny, their race's modes of reasoning!)

10. I have not mentioned the importance of propaganda from the commercial point of view. I have heard everywhere, from Spaniards and from English themselves, that "the Spanish hate the English". They are being trained to hate the French as heartily. The Spaniard "remembers the Maine,"² and yet, having a nearer object in Gibraltar to remember against the English, and a larger number of points of irritation between him and the French, he would presently forget the Spanish-American war, if he were permitted to, and continue in increasingly friendly relation with the United States,—if for no other reason than because he hates the others worse! But the Germans do not propose to permit the Spaniard to forget the Maine. The incident is dug up and aired in the pro-German press at every opportunity; Spain is continually reminded that the Yankees sought to "besmirch her honor with that base and baseless charge." And the second string to the enemy bow, as played against us, is that we refused the mediation in this war of His Holiness.³

11. I do certainly believe that we should endeavor to prevent the enemy from embittering the Spanish people against us, by a constant

² Reference is to the battleship USS *Maine*, which exploded while at harbor in Havana on February 15, 1898, killing 266. Although Spain played no role in the explosion, at the time the event helped solidify U.S. public opinion against Spain prior to the Spanish-American War.

³ For Pope Benedict XV's August 1 peace proposals and the U.S. response, see *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 43, pp. 482–485, 488–489, and *ibid.*, vol. 44, pp. 57–59. For additional documentation, see *Foreign Relations, 1917*, Supplement 2, *The World War*, vol. I, pp. 161–222.

and determined harping upon these two points, and upon our materialism, and our "picturesque" peculiarities.

It will pay us, strategically and commercially, not to permit ourselves to be undone in this country by German lies and ridicule.

12. The Catholic press of Spain is a formidable influence. Newspapers published with the approval of the church are preferred by the strictest Catholics, and have easiest access to their homes. Although the church holds itself responsible merely for the morals of such papers, it is quite certain that these papers do not present military or political matters in a manner offensive to the church authorities; and, in view of the distortions of fact and the language employed by some such papers, it is amazing of what the church in Spain can bring itself to approve.

13. I believe that we should bring to our side what Catholic papers we can. Some of them would not cost much.⁴

14. Propaganda by pamphlets, books, circulars, etc. exerts an influence when conducted with intelligent consideration of the need of the occasion.

This office has been considering the possibility of reaching the Catholics along these lines. The French have done something. I do not know what the English are doing, except that I have heard they were sending out publications that are not considered suitable for the masses of the people here.

15. The French, the English and the Italian have engaged in propaganda work by cinematograph. The films shown are not always war pictures.

16. I believe that it is possible for Mr. Marion to do exceedingly good work here for us.

17. He has with him some excellent films, which, if shown throughout Spain, and well advertised as American, could not fail to influence the opinion of this country in our favor,—for, after all, Spain is ignorant because she has poor facilities for information not because she is herself inert and unthinking.

Take, for instance, one film Mr. Marion has brought called "The Story of a Grain of Wheat". That film, which shows American agriculture, industry and commerce at its best, would create nothing less than a sensation in the wheat-growing regions of Castile, and I venture to assert that the Spaniard who saw it would go from the show with some respect and admiration for a people who cultivate his own crop on such a scale, by such means, with such success. And in the back of

⁴ This sentence was struck out by an unknown hand.

his head there would begin to germinate a notion that he would better not engage in conflict with such a people.

18. Propaganda by personal advocacy. This is difficult for us because there are few Americans in this country and those few not always of a desirable type. Propaganda by personal relations has been most carefully developed by the enemy; Germans mix with all classes of Spaniards and have got on intimate terms with the people,—a thing which is difficult for a foreigner as a rule.

I have thought that we might do a little along this line if we had here some good American priests, patient and tactful, speaking Spanish well,—if possible, even related to Spanish people in this country.

Some influence might be exerted among the intellectuals by professors of our universities, if they were sent to visit Spain; but such visitors would need to be of our finest,—educated, urbane, masters of Spanish language and customs, and able to address critical audiences upon congenial topics. We possess some such; there is here an opportunity for them to serve their country.

6. Letter From the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel) to President Wilson¹

Washington, December 27, 1917

My dear Mr. President:

Sisson cables that your message has been printed and widely circulated, and that a very sound service has been formed for the handling of our wireless and cable news.²

I gathered a half million feet of film for the Y.M.C.A. for exhibition in the soldiers' houses on the firing line. These pictures show our social, industrial, and war progress. They should be in Russia now, and I

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 93, 1917 Nov. 27–1918 Jan. 7. No classification marking.

² Reference is presumably to Wilson's annual address to Congress of December 4. In telegram 2129 from St. Petersburg, December 22, Sisson reported: "Cabled you detailed report operations December seventeenth. Million copies the President's message printed." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/8) For the text of Wilson's speech, see *Foreign Relations*, [1917], With the Address of the President to Congress, December 4, 1917, pp. ix–xvi.

have cabled Sisson³ to take as much of the film as he wishes, using it in cities for our publicity purposes. This will obviate the necessity of a separate expedition.

Sisson understands he is not to touch the political situation, to avoid all personal entanglements, and that while he is not to consider himself an attaché to the Embassy, he must maintain the most friendly relations with the Ambassador.⁴

The Secretary of State, any number of Senators, and practically every other citizen interested in international affairs, deluge me from day to day with the suggestion that we send to Russia men of Russian birth for the purpose of explaining America's meaning and purposes. I have not thought this wise because the Russian situation changed so from day to day, and demanded such extreme caution in every approach. I have now, however, a list of very remarkable people that it might be well to send; men born in Russia, successful Americans in every way, and able to write and speak authoritatively. What do you think of sending them over?

Propaganda, of course, goes hand in hand with policy. It is impossible for me to do very much in Russia or with Russians until certain decisions are made.⁵ Even were it proper for me to advise, I do not feel that I am sufficiently in possession of facts to give intelligent advice. The people that come to see me, and to whom I attach most importance, however, feel strongly that some definite statement should be made that we stand ready, as in the past, to give whole-heartedly of all that we possess, to relieve distress, to aid in restoration, and to build foundations under military strength, but that this spirit of generous helpfulness can only be given effect in cooperation with a Russian movement that is expressive of the whole people, that has its source in democratic procedure, and its authority from a free electorate.

These portions of Russia where the German prisoners are, where the coal fields are, where the grain belt is—all are in possession of anti-

³ Not found.

⁴ In telegram 1901 to St. Petersburg, December 14, Creel informed Sisson about the "half million feet of motion picture film," and also that "President insists that you avoid political entanglements and personal matters." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 736, 103.9302/6a)

⁵ The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 (November by the Gregorian calendar) led to difficulty in the U.S.-Russia relationship, although diplomatic relations were never formally severed. On December 6, Lansing conveyed to Francis Wilson's instruction that all U.S. representatives in Russia refrain from any direct communication with representatives of the Bolshevik government. (Telegram 1883 to St. Petersburg, December 6; *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Russia, vol. 1, p. 289) The revolution was followed by a civil war between Communists and anti-Communists which continued throughout World War I.

German, anti-Lenine forces. Such a statement would strengthen these forces even while cutting away Bolsheviki supports.

I am not trying to be “ambassadorial,” but simply searching for some light that will enable me to see my own way clearer.⁶

Respectfully,

George Creel
Chairman

⁶ A stamped notation on the first page indicates the letter was acknowledged on December 28. Wilson’s response, however, is dated December 29: “Thank you for your letter of the twenty-seventh about the Russian propaganda. You are taking just the right position. It must be our position for the time being, at any rate, and we must wait to see our way before pushing forward any faster than we are now doing or in any different way.” (Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 93, 1917 Nov. 27–1918 Jan. 7) Both letters are also printed in *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, pp. 367–368, 387.

**7. Cablegram From the Committee on Public Information
Commissioner in St. Petersburg (Sisson) to the Chairman of
the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹**

St. Petersburg, January 3, 1918

If President will restate anti imperialistic war aims and democratic peace requisites of America thousand words or less comma short almost placard paragraphs comma short sentences comma I can get it fed into Germany in great quantities in German translation and can utilize Russian version potently in army and everywhere stop excerpts from previous statement² will not serve stop need is for internal evidence that President is thinking of the Russian and German common folk in their situation of this moment and that he is talking to them stop can handle German translation and printing here paragraph obvious of

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 2, Bullard—Sisson—Russia—Cables. No classification marking. Sent via Western Union. A stamp on the back of the last page reads: “1918 Jan 4 AM 8 31.”

² Reference is presumably to Wilson’s speech of December 4. See footnote 2, Document 6.

course to you that disclosure German trickery against Russia in peace negotiations³ promises to immensely open up our opportunities for publicity and helpfulness stop⁴ with film expedition send supplies of transformers rheostats carbons cement rewinders number four cable stop Gaumont or Pathe machines preferable account convenience local repairs stop intersperse thousand foot comedies with educational reels stop soon as possible themes of some educational firms should be built into emotional dramas five to eight thousand feet stop choose film leader carefully stop no American not kindly and democratic must come in to Russia stop Smith⁵ is competent can handle advertising if necessary and attached him to my staff December first stop first film has gone admirably paragraph presently may be desirable to start our own newspaper stop it is mechanically feasible stop what is your view question would need desk man as capable as Rochester⁶ to get out paper stop would Sam Adams⁷ come to swing writing end devoting himself solely to this work question mark put some general news in cable stop several short items better than one long one stop could you utilize few paragraphs return service stop cable tolls low outgoing stop have you seen Thompson⁸

Sisson

³ Reference is to the peace negotiations between the Central Powers and Russia leading to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, signed on March 3, 1918.

⁴ In an undated note, Creel wrote that after receiving this cable he "went at once to the President, and after some urging, he made his great speech of January 8, 1918, in which he laid down the Fourteen Points." (The note is bound in a volume of collected letters with an introductory note dated March 21, 1931; Library of Congress, Papers of George Creel, Woodrow Wilson and the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1931, Box 1, Vol. I, 1917-1918, 1931) House, however, makes no mention of Creel in his diary entry of January 9 describing the drafting of the speech. (*Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, pp. 550-559) Wilson's speech before a joint session of Congress is printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, vol. I, pp. 12-17.

⁵ Guy Croswell Smith.

⁶ Reference is presumably to Edward S. Rochester, a journalist who was editor of the CPI's publication *Official Bulletin*.

⁷ Reference is presumably to Samuel Hopkins Adams, a journalist who wrote for the CPI.

⁸ William Boyce Thompson. For Thompson's January 3 report on propaganda in Russia, see *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, vol. I, pp. 12-17.

8. **Letter From the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel) to Paul Fuller of the War Trade Board¹**

Washington, January 4, 1918

My dear Mr. Fuller:

I have just heard of an order issued by the Treasury Department at the request of Mr. Oliphant, to the effect that all motion pictures going out of the country should be censored by the Customs House Officers. As a result, the shipments of American propaganda film to Scandinavia and Russia were held up yesterday on the very eve of departure, and it has taken several hours of my time to straighten out this infernal tangle.

Practically every foot of film made in the United States is censored by this Department. Also, before leaving the United States, the consignees must receive a license from the War Trade Board. By our arrangement, these men have been referred to me, and with each of them I am making an arrangement that permits me to pass upon the matter they are taking, but which also gives me the right to make them take a certain amount of our propaganda film with them for incorporation in every program.

For the Customs Officers to try to censor film is as impossible as it is needless. Some of my shipments run from half a million feet to a million and a half. Not only would projection rooms have to be provided, but it would take a force of five men working day and night for a month to censor the material. When one considers that it has already been censored, it will be seen that the only result is confusion, expense and delay. Will you please be kind enough to take this matter up at once, and have the order withdrawn as far as New York is concerned at the present time.

Will you also give explicit orders that no motion picture license is to be issued until the man has been referred to this Committee. This will prevent the exportation of any film but that which has already been approved, and will enable us to force our educational matter upon every exporter.²

Sincerely,

*Chairman*³

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 10, Hart, Charles. No classification marking.

² For the changing regulations and requirements of film exportation, see *Film and Propaganda in America: A Documentary History*, vol. 1, *World War I*, Documents 119–138.

³ Creel did not sign this copy of the letter.

9. **Cablegram From the Committee on Public Information
Commissioner in St. Petersburg (Sisson) to the Chairman of
the Committee on Public Information (Creel)**¹

St. Petersburg, January 13, 1918

Presidents speech placarded on walls Petrograd this morning² stop one hundred thousand copies will have this display within three days stop three hundred thousand handbills will be distributed here within five days stop proportionate display Moscow by end of week stop YMCA agreed distribute million Russian and million German copies along line stop other channels into Germany being opened stop Ivestia official government newspaper nearly million circulation through Russia printed speech in full Saturday³ morning with comment welcoming it as sincere and hopeful stop much of other newspaper comment still cynical but shifting rapidly as speech makes its own mighty appeal stop German version in hands printer now stop calls editorial⁴ useful also Thompsons interview⁵ stop what was comment Nova Mir comma New York Bolshevick paper stop place third allotment my credit New York stop will hold balance second allotment in New York as moving picture reserve stop will have to transfer third to Russia stop before I send bank instructions as to method cable rate of rouble exchange stop first transfer was unfavorable as purchasing value of rouble is only ten cents stop in this case all right to deposit with National Bank Commerce

Sisson⁶

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 2, Bullard—Sisson—Russia—Cables. No classification marking. Sent via the Postal Telegraph-Commercial Cables Company. The time “1:27 a.m.” is printed on the last page of the cablegram. Creel forwarded the cablegram to Wilson on January 15. (*Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, p. 596)

² See footnote 4, Document 7. Telegrams from several Embassies reporting on the reception of the President’s speech are printed in *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Supplement 1, *The World War*, vol. I, pp. 17–28 and 32–36.

³ January 12.

⁴ Reference is presumably to *War for Peace* (1918), a publication in the CPI’s *War Information Series* edited by Arthur D. Call.

⁵ Not further identified.

⁶ In telegram 2363 from St. Petersburg, February 13, Sisson further reported: “Circulation of the President’s message January eighth practically completed. Totals three million two hundred and fifty thousand copies without account of results of separate printing and distribution at Odessa, Tiflis, Rostoff, Vladivostok, Chita and Omsk.” According to a handwritten notation on the first page of the telegram, Creel was sent a “paraphrase” of the February 13 telegram on February 18. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 731, 103.93/45)

10. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Russia¹

Washington, January 23, 1918

21112. For Sisson from Creel: Emphasize following points in all publicity work. Stop. Give them to your writers and speakers and drive them home in every possible manner:

I. That the United States has no other motive in waging war against the German Government than to overthrow autocracy and to protect democracy from the intrigue and physical might which threatens it.

II. That it is folly to believe that the United States would give thousands of lives and expend billions of dollars in prosecution of a war for commercial advantages, which, even without considering the loss of life and the consequent weakening of the industrial power of the republic, could not for decades compensate the nation for the sums expended in carrying on the war.

III. That the United States, if a German victory would not be a deadly menace to its own independence and free institutions and to those of other democratic nations, could have remained neutral in the war and through commerce and industry accumulated vast wealth and become the great financial power in the world.

IV. That the capitalists of the United States would have acted without reason and contrary to their interests to have favored a war for the sake of insuring a few hundred millions of debts due them by the Entente Governments when the war would impose billions upon the United States, which would have to be paid by taxes of which the great bulk would be collected from these same capitalists, whose business enterprises would be disorganized and jeopardized by war.

V. That the entry of the United States into the war against its financial and industrial interests is certain evidence that it considered its own and the world's democracy in grave peril from Prussian aggression, particularly the newly arisen democracy of Russia.

VI. That every class of the population in the United States and every political party are solidly behind the Government in pressing the war through to a victorious conclusion regardless of cost in life or treasure. COMPUB.

Polk

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/12a. No classification marking. Marked "Seen" by Alvey Adey on January 23. Patchin initialed the telegram.

11. Memorandum by the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹

Washington, undated

Memorandum for an American Bureau of Public Information in Europe

Pressure from various quarters has been brought to bear on the Army Authorities to undertake Propaganda along the lines of the different European organizations. Both the British and French maintain bureaus in the allied and neutral countries each one considering its own national interest as well as that of the allied cause.

Thus far, our only "Propaganda" has been through the Press Division of the Intelligence Section of the American Expeditionary Forces which has charge of public relations and of censorship. It has supplied information freely to all who wished it, distributed photographs in allied countries and extended unusual facilities to influential civilians and writers and correspondents for seeing our Army.

Any organization that we may develop in the future should be under Government direction. Volunteer organizations will not only overlap but will assume a semi-official capacity if they receive official assistance necessary for efficiency, and, unless they carry out the spirit of Government's intentions, may produce mischievous results in a work which requires the most delicate possible handling. Dismissing the Volunteer System as impracticable, we may follow one of two courses.

I. The Press Division may extend its work along present lines by an increase of personnel and a small appropriation which might come from the War Department.

II. We might establish a central bureau in Paris where the Press Division already has an office and branch bureaus in London, Rome and Madrid, the Central Bureau being in liaison with the Committee of Public Information in Washington and the Intelligence Section of the Army. Our policy should be to stiffen the moral[e] and determination of the allied countries by the presentation of the immense power which America could exert against the Germans when our preparations are complete. It would counteract German propaganda and other propaganda which has had such serious results in Italy for example, and by

¹ Source: *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 46, pp. 200–203. The original notes that the memorandum is dated "c. Jan. 31, 1918." All brackets are in the original. © 1984 by Princeton University Press.

the exposition of American thoughts and ideals, remedy the too common scepticism of our motives among the masses in the allied countries who can not conceive that we are not in the war for territorial or commercial gains. After peace negotiations had begun, the organization would still be serviceable in its influence as a means of reflecting our national aims.

The chairman of the central bureau in Paris should be a man of broad European experience, and the branch bureaus in London, Madrid and Rome and the Scandinavian countries should be directed by men who knew the country to which they were assigned sympathetically and spoke the language fluently, including an eminent scholar, a practical man of affairs, an economist, a journalist and others who would reach different institutions and classes of Society. Upon the choice of these men and the character of the chairman would depend the results of the work which would be carried on in a dignified, modest and thorough manner in keeping with the character of the New America as opposed to the America with which Europeans associate boasting, flamboyancy and commercialism.

FIXED CHARGES FOR AN EUROPEAN
BUREAU OF AMERICAN INFORMATION

| | Annually |
|--|------------|
| Rent of offices in Paris, London, Rome, Madrid, Rotterdam, Berne, Christian[i]a, Stockholm, Copenhagen and Petrograd | \$24,000. |
| Stenographers, clerks and offices expenses | \$50,000. |
| Salaries of five assistants in each branch at the rate of \$250. to \$500. monthly | \$240,000. |
| Total of Fixed Charges | \$314,000. |

The principal assistants would be expected, as a matter of patriotiam [patriotism] as well as of wisdom in the policy of such work, to give their services for small remuneration. Out of an appropriation of \$500,000. say \$176,000 would be left for printing, travel and emergencies of the organization. One assistant at the Central Bureau should be am [an] accountant who would act as auditor. All employees would be subject to a month's notice. No moneys should be spent in such a manner that the record of the expenditure would not bear public investigation.

1. Sound ethics as well as sound policy apparently require that our people should be told the truth in some detail of the present situation of the Allies. The facts had better come from the government now than later from other sources which may play into the hands of critics.

2. Allied representations of the danger of the Germans winning a military decision on the Western Front should be considered in relation to the Allies' desire to have us committed to the war with our last drop of blood and last dollar to gain ends, which, in some instances, are not in keeping with our declared purpose in the war.

3. In any event a campaign of education as to the actualities of the present situation should be inaugurated at home. The only force which will be convincing to the German General Staff in its survey of the situation is military force and the building of the bridge across the Atlantic which will bring military force to bear upon the German Army. Any preparations, even any public emotion, which is a diversion from this purpose will only play into the hands of the German military party which judges our effectiveness only by its measure of the power of our blows and our potential blows. The response of our people to the truth should be so determined and concrete in its warlike intensity that the German Staff will not mistake our meaning; for this is the best weapon to place in the President's hands for the earliest possible ending of the war.

4. The French government should be informed of our purpose in telling our people the facts in order that the French government may, if it chooses, use its censorship in suppressing what may be harmful to French morale while strengthening to our own.

5. It is common talk among the French, and in a lesser degree among the English, masses that we are willing to loan the Allies money[,] to subscribe to Red Cross funds and provide ambulanciers but we are not willing to shed our blood. As the most convincing proof of our determination our trained troops, no matter how small their numbers, should, even at the expense of heavy casualties [casualties], play a part against any great German offensive on the Western Front which will be well heralded in Europe.

6. In the event of a disaster to the French Army prevision requires that we safeguard our army, and, in the extreme event, join the British Army using British bases for future operations.

7. Such is the character of the French people and such the effect of the strain that they have borne for more than three years that every possible influence [influence] should be exerted to stiffen their morale with conviction [conviction] of our strength in order that they may withstand the shock of another great offensive which will undoubtedly be directed against their sector if the German[s] decide to make a supreme effort for a decision on the Western Front.

12. Report Prepared in the Division of Foreign Press, Committee on Public Information¹

Washington, February 1, 1918

Report of the Division of Foreign Press (cable) up to
February 1, 1918

The underlying purpose of this Division is to help in the dissemination of news regarding America with special reference to making clear the reasons why this country entered the war, its purposes, military preparations and efforts. America is appealing to the good sense and democratic instincts of the world. Such an appeal lacks reality unless it reaches the newspaper readers of the world. This particular Division deals with "spot" news i.e., material requiring dissemination by telegram, cable or radio.

Speaking generally, it is fair to say that America has largely been misunderstood throughout the world and developments in this country have been badly or inadequately presented in the foreign press. This is no new condition. America for years has been unfortunately advertised. With some notable exceptions, it can be stated that brief items, often sensational in character and never with background or proportion, have constituted the news sent from this country. Many important news distributing centers have received no direct news from here.

1: This Division is expected to be familiar with news channels throughout the world and particularly with the channels through which news regarding America is carried.

2: It seeks, in every way, to encourage press agencies and correspondents to increase the amount of American news sent abroad and, wherever possible, assists in obtaining access to news and aids in securing improved transmission facilities. It establishes cooperative relations with correspondents of foreign papers and with the press agencies.

3: The Division sends, to wherever it seems necessary, a supplementary news service. As a matter of policy, such service is not of a character to compete with news handled by established news agencies or that sent out by special correspondents. Such service is, in truth, a supplementary service designed to meet the requirements of the present time for a just presentation of the American point of view.

4: The Division stands ready to distribute abroad textually, import communications, such as presidential addresses. The general policy in handling such communications is to transmit them to the news centers

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 16, Poole, Ernest Feb–June 1918. No classification marking.

of the world and there to turn them over to the established press agencies for further distribution. At places where such arrangements cannot be made, because of the absence of press agencies or for other reasons, the messages are sent to the American official representative to be given out by him to the local press.

5: The Division keeps in direct contact with the State Department and exercises the greatest care in no way to misinterpret American policy. Arrangements are in the making for close cooperation with the War Trade Board.

On January 31st the following services were being sent out:

1: A cable service of approximately two hundred-fifty words a day to the Committee's representative in Petrograd. The Root Mission and others familiar with the situation in Russia urged that an American news service be sent there.² At that time a service of about one hundred words a day was being sent from New York to Petrograd by the Viestnik Agency, then an official Russian news agency. Understanding was reached with this agency for extension of its service to four or five hundreds words a day. This arrangement was terminated after having been tried for a few weeks and later the present service was instituted. The service usually consists of several short items, which over a period of time, are intended to give a picture of developments in America. It is the only direct news service from this country to Russia.

2: On November 29th a service of approximately twelve hundred words a day was started to France. This service is sent by Navy Radio and intercepted by a French radio station. The original intention was that this service should go into Russia and arrangements were made to have the messages retransmitted and intercepted by the Russian station at Moscow but owing to the chaotic situation in Russia the messages for some time have not been received in that country. The service to France goes to the Maison de la Presse for distribution in France, and is telegraphed to the American Legation at Berne where it is also given out for publication. Recently the service has been sent from Berne to Rome.

3: This radio service for a while was intercepted by the station at Darien on the Isthmus of Panama where copies were given out to the local papers and the messages rebroadcasted for the benefit of a number of radio stations in the Caribbean Basin. Later this service was replaced by a service telegraphed to San Diego. There the service is translated into Spanish and radioed from San Diego to Darien for reradioing. The present plan permits the sending of items of especial interest to South America.

4: Arrangements are pending for extending the news service into Stockholm, Venezuela and to various points in Asia.

5: Numerous conversations have been had with representatives of the news agencies with the idea of encouraging them to extend and improve their news services.

² See Documents 2 and 3.

This Division handled the world wide distribution of the presidential addresses of December 4th and January 8th³ and sent to South America and Asia a summary of Secretary Lansing's review of Colonel House's report on the special Mission to Europe.⁴

The presidential messages were quite generally printed in full in the leading newspapers of the world. Such publication has gone a long way towards making clear to the world the American attitude and purposes.

As illustrative of the way in which presidential addresses are handled by the press associations, the following statement by the Kokusai Agency of Japan is interesting. After describing how the message was handled in the United States to San Francisco the statement goes on to say:—

"It had traveled overland for nearly four thousand miles and then commenced its long under the sea trip from San Francisco to the Island of Guam. Here again the long message was taken down and 'relayed' once more for China and Japan where the Reuter agent in Shanghai and the general manager of Kokusai had been notified to accept it. This notification was received late on Tuesday night the 4th, and again on Wednesday the 5th.⁵ During the afternoon of the fifth the first section of about one hundred words came in on the wire to the headquarters of the Kokusai Agency at Sojuro-cho. Here all preparation had been made to give this great message a fitting reception and treatment; the editors, translators, manifolders and messengers had all been organized for the work. Experienced editors taking turns, received the telegrams as they came. These were immediately rewritten on the typewriter to dictation of the editor. Short "takes" were passed to translators and then to the chief translator in Japanese and English for reediting. The retouched and compared sheets were then rewritten and passed to the manifolder for the machine work of the reproduction of the copies necessary.

"It was a busy and interesting night for, owing to the extreme pressure on the local wires the matter came slowly. Fifty-two messages of between seventy and one hundred words were received and each one passed through the same machine.

"The utmost care was taken to prevent premature publication of any part of the message before the whole was ready for simultaneous distribution.

"The first completed copies were put upon the outgoing trains for the far out-of-town newspapers. The first of the copies of the message in full English and translation was delivered at the general manager's office early in the morning—and immediately this was approved, a full copy was sent to the American Ambassador. After the copy was

³ See footnote 2, Document 6, and footnote 4, Document 7.

⁴ Lansing forwarded his summary of House's report on the American Mission to Europe and the Inter Allied Conference to Wilson on December 27, 1917. See *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 45, pp. 368–369.

⁵ December 4 and 5, 1917.

delivered the 'release' was given and the bicycle messengers rushed out so that every newspaper would receive it promptly and without discrimination.

"The news agencies which, cooperating with the Kokusai, distribute the Kokusai News Agency service to the provincial newspapers were supplied at the same moment and then came the wider and wilder scenes in the offices of the news agencies and newspapers in Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama and Kobe and throughout the provinces. Literally hundreds of telephones were commandeered and from one end of Japan to the other the contents of the message were distributed and made ready for publication. The scope of the distribution of the Kokusai news agency matter was never before, perhaps, more thoroughly marked and, indeed, as the accompanying tributes and acknowledgements will show, never so much appreciated or more thoroughly recognized.

"One of the remarkable evidences of the newspaper enterprise in Japan was shown by the great Osaka afternoon newspapers, which, a few hours after the message was delivered at the offices, had the message printed on their afternoon Osaka editions three hundred miles away."

The Division limits itself to sending out news of events here, believing that, in the long run, the best propaganda is merely to let American events tell their own story. The editor abroad is given items that he can reasonably be expected to print. The items are varied in appeal and always have a current interest. No "cooked-up" propaganda is distributed.

This Division offices in connection with the Naval Press Censor. The Press Censor, of course, sees that no military information or malicious statements are cabled out of the country. The censorship is preventative; this Division has the constructive problem of seeing that the American story is adequately told.

Indicative of the willingness of the great press agencies to cooperate, the following quotation from a letter written by the Managing Director of Reuters⁶ is interesting:—

"We carry out joyfully the instructions conveyed to us for the handling of these telegrams. The amount of work entailed in the telegraphing all over the world and in the translating most accurately into French of the despatch of three thousand words is literally gigantic. That we undertake it gladly we have already said, for we know that we are rendering good and true aid to the American government and to the allied powers."

Until very recently the staff consisted of the director and Mr. Perry Arnold, who was at one time in charge of the United Press bureau in Washington and later was foreign editor for that organization. Lately

⁶ Not found.

the staff has been increased by the addition of Mr. Paul V. Perry, who came from the Detroit Free Press where he was telegraph editor. Abroad, the work of the Division is represented in Petrograd by Mr. Sisson; in Moscow by Mr. Bullard; in Berne by Mrs. Whitehouse, and in London by Mr. H. N. Rickey.

13. Memorandum From the Chief of the Military Intelligence Section, Department of War General Staff (Van Deman) to the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹

Memorandum No. 8

Washington, February 7, 1918

SUBJECT

Liaison between Army Intelligence and U.S. Foreign Education Campaign.

A campaign of foreign education (or U.S. propaganda) in order to be intelligently prosecuted relies, of course, on accurate information. The following is an outline of the kinds of information which will be needed, together with an indication of what can be supplied by the Army Intelligence Section.

1. (a) The Propaganda Section will want to keep up with the latest changes of popular feeling within Germany as regards the United States. It will want to know any notable failures to inform, such as the mutilated publication of President Wilson's messages or the garbled accounts of Secretary Baker's statements on our armed forces. It will want to know of any marked misconception Germans have in regard to our war aims, etc.

(b) The Army Intelligence Section with General Pershing now gets the latest German newspapers, translates and estimates them, as well as the latest Swiss and Scandinavian and Dutch papers.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 111, Correspondence of Arthur Wood, Box 2, R.H. Van Deman. No classification marking. An unknown hand made minor editorial revisions throughout the memorandum, which have been incorporated into the text. This memorandum is attached to a February 28 letter from Arthur Woods of the Foreign Section of the CPI to Colonel Van Deman, in which Woods wrote: "I hope that you are carrying out this plan and will let us have the information mentioned in the different items as they come in.

"We are particularly in need of anything to throw light on ways in which public opinion anywhere in the world is being misinformed; and the effect produced by the educational work this Committee is now doing."

2. (a) The Propaganda Section will want to keep in touch with popular feeling in Germany as hidden behind what the newspapers give.

(b) The Army Intelligence Section collates reports of agents within Germany, of travelers from Germany, and of mail censors' findings, as supplied by the Allies, and by our own State, War, Navy and Justice Departments. These reports generally tell a very different story from that in the German newspapers.

3. (a) Propaganda will want to know the run of feeling among soldiers in the enemy trenches.

(b) Army Intelligence collects information from prisoners and deserters, overhears talk in enemy trenches, and often, through patrols and raids, gets enemy letters and documents.

4. (a) Propaganda will want to know actual conditions in the enemy trenches, which affect morale, such as amount of food, conditions of living, friction between infantry and artillery, jealousies between Prussians and Bavarians, what the soldiers read, how often they get relief, etc.

(b) Army Intelligence,—through patrols and raids, as well as by aerial observation, and from prisoners and deserters,—has the answer to the above question.

5. (a) Propaganda will want to know the exact character of certain divisions in certain sectors, e.g., the location of divisions just transferred from the East Front and probably undermined with Bolsheviki, the location of Saxon regiments, probably with a big percentage of socialists, location of Bavarians, jealous of Prussians, or of Czecho-Slovaks likely to desert.

(b) Army Intelligence aims to locate every division in the German Army.

6. (a) Propaganda will want to know of any German army orders affecting its work. For example, the reported General Army Order to shoot any soldier caught reading propaganda dropped from the air might make it advisable to restrict U.S. propaganda to small printed paper slips, which a soldier could conceal.

(b) Army Intelligence aims to supply such information.

7. (a) Propaganda will most of all want to know *what treatment is meted out to its papers in the German trenches.*

(b) Army Intelligence can get some of this information from prisoners, from aerial observation and from patrols and raids. It can attempt to get it from agents in Germany, can have them instructed to look out for such information.²

² An unknown hand wrote the following addition to this sentence: "+ can put them in Germany for the purpose of finding out."

8. (a) Propaganda will want to know what methods of distribution work best, aeroplane, trench mortar or patrol, and what new methods are possible, such as balloons or kites.

(b) Army Intelligence can make observations and studies of these problems.

9. (a) Propaganda will want to know other possibilities of extending distribution, such as loading printed matter into machines of our Allies engaged in reconnaissance, fighting or bombing, or such as distribution by Allied patrols.

(b) Army Intelligence can get information on this.

10. (a) Propaganda will want to know what methods have been tried and discarded; also the principal Teuton tricks, so as to avoid them.

(b) Army Intelligence is now making a study of what the Allies have done in aeroplane propaganda; what methods they still follow, and what won't work; also what the Russians are now doing on the East Front; also what the Teutons have done, especially their successes, such as the misleading of the Italian Second Army last October.³

R. H. Van Deman⁴

Colonel, General Staff

Chief, Military Intelligence Section

³ Reference is presumably to the Battle of Caporetto, which began on October 24, 1917, and in which the German army advanced rapidly against Italian troops.

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

14. Telegram From the Embassy in Mexico to the Department of State¹

Mexico City, February 18, 1918, 5 p.m.

790. From Murray to Creel. "I am proceeding in accordance with instructions February 16th.² Suggest personal drawing account in lieu of salary maximum three hundred monthly from February 18th. I have shown Mooser³ all our correspondence to date. While I am ignorant of the nature his recommendation as inferred from third and sixth sentences your cable, am loath at present to indorse ten thousand monthly or any cumbersome local committee plan. Let us go slowly until we get our bearings. Emphatically certain that it would be distinctly injudicious to involve Embassy or Consulate directly or overtly. Nothing to be gained and disadvantage obvious. Committee's branch here should function on its own responsibility, working independently with close relations with Embassy understood and in coordination with other friendly bodies to obviate duplication and overlapping, but always maintaining its supremacy in influence and control. Our work must be done aggressively, openly, and cleanly with due regard for dignity and conservatism and a complete avoidance of methods which would place us on level with German propagandists. I shall investigate with a view to possible action later expediency of encouraging friendly newspaper by openly purchasing and using space at regular advertising rates or otherwise assisting them in reducing their expenses for paper."

Summerlin

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 731, 103.93/48. No classification marking. Blue. Received February 19 at 1:46 a.m. A handwritten notation at the top of the telegram reads: "Copy to Creel. Feb 19, 1918. File RBM [?]." Beneath this notation Patchin wrote: "Copy to Creel + File. PHP."

² In telegram 771 to Mexico City, February 16, Creel instructed Murray that he was the "official representative Committee in Mexico and I want you to report on all press matters and propositions for financial and educational cooperation with various allied and private committees." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 736, 103.9302/40d)

³ George Mooser, CPI representative sent to Mexico to take charge of a "film campaign." (Telegram 755 to Mexico City, February 9; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 736, 103.9302/32b)

15. Telegram From the Embassy in Russia to the Department of State¹

St. Petersburg, February 19, 1918, 3 p.m.

2388. For Creel from Sisson. "February 19th. This is in reply to your open undated cable requesting survey of general situation. My telegram number 2363, thirteenth instant,² State Department evidently had not reached you when you sent message, as it answers some of your inquiries.

On future situation, if Germany does not take St. Petersburg, publicity work can go on with great ultimate after war advantage to America. An all Russia distribution for pamphlets is already nearly complete on large scale. An excellent pamphlet Bullard has just finished writing, "Letters to a Russian Friend",³ now on press. News pamphlets and pamphlet editions various Wilson speeches all feeding out in increasing volume. Printing plant here that compares well with best in America relies almost solely on our work and helps enthusiastically. Red, white and blue bands appear upon Bullard's pamphlet. Covered distribution of January eighth message in detail in previous cable. Can add that German version did get over German line at center and parts of Austrian line, the whole allotment. Speech of February eleventh⁴ is being translated into German and Austrian and chief effort will be to get into Austria. A soldier organization will do the work and the plan is completed. Distribution should start in a week, fortunes of war permitting.

Cable service has got its roots down and its work at both ends is beginning to please me. Compub cable brought the only copy Presi-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 731, 103.93/54. No classification marking. Green. Received on February 24 at 9:17 a.m. Patchin wrote on the first page of the telegram: "Paraphrase sent to Creel. File. PHP."

² See footnote 6, Document 9.

³ Reference is presumably to *Letters of an American Friend*. See *Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information*, p. 251.

⁴ Wilson's speech to a joint session of Congress on February 11 assessed Austro-German peace proposals made in response to his Fourteen Points address of January 8. Wilson reiterated four points: "each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent"; "peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game"; "every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned"; and "all well defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world." For the text of the speech, see *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Supplement 1, *The World War*, vol. I, pp. 108–113.

dent's last speech into Russia. Newspaper presentation sufficient to obviate the necessity of bill-posting here. Distribution three hundred thousand handbills begins in the morning and Moscow will have both posters and handbills. Except for German and Austrian distribution am letting Pub as test do this message job without help from me.

General outlook therefore attractive until you put it to the test of immediate war utility in a country distracted by civil war and warred upon from without by a country which it may fight defensively, but not with any intention of helping the Allies. They are wild internationalists who not only in the beginning, but until lately, were willing to have German support for their own ends of revolution. Germany thought she could direct the storm, but the storm had *such* intention. No other country who gives either aid or kindness will fare better. Anything offered short of military aid will be accepted, and will not count in the balance against the intended program of agitation in the United States and among Entente nations. So on strict basis war, utility is lacking for what the Bolsheviks will do they will do anyhow; but indirectly America gains by having America all the time presented, and the President's influence in the crucial time of future general peace-making grows largely through a continued Russian drive. I recommend that the whole news and circulation plan go ahead to the end of the war or until Russia is at actual peace.

On meetings and oratory I have probably disappointed you. How useless they would have been you can not appreciate until I tell you face to face. Would have liked to have started outspoken Government owned news paper, but man and mechanical power were both lacking. Has taken a week, for instance, to get a permit for stringing one electric wire for projecting machine. It takes me three days to get cash money from bank. In such sheer unexampled disorganization of business life it was sounder to let newspapers themselves be disseminators. Bullard will try out a cartoon poster idea later. Believe you are forwarding cartoons and posters to him now. If not, do so.

With film publicity I have preparation and no films. Neither Bernstein or Mott party have come, or can come through Finland. Have figured that I could go out week after Bernstein got here. Supposed from outset you know as well as we that for nearly a month we have been cut off from the world except by cable. Government ice breaker carried out Madam Koloutai⁵ and body of World Revolutionists day or so ago, but Finnish war now blocks travel. No couriers. Will come out earliest possible date.

⁵ Aleksandra Kollontai, Russian feminist and head of the Commissariat for Social Welfare.

Germany any day can unmake most of our plans. She declared armistice ended noon today and is advancing already toward Revel and Dvinsk.⁶ If advance is beyond Revel we will know that Petrograd will fall in three to five days additional. We will not be here then. Government, if it survives internal shock, will go to Moscow. Embassies too. Will in that case send Bullard and group to Moscow, and if cannot get away to the North will go myself. If silence falls do not worry. We will be safe. Give my love to family. If Germans do not advance beyond Revel things may go on as usual, but I think I see the Bolsheviks going out and worse and faster peace makers coming in. Finally, we will keep going as if the future were serene. Good luck."

Francis

⁶ Peace negotiations (see footnote 3, Document 7) had stalled on February 10, and the Germans resumed their military attacks on Russia.

16. Editorial Note

In Switzerland, a dispute arose between Embassy officials and the Committee on Public Information (CPI) representative in Bern over the degree to which the latter's work should be publicly acknowledged. Vira Whitehouse, CPI Commissioner in Switzerland, argued that she should be allowed to operate openly as a CPI representative. Writing to CPI Chairman George Creel on February 8, 1918, she reported that "I have found on approaching editors of both classes of papers in Switzerland that such information as your Department furnishes, developed in the way I have already proposed to you, meets a warm welcome, especially when connected with an exchange of news." However, Whitehouse noted, not all Embassy officials were in accord with this approach. Specifically citing Secretary of the Embassy in Bern Hugh Robert Wilson, Whitehouse wrote: "Our main difference of opinion is that he fears a frank news policy and I am convinced that it will be great value in view of the basic resemblances between the Swiss Government and our own and this conviction has been strengthened by the conversations I have had already with editors and officials. The other method to my mind resembles too closely that German method which has brought the word propaganda into disrepute." (Telegram 2599 from Bern, February 8; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/24)

For his part, Wilson wrote Creel on the same day that "I feel that acknowledged Governmental activities in propaganda are highly inadvisable. Since the beginning of the war German propaganda has flooded Switzerland to such an extent that public opinion in this country turns away in a natural reaction from any thing that tends to that direction." He continued: "Furthermore I am convinced that one article written by an editor from conviction of his heart is of more value than tons of literature and that personal and unofficial relations with editors to explain America's views is the best type of propaganda." He concluded: "I feel that if she were a recognized emissary from the American Committee on Public Information this would preclude her from reaching such relations with the editors of newspapers." (Telegram 2600 from Bern, February 8; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 736, 103.9302/25)

Carl W. Ackerman, a journalist and colleague of Presidential adviser Colonel Edward House, wrote to House immediately after Whitehouse and Wilson wrote to the Department, arguing against Whitehouse's open work: "Public opinion not influenced by editorials but by news. German propaganda which is successful is German news despatches. Our failure here is that little news from America printed. Result that no one believes American war preparations serious. Eighty-five percent news despatches concerning America speak of mistakes, failures, miscalculations, food and coal shortages and of small army. Perhaps fifteen percent constructive or favorable. Establishment official bureau here would meet same reception as establishment of Swiss official bureau at Washington. Everything submitted will be thrown away. If America thinks its bureau an exception it is mistaken. Swiss friend just returned from America, writing articles for NEUE ZURCHER ZEITUNG was instructed by editors to recast some statements favourable to America so as not to antagonize German readers. Editor stated neutral policy of paper had offended Germans and editor was informed that unless attitude friendlier coal would be cut off by Germany.

"Believe Mrs. Whitehouse can work effectively in certain lines but American Government should not permit her to open bureau as instructed. We need not a bureau but despatches distributed through an American news agency such as Associated Press or United Press. We must compete with German and Austrian agencies because they, and not editorials and personality, influence public opinion." (Telegram 2613 from Bern, February 9; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 736, 103.9302/26)

Creel responded to Whitehouse's telegram on February 16. He informed her that James Kerney, CPI representative in Paris, was scheduled to arrive in Europe soon and instructed her: "Let your situation

wait until arrival of Kerney and shipments when clear cut decision will be made. Stop. Original instructions unaltered and President personally instructed State Department of his approval of our plans but think wise to wait before establishing office and presenting letters. Stop. Continue survey and unofficial contacts. Stop.” (Telegram 1506 to Bern, February 16; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/40f)

Whitehouse discussed her perception of this incident in her memoirs, *A Year as a Government Agent*, pages 208–211, and reprinted relevant documents on pages 289–316.

**17. Letter From the Committee on Public Information
Commissioner in Switzerland (Whitehouse) to the Chairman
of the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹**

Bern, February 24, 1918

My dear Mr. Creel,

I at once answered your telegram of February 16th—in which the chief point was that I was to wait for a clear cut decision and in the meanwhile continue my “unofficial contact”.² You cannot realize the impossibility of what you ask. No one is in Switzerland except for a definite work. I am asked by everyone why I am here, and if I am to have any real relations with them I must explain.

Dr. Schleiken³ the editor of the *Freie Zeitung*, a man in whom everyone has the greatest confidence, approves entirely of the manner in which I propose to conduct our work, if I remain.

Mr. Haguenin⁴ of the French Bureau de la Presse, has come to approve entirely after I explained to him.

The Legation here is in the hands of Mr. Wilson,⁵ a young man—energetic but raw—32 years old, who has not been home for seven

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 25, Whitehouse, Vira. No classification marking.

² For Creel’s instructions, in telegram 1506 to Bern, February 16, see Document 16. Whitehouse’s response is in telegram 2685 from Bern, February 19. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/37)

³ Hans Schlieben, editor of *Freie Zeitung*.

⁴ Émile Haguenin, Director of the Press Bureau at the French Embassy in Bern.

⁵ Hugh Robert Wilson, Secretary of the Embassy in Bern from April 18, 1917.

years except twice for a few weeks. And a Mr. Allen Dulles,⁶ a young man 25 years old, a nephew of Mr. Lansing's. A nice young man, but to my mind very ridiculous in his extreme fear of simplicity. He asked me to come for a conference one day—said he had discovered a way out of our difficulties which would delight both departments at home. It was that I was to represent myself as the agent of the Associated Press, who was here not to give news but to send news back to them! The fact that it was as much a lie as the women and children fiction⁷ recommended it strongly to him. Several days ago two envelopes of feature stuff came for me in the pouch, yesterday he told me they were there and I could have them if I came for them. He said if the Legation sent them to me and the hotel people (the porters!) noticed it, they might take it as a recognition of my official position. Please laugh! That's why I am telling you all this silly stuff. I should like to be Secretary of State for a few months and reorganize the department—let in some modern daylight.

These two young men, for instance, are steeped in old traditions of intrigue and double dealing. The system of our diplomatic service develops from young men of independent incomes, a class who did very well doubtless at courts, such as the Russian autocracy and the Germans used to have, but they do not represent our own democracy.—One thing about our system which I approve entirely is the appointing of ministers and of ambassadors from outside the service. Of course the little secretaries hate it and say it threatens destruction to everything because the ministers and ambassadors come and ignore a great deal of the traditional cobwebby musty effects, which seem all important to the trained diplomat. These diplomats are not American, they are not democratic, they are not representative, they and their wives often even make fun of their own country and country people. I spent a winter at the Hague with the Lloyd Bryces,⁸ a winter in Berlin with the Gerards,⁹ and here I am in intimate daily contact with the Legation here—and I think it is time to bring our diplomatic service abreast

⁶ Allen Welsh Dulles, Second Secretary of the Embassy in Bern from April 18, 1917.

⁷ In telegram 1379 to Bern, January 22, Acting Secretary of State Polk informed the Embassy that Whitehouse had been appointed "for the purpose of studying conditions relation [*relating*] to women and children" and that "It is not now and never has been the policy of the United States to conduct persuasive activities in any foreign country. It relies entirely upon frank and open presentation of its aims and objects, and the secret and corrupt methods of its enemies have never been attempted and will not be." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302/12)

⁸ Lloyd Stephens Bryce, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Netherlands from November 16, 1911, until September 10, 1913.

⁹ James Watson Gerard, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Germany from October 29, 1913, until the United States and Germany broke diplomatic relations on February 3, 1917.

with the times! There, I am doing again what you told me not to, I am behaving like a statesman and not like a press representative. When you are President, please make me Secretary of State; I KNOW I could do it.

To get back to business:

FREIE ZEITUNG. The Legation is all excited over the attacks by the Germanophile Swiss press on the Freie Zeitung because of the statement contained in literature dropped by aeroplanes in Germany that “we” are supporting and aiding the German liberals in Switzerland. If the members of the Legation had ever been in a political campaign they would not lose their poise so completely over every attack of the enemy—Dr. Schlieken takes it very calmly—just as I used to take MRS LANSING’S¹⁰ and Mrs Wadsworth’s¹¹ attacks on me—as a pacifist! because I worked for suffrage in war times.

The point of the difficulty is this: That the Swiss have already tried once to suppress the Freie Zeitung on the ground that its opposition to the German government was against their neutrality laws—At that time a newspaper protest came from America against a democracy like Switzerland suppressing a paper simply because it urged democracy in Germany. It is feared that if these assertions (about our support) are continued, a new attack might be made against the Freie Zeitung on the ground that it is not a sincere expression of German Democracy, but a subsidized attempt at propaganda on our part. Dr. Schlieken thought it would be just as well if these assertions were not repeated, hence I mentioned it in my cable of February 22nd. I said in the cable Feb 19th that I would assume the responsibility of taking an office.¹² The condition here about rooms and offices is worse here than in Washington, because there at least you can bribe people to rent their houses and offices. Here the Swiss who have lived through generations in the same rooms won’t even be bribed. Ever since I have been here I have been agitating and advertising for an office—at last I found a dark little hole of four rooms I could have beginning May 1st, but one of the rooms I could have at once. Then Wilson and I sent our telegram, and I waited until your answer came. I assumed the responsibility of taking the office—I went to get the one room—but in the meantime, it had been taken, and as yet I have found nothing.

¹⁰ Eleanor Foster Lansing, wife of Secretary of State Lansing and opponent of suffrage for women.

¹¹ Alice Hay Wadsworth, wife of Senator James Wadsworth (R–New York) and opponent of suffrage for women.

¹² Neither the February 22 nor the February 19 cable was found.

It will take, of course, an endless time to have a telephone put in, and I am keen to be all ready to start work when the "clear cut" decision comes. If it is against us, doubtless I can get rid of the office.

In the meantime, the films and your operator will arrive and we will have NOWHERE to show the films—no use to make of them because you have never answered my cables about the Cinema Co—and the necessary capital. And every day the Germans are buying up more and more of the businesses. Do you understand that when I say "BUY" I do not mean buy the buildings but the business, good-will, fixtures, and LICENSES, which is important because the government will not issue more licenses and I am prevented of course from even approaching them on the subject.

I feel confident of being able to do this work better than any one here. I am sure I am of a higher order of intelligence and my experience is so much wider than theirs—and that's not saying very much. You remember when I left I was full of distrust of my own ability. If the decision is in our favor and it is possible for me to undertake the work at all, I should like to get the work started and well organized—because I see HOW to do it—and then I want you to find someone to take my place if the war continues. I say that because I think there is a limit to what can be accomplished in a little spot like this and I want to do more fundamental work! I would feel I was helping more at home agitating against some of the things that will be happening in our own city.

Has Mr. Aubert spoken to you of a Monsieur Godard? He is the man who has charge of communicating with the French Commission in Washington. He has been here only a little longer than I. I asked him what struck him most in the situation and he said it was the smallness of the group here whose opinions count. He put it at 200 men, for the whole of Switzerland including both factions, pro-ally and pro-German, also foreigners, as well as Swiss—I was struck by the same thing and have already written to you about it—and the way these men gossip! Rappard is the gossippiest of them all—

The French Bureau de la Presse have at last taken me into their very center—Haguenin has discovered that I can be helpful—I can gain for him and myself an entree into any group through the women because they all know who I am and are eager to see me and meet me! Haguenin has been here for two years and at least has information of great value.

I spoke to Dr. Schlieben who has become a close friend of mine about Mr. Waltiers (English agent) view of the French Maison de la Presse as a huge fraud. Dr. Schlieben thinks that the Paris division is no good—and the Swiss Division good only for its translations and

analysis of the German press. I am sending you a copy of his report. If I have an office here later would you like me to have this report of theirs translated into English and abbreviated for your information? Please answer this question. I can do it easily—if we continue!

Yours sincerely,

Vera B. Whitehouse¹³

P.S.

Mr. Wilson told me last week that the Cable News, he thought, had ceased coming. He said he would find out and let me know. He has never done so. There is certainly no sign of it in any of the papers. These papers reprint American news from London and Paris papers showing how keen they are for it.

This morning I very subtly (!) asked Mr. Dulles about the Cable News and he says it is coming but does not know what use is made of it! There is a fat round-faced boy here—a kind of attache called *Day, who I think is supposed to do the translating. Perhaps he tries his hand at the news when he has nothing else to do. He is only about 20 or 21, and I am confident has no sense of news values. The whole legation is *poisoned* by antagonism to your department—Do you know that? It seems that it must come from instructions or lack of instructions from Washington.

Frank Polk has been gossiping about me. Normie¹⁴ writes me please to come home at once. He said he is told that Frank Polk says I sent a furious cable to the State Department. I think he must be referring to the first cable I sent to you protesting against “the women and children” and saying I could not work under false pretenses.¹⁵ Anyway Normie is much wrought up over my having “lost my temper” as he says in a cable to the State Department, but does understand that there must have been some provocation.

I may tell you that every member of the Legation still says I am here for women and children; although I have written to Wilson and suggested that he would say nothing but refer people who enquire to me.

¹³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

¹⁴ Norman de R. Whitehouse, her husband.

¹⁵ See Document 16.

**Day's* chief claim to distinction is that he is a nephew of Frank Brown who "they" (the Legation people) tell you with bated breath is president or vice-president of some bank! I knew him and think little of him.¹⁶

¹⁶ There is additional documentation on the conflict between Whitehouse and Embassy officials in Bern in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 736, 103.9302. Whitehouse left Switzerland in March, but returned later in the year. (*A Year as a Government Agent*, pp. 89–90, 106) On May 23, President Wilson wrote to Lansing: "I have always regretted Mrs. Whitehouse's return from Switzerland and the misunderstanding of her and of her purposes on the part of our Minister there." He continued: "She is going to work there in a perfectly open way, not as a diplomatic representative of course, but as one representing the Committee on Public Information, and acting with my approval, and she is going to act again." (Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 3: Letterbooks, 1913–1921, Reel 155, Vol. 50, 1918 May 6–29)

18. Letter From the Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information (Irwin) to the Committee on Public Information Commissioner in France (Kerney)¹

Washington, March 19, 1918

Dear Mr. Kerney:

I have taken charge of the work of foreign propaganda, vice Commissioner Woods resigned. Mr. Hugh Gibson, as you doubtless already know, is on his way to Paris via London. He will doubtless see you and put you in touch with our plans. I cabled you today asking you to report on progress and to tell me what you thought should be done.² We are prepared greatly to expand the French work, and I shall very shortly be sending you assistance. In the meantime, a great deal of assistance can probably be picked up in Paris. I know the French better

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 8, Kerney—Corres. March–July 1918. No classification marking. The letter was sent to Kerney in care of the Embassy in Paris.

² Telegram 3339 to Paris, March 19. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/91c)

than any other European people in this war, and so can perhaps do a little judging on the situation, myself.

In the first place, I am of the opinion that printed propaganda has worn itself out a little in all countries, and that word of mouth stuff is infinitely more valuable. I also know that the French are great on *conferences*, and that public lecturers are excellent propagandists. Much was done in an organized way last winter by such speakers as Herbert Adams Gibbons.³ I think you should do all you can to organize the Americans capable of making an acceptable speech in French language, and sending them forth with the general ideas which we wish to implant. This work is much better done by perhaps Americans than by Frenchmen, provided the Americans can speak the language acceptably. If you are going heavily into that department please let me know, because I think I can send you a few people from here.

If I were you, I should avoid the mistake of allowing myself to be closely connected with what we call “the ex-patriot bunch” in Paris. These people look to Paris society and the French Official class for their social sanctions, and are no more in touch with the real people of France than a foreigner who had invaded New York society would be in touch with the real people of America. Too much has been done perhaps with the upper classes of the French and not nearly enough with the people in general. Just before I left France in February, I took a trip through the South in order to find what the people were thinking and talking about, as regards America. I found that the German whispering propaganda has been busy down there, and that nothing had been done among them to controvert the idea that we are money grabbing people who entered the war to prevent financial panic, who are loaning funds to Europe at luxurious interest, and who, when the allied nations are exhausted, will come over and collect on the mortgage with fresh armies. As you have probably perceived by now, Europe is getting very radical, and what is whispered among the submerged classes today may be the dominant thought of the governing classes tomorrow, so even in friendly France we cannot overlook the working and peasant classes.

Here is the thing upon which I suggest immediate action: In thinking over this matter of propaganda. I realize that the most effective propaganda done in America during the period of our neutrality, was done by prominent newspaper and magazine writers for our American publications, who went to Europe, took one side or the other, came back and wrote about it. A statement from Clemenceau, Maeterlinck,⁴

³ U.S. journalist.

⁴ Maurice Maeterlinck, Belgian author.

or Anatole France⁵ did not have nearly so much influence as a magazine article by William Hard,⁶ Irvin Cobb⁷ or Richard Harding Davis.⁸ These Americans had their own following among our magazine or newspaper readers and talked our own intellectual language as the Europeans did not. Now, I want to encourage star French journalists and literary men to come to America and write us up. One problem confronts us there. The European publications are run on a very much more narrow margin of expenses than the American and cannot afford to pay huge expense accounts as ours can. It may be necessary for us to offer to pay their expenses. I dislike to do this for two reasons—first our money is somewhat limited in proportion to the job we have to do, and second this method might be criticised. But, after all it is not really illegitimate, and the main thing is to get the men here. If you can arrange for such men, the more eminent the better, to visit America, we will arrange at this end to have them taken in hand, given a good time and shown everything.

This is about the organization that I have suggested for most of the European nations. We will have to modify it sometimes to suit individual circumstances. First, the Director, second one or two expert newspaper men or professional publicity agents; third, a bureau of speakers in which should be included someone to take charge of distribution and use of moving picture films; fourth, one or two first rate American advertising men; at least one person whose job it is to travel through the country and gather information for our use; about what the people are saying about us with a view to ascertaining what our needs are in the way of propaganda.

Item four may strike you as curious. It is, in fact, one of my hobbies. I have been watching both British and French propaganda. They are both rather inept because these people are a generation behind us in the advertising game. We invented and developed it, and we are the only people, except the Germans, who have been trained to be experts on psychology. I want to send over to Europe and use there, the kind of American advertising man who has the priceless jewel of originality in him—who will think of the thing that no one else will think of. Of course, I should want his work gone over and experted by those who better understand the people, in order to prevent his making a mistake. Please do not understand this idea in its narrow sense. I do not want a man to write American advertising. I want one to think of the thing that no one else thought of before in the way of influencing people.

⁵ French author.

⁶ U.S. journalist.

⁷ U.S. author.

⁸ U.S. journalist.

Since you are new to France and do not, I understand, speak the French language, I should suggest that you make connections with someone who really understands the people and that you talk most of your plans over with him and be guided by his advice. The French are a people of great intelligence, as you know, but of various mental peculiarities; methods that go great with us, frequently fall down absolutely with them and vice versa. Moreover, in no other country of Europe except Spain, is it so easy for the well intentioned outsider to give offense to his public.

Hugh Gibson will doubtless talk over our plans more fully when he arrives.

Wishing you every success in the job, I remain,
Very sincerely yours,⁹

⁹ Printed from an unsigned copy.

19. Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State¹

Paris, April 2, 1918, 6 p.m.

3502. For Compub from Palmer. Pershings offer unreserved assistance against German offensive wholly sufficient.² Encouragement to Allies and our fighting will continue to strengthen Allied morale. Strongly suggest concentration educational facts on enemy country immediately. German soldiers and people begin to feel effect of heavy casualties and failure of offensive. Gibson who is making remarkable progress and thoroughly familiar European methods, should, I think, be given authority and support to direct this work in cooperation with

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/121. No classification marking. Blue. Received at 11 p.m. Patchin wrote at the top of the telegram: “Copied to Creel Apl. 3, 1918. File. PHP.”

² On March 28, Pershing visited General Ferdinand Foch, who had been named Supreme Commander of the Allied Armies, and “placed at his disposal the whole resources of the American Army for employment in the battle now in progress.” (“Pershing Offers Army for Great Battle,” *New York Times*, March 30, 1918, p. 3) On March 21, the Germans had launched a series of attacks along the Western Front.

Kerney with whom he has established cordial working relations. Work would include two methods; first; use of airplane, trench guns, and other army methods to reach German trenches; and second; through Switzerland and Holland across frontier through socialist and other sympathetic agencies to reach to people with reference to Presidential message³ and appeals in keeping with his ideals and policies. As no German soldier is allowed to possess, with his officers knowledge, any literature of this sort it is important that matter be printed on small sheets which can be compressed into pellet form for firing from guns, dropping from planes, or private distribution in Germany. Important that there be several of appeals that can be repeated and passed around as element of time is vital and action may be necessary on short notice. Advisable that printing be done here and that we write appeals aside from keeping strictly to lines you laid down. In Switzerland, which Gibson will visit before proceeding Rome, he will get further information as to methods of distribution.

Sharp

³ Presumably Wilson's Fourteen Points; see footnote 4, Document 7.

20. Editorial Note

One method of distributing publications in enemy territory pursued by the Committee on Public Information (CPI) was the use of balloons. On April 18, 1918, Director of the CPI Foreign Section Will Irwin sent a telegram to Hugh Gibson, First Secretary at the Embassy in Paris: "Have invention here which is great improvement on anything formerly devised for getting literature to civilian population of Germany. Consists of balloon about nine feet in diameter carrying apparatus which will hold ten thousand quarter size leaflets and feed them separately on principle of automatic feed of printing press at rate of 12 or 24 per minute. Has bomb attachment which will destroy apparatus when last leaflet is fed. Such a balloon with average wind currents would have touring range of between five and seven hundred miles and could therefore easily reach Prussia. Rises to about two and one half miles and could therefore take advantage of the stable upper air currents. Clock arrangement enables starter to make it begin feeding at any time he desires after rising. Works perfectly on the ground but

are going to have it tested soon as possible in actual flight. Apparatus including balloon will probably cost about one hundred dollars apiece making cost of distributing leaflets one dollar per thousand." (Telegram 3601 from Paris, April 18; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/183s)

On May 7, Irwin sent a telegram to CPI Commissioner in France James Kerney in Paris: "Preparing to manufacture carriers for distributing balloon and question arises whether sheets of eight and half by fourteen inches or nine by twelve inches are more easily and economically cut in France. Please see some practical French printer or book binder and wire answer." (Telegram 3910 to Paris, May 7; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/261j)

Kerney sent a telegram on June 15 that confirmed the use of aerial methods for distributing information: "Rifle grenades for shooting propaganda into enemy trenches being used by our army as well as French at every possible opportunity. Paper balloons also being used for civilian propaganda. Other methods under experiment." (Telegram 4219 from Paris, June 15; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/400)

On July 22, Kerney sent another telegram from Paris reporting that French, British, and Belgian representatives were "anxious to have Americans assume distribution of material to be sent by balloon into interior of Germany which is feasible because of our location at front." (Telegram 4541 from Paris, July 22; National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 733, 103.93/537)

21. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State¹

London, April 24, 1918, 6 p.m.

9694. "For Creel from Sisson. April 24. Trust that London News distribution center is not to be left even temporarily vacant when Suydam returns to Holland. If Russell is coming he will need an active and intelligent desk man for this place of work. London is natural clearing house for distribution and utilization. Reuters has one marked similarity *to use* of Westnik in Russia, the need of having material

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/195. No classification marking. Blue. Received April 25 at 3:07 a.m. Patchin wrote at the top of the telegram: "Copied to Creel + Irwin Apr 26, 1918. File. PHP."

rearranged for it here after initial receipt. One man must work inside the Reuter machinery. Suydam has done this well for last fortnight. Material coming by cable from New York does not yet measure up, it is too long and too obvious, facts should be built up so that the reader gets his own opinion, not sign posted with the opinion desired to be conveyed, the sound rule of not handicapping fact stuff with edifying opinion should be followed. In future American doings and plans should be discounted for Continental use for awhile. Accounts of deeds are the thing. The statement that one new ship was added to tonnage today will get wider publicity than the plan for a thousand in six months. Should not one news man be stationed at army headquarters in France to wire direct to London, looks so to me, if you are to have a working machine. Am leaving Friday".²

Page

² April 26.

22. Telegram From the Embassy in Italy to the Department of State¹

Rome, April 30, 1918, 9 p.m.

1558. For Irwin from Gibson. Following plan of activities in Italy submitted for your consideration. Our purpose should be to:—

One: Improve morale of Italian people of all classes.

Two: Counteract effects of German propaganda which is being done effectively through various channels.

Three: Counter attacks on German campaign of misrepresentation concerning the United States its aims and preparations.

Four: Keep the Italian people impressed with our great and rapidly increasing resources and our determination to aid Italy in every possible way.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 732, 103.93/221. No classification marking. Green. Received May 2 at 8:15 p.m. Patchin wrote on the first page: "Para[phrase] sent over. File. PHP."

Five: Spread understanding of the liberal ideas for which we are fighting with a view, not only to maintaining public opinion enthusiasm but also to strengthen intelligent public opinion so that it will resist reactionary tendencies.

The means we have at our disposal to accomplish these ends are:

One: There should be made accessible to all the people good translations of the President's utterances bearing on the war. These should be put out so far as possible under the names of Italians prominent in different ways with varying comment for the enlightenment of different classes. The people hold the President in deep reverence and a comprehensive campaign for the spread of his ideals and purposes would be effective and of inconsiderable cost. Material should be furnished to writers and speakers on American war aims as set forth in the President's speeches. One of the reasons for lack of popular enthusiasm seems to be that there has not been enough appeal to democratic ideals.

Two: Moving picture campaign which should be undertaken at once and on large scale. Poorer and more ignorant classes who are most dangerously infected with anti-war spirit are not always to be reached through press or pamphlets campaigns but show deep (#)² in American films. Believe picture campaign will show more results here than in France and that effort should be concentrated here. In a small way good effects have been secured from small supply of films already furnished.

Three: The Press campaign is relatively simple here and can be handled on established lines. Italian papers show more interest in American news and articles than either French or Swiss papers and committee has secured gratifying amount of space. There should be organized in the United States a campaign of letters written by Italians to their friends and families in this country telling of the war spirit of America, the feeling for Italy, the privations in food and other necessities that Americans are willingly accepting so that the Allies can be supplied. The more ignorant classes will place more credence in such letters than in printed information.

Five: Speakers Bureau should be strengthened and enlarged. La Guardia³ has done good work but there should be a number of other Italian speaking Americans traveling constantly about the country talking about America and its aims. Good Italian speaking manager for the Bureau should be sent at once.

² As in the original. Presumably it signifies an omission or garbled text in the transmission from Rome.

³ Fiorello LaGuardia, who was elected to Congress in 1916 (R–New York), took leave during World War I to serve in the Army Air Service. He commanded the U.S. air forces on the Italian-Austrian front.

Six: Commercial propaganda, Red Cross activities, visits of Italian correspondents, and public men to our bases and front in France, still pictures and such other that as may suggest themselves from time to time.

The organization at Rome alone will not be able to handle the situation properly. There should be active sub centers at Milan, Turin, Florence, Genoa and Naples, some of them under direction of our Consular officers and some under especially assigned men; also representatives at Padua for propaganda in enemy countries. The problems presented at these different places are quite varied and need close and constant supervision. Consul at Milan has done good work mostly at his own expense. Other districts neglected except as their needs could be understood and attended to from Rome.

Situation here is undoubtedly fraught with grave danger which may readily lead to another disaster. This situation demands an immediate and energetic campaign of education. We are in a particularly advantageous position to undertake it as there seems to be more confidence here in the power and honesty of the President than in any of the Allies. Ten thousand dollars a month should be considered a minimum for effective work in Italy and it should be made available at once so that our people can go to work and get results. Time is the vital element and a decision one way or the other should be taken at once; a month from now it may be too late. We must be prepared to spend money as the situation requires in such a critical situation, inadequate resources are hardly worth applying.

We have an earnest and competent crowd here and they should be given full support if we are to do anything worth while. Foregoing is substance of plan agreed upon in full conference with them.

Nelson Page

**23. Report Prepared in the Military Intelligence Branch,
Department of War General Staff¹**

Washington

[Omitted here are a cover sheet and table of contents.]

COSTA RICA

I. *OBJECTIVES.*

Costa Rica is the egg nearest decomposition in a basket where the explosion of one would set off four other bad eggs. Any stench raised in Central America would divert slightly our military resources but might seriously cloud the political horizon. America's political offensive against Germany would suffer if forced intervention in Central America made the whole Latin American continent fearful of the United States and gave Germany the chance to raise a cry of "Yankee imperialism."

[Omitted here is Part II, "Controlling Factors."]

III. *PROPAGANDA STATUS.*

German Propagandists are numerous and powerful in Costa Rica and their close association with political plotters has been indicated above. Their object is the obvious one, pilloried by President Wilson, to create disturbance to divert United States energies. In this case they work for the definite end of forcing the kind of United States intervention which would invite the cry of "Yankee Imperialism" and give Berlin a talking point against the American war aims.

They probably hope to have disturbances serious enough to cause real embarrassment to our military affairs.

There are indications that German wireless stations are concealed in Costa Rica. The trail of Germans who have been making maps and surveying strategic positions has been picked up in Costa Rica in more than one place. A startling example of the mysterious speed with which isolated German colonists, three days' ride from the sea coast, have received European war news ahead of those on the coast at the cable ends, was recorded last November when the Germans of the interior told an American mahogany buyer the news of the Italian defeat before those who got only cable news had learned of it. It was believed that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 133, Manuals Giving Psychological Estimates of Foreign Countries, Prepared by the Military Intelligence Branch of the General Staff, Feb.–June 1918, Costa Rica Psychologic Estimate. No classification marking. There are two typewritten dates on the first page of the report: February 27, 1918, and May 1, 1918.

a wireless station in Costa Rica was a great aid to von Spee's² operations in the Pacific.

Under the Episcopacy of Bishop Johann Gaspard Stork³ of San Jose the number of German subjects as priests or members of the seminary has more than quadrupled. They are scattered throughout the country and certainly are used for the transmission of information besides talking German propaganda under the mantle of religion.

The "Nueva Era" is a four-page daily published in San Jose by Bishop Stork. Its circulation is small but articles from it are sometimes reproduced by the provincial papers. It is violently anti-American and strictly "neutral", i.e. pro-German.

Types of 'neutral' articles are:

a. *Defense of Germans:*

1. how badly they are treated—trade cut off.
2. they are lied about and represented as anarchists.
3. how splendidly they are as individuals: von Hertling⁴ a glory of Catholicism.

b. *Wicked Allies:*

1. won't make peace when the Pope asks them to.
2. perfidious England, etc.,
3. they control the cables and send them out falsely.
4. they practice "frightfulness" themselves, e.g. throwing bombs on Jerusalem.

Types of anti-American articles are:

- a. American imperialism, e.g. the invasion of the "Latin American Republic" of Haiti.⁵
- b. Hypocrisy of the Monroe Doctrine.⁶

² Maximilian von Spee, German admiral killed at the Battle of the Falkland Islands, December 8, 1914.

³ Bishop Juan Gaspar Stork.

⁴ Georg von Hertling, German Chancellor.

⁵ In 1915, President Wilson sent the Marines to Haiti in an effort to restore stability after the assassination of Haitian President Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam. U.S. military forces did not completely withdraw from Haiti until 1934.

⁶ In his December 2, 1823, message to Congress, President James Monroe outlined a foreign policy that declared that, while the United States would not interfere with European affairs and recognized existing European colonies in the Western Hemisphere, it would not tolerate further attempts by Europeans to exert control over territories in the Western Hemisphere.

c. America is the arch-hypocrite and oppressor of small countries, won't allow American Union,⁷ etc.

Many pro-German propaganda newspapers have been shipped into Costa Rica *from Barcelona, Spain*. On October 30th one printed a telegram from Nauen commenting on the shooting of Mata Hari, and adding, "She was shot by the very government which once acclaimed Miss Cavill, an English spy, who confessed her guilt."⁸

On November 3rd one of these papers published the statement, "The Yankee treasury has loaned the Italians \$230,000,000 for purchases in America.—American aid—to herself."

On November 6th a paper by a Venezuelan was published lauding German achievements in all fields and ridiculing calling such "barbarians."

November 4th this paper sketched the defeat of Italy "abandoned by her allies."

The following Spanish newspapers have been sent from Barcelona to Costa Rican addresses: "El Tiempo", "El Debate", "La Tribuna" and "El Iris de Paz". All are pro-German.

Juan Kumpel's "La Guerra" has been sent to all South American countries, a German distributor in Chile estimating the number of such pamphlets circulated by him as 125,000.

Spain constantly tries to send into Costa Rica translations of German war books notably "Germany and the European War" written by Delbrueck, Treitschke,⁹ and a dozen other German professors and officials, giving the usual German justifications and onslaughts on England, France and America.

From Mexico a steady stream of propaganda flows into Costa Rica from the "Informaciones Alemanas". The following is a sample list of pamphlets in a single package intercepted in the mails:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| "El Vampiro del Continente" | Author Count Reventlow |
| "El General Mar le Von Hindenburg" | "Oscar Boer |

⁷ Reference is presumably to the Pan American movement, a series of conferences of Latin American states which began during the 19th century. At these conferences, Latin American countries pushed for an "American" understanding of international law which promoted non-intervention in a country's affairs, hoping to blunt U.S. influence in the region.

⁸ Mata Hari (born Margaretha Zelle), a dancer executed by the French in 1917 on charges of espionage. Edith Cavell, a British nurse executed by the Germans in 1915 for helping Allied soldiers escape German-occupied Belgium.

⁹ Hans Delbrück and Heinrich von Treitschke, German historians.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| "El Coalicion Contra la Argentina" | " P. de Cordoba |
| "El Problema Submarino" | " Emilo Huidobro |
| "La Dominacion Britanica en las Indes" | " W.J. Bryan |
| "La Protection al obreo an Alemania" | " Roberto Schmidt |
| "El Mowe" | " Conde de Dohna Schlodien |
| "De Kameron Hasta la Trinchera Alemana" | " M. Kirsch |
| "Grammar of the German Language" | published by Otto Ruppert. |

In sum, the list of known Germans and anti-Americans now at work in Costa Rica is upward of three hundred. The list of publications sent in and out of Costa Rica in every direction is now over fifty.

The American answers are obvious, indicated by the character of the German attack.

The principal feature of the situation at present is the prevalence of German agents and German reading matter in contrast to the lack of American news, American books, American films and American agents.

IV. AMERICAN PROGRAM.

1. *Costa Rica now the key to Central America.*

The *need* for American use of psychologic influence is indicated by the political situation and is emphasized by the very active pro-German propaganda existent there. Moreover the American embargo needs explanation to Costa Ricans.¹⁰

The *opportunity* is indicated by the high percentage of Costa Rican literacy and by the rather friendly attitude to the United States.

The *prospect* for the immediate future is confined to the sending of news dispatches but later there can be added special articles for the papers and magazines, pamphlets, moving pictures and the active aid of Americans resident in San Jose, etc.,

2. *Summary of Factors to be kept in mind.*

In general Guatemala is the most pro-American state in Central America. Costa Rica is next. Nicaragua is the most anti-American,

¹⁰ In October 1917, the United States passed the Trading with the Enemy Act, which restricted trade with enemies during times of war.

therefore pro-German. Salvador is pro-German because of German capital. Honduras is pro-Mexican.

The merchant class is the chief power in Costa Rica. There are no big commercial houses representing the United States. The United Fruit Company, far and away the most powerful concern in Costa Rica, owning more land than any one except the government, is British in the eyes of the people, since its ships sail under the British flag though its capital is American. The British embargo on coffee, Costa Rica's chief export, has caused some feeling against Britain.

Germany has the Hamburg-American Line offices, owns most of the coffee plantations and has fifteen large wholesale houses in San Jose. Consequently there is a strong pro-German colony, many of whose members are married to Costa Ricans.

The only real enthusiasms felt for any foreign country are for France. Costa Rican higher education is mostly in Paris.

One other economic fact should be kept in mind by American psychologists. Inasmuch as the middle class is poor and as there is absolutely no work for girls in Costa Rica prostitution is very widespread. There are not more than forty girls holding jobs in San Jose and women look upon these as degraded in comparison with the prostitutes.

The *ever present* factor is that Costa Ricans, even those most friendly to the United States, have always shown signs of fear lest the United States government should have designs on the country. This persistent apprehension is the underlying factor in all Latin American countries and just now is being continuously harped on by pro-German propagandists' cries of "the ogre in the North" and "the vulture casting longing eyes on all Latin Republics."

As regards *publicity*, billboards, pamphlets and handbills are extensively used to influence public opinion. Movies are popular and are a great medium of advertising. Newspapers are important, uncensored and widely read. The chief papers are "El Tiempo", Port Limon (English and Spanish); "El Heraldo de Atlantico" (Spanish weekly) Port Limon; "L'Informacion" (Spanish daily) reaches all classes, San Jose; "La Republica" (Spanish daily) San Jose; "El Noticiero" (Spanish daily) San Jose; "La Prensa Libre" (Spanish daily) San Jose.

3. *Dont's* for American psychologists as obtained from students of Costa Rica are:

(1) Don't brag. The Latin American is sick of hearing how *big* the United States is. It is what he fears most. Let him *infer* how powerful the United States is, don't rub it in directly.

(2) Don't represent the United States as perfect, or Americans as thinking themselves superior to every other race. Better say that the

United States has big faults but is struggling ahead faster and more democratically than any other nation.

(3) Don't threaten. The Latin American is intensely proud. Flattery appeals to him, with understanding of his difficulties and eternal expression of personal solicitude for him.

(4) Don't say "Americans and America". Say the "United States." Latin Americans resent describing the United States as the whole of America.

4. *Things to emphasize are:*

(1) United States war preparations, their efficiency, thoroughness and speed.

(2) United States unity and determination to win a just peace.

(3) The anti-imperialistic war aims of the United States as declared by President Wilson, but guard against representing Wilson as a dictator, ambitious to dominate the war and the world.

(4) America's intervention makes Allied victory certain. German propagandists' great cry in Latin America is "*Alemania vencera*", "Germany will win".

(5) United States traditional friendliness for Republics. Emphasize any honor shown in the United States to South American visitors, writers and artists.

(6) The passing of the bumptious American globe trotter and the tricky American salesman. Tell of the reform in United States ideals of business and the new determination to please Latin American business men.

(7) America's changing attitude toward labor and new curb on corporations which exploited workers in the United States just as in Latin American countries.

Open and above-board direct education, will have its hardest sledding in Latin America where indirection, flowery courtesy, flattery and "palaver" are indispensable.

5. *The three general principles* laid down for American psychologic efforts, however, are just as valid here as any where, viz:

(1) The United States is in this war for ten years if need be.

(2) The United States will make peace any day, on democratic anti-imperialistic terms.

(3) The United States is feeling the world-wide impetus toward reform, is changing rapidly and is ending some of the very abuses which hit her neighbors hardest.

Calm, courteous, confident reiteration of the fact that *the United States can not lose the war* will carry furthest and deepest.

6. *What Can Be Done Now.*

The steady feeding of daily news dispatches to Costa Rican papers and to papers in nearby countries for reprint in Costa Rica can be extended at once.

7. *What Can Be Done In The Future.*

Besides daily news dispatches, special articles can be mailed as soon as distributing agents are arranged for. The forwarding of American newspapers and magazines in quantity to clubs and libraries is really important.

Special articles can be mailed from the Foreign Press Bureau for Costa Rican papers and magazines. *Reprints* of articles in United States papers praising Latin America are extremely powerful.

Pamphlets, in Spanish, of United States war aims are influential. Pamphlets explaining the *United States embargo* are especially needed.

Moving pictures are popular and influential. Besides films which the United States government can send, several film agencies sell to Latin America and their sales to Costa Rica can be especially adapted. The subjects outlined above can be filmed, together with general educational pictures of United States' scenery, industries, personalities, etc.

Americans living in Costa Rica could easily be utilized for psychological influence of the most penetrating kind by an agent sent directly to them.

24. Editorial Note

On June 25, 1918, Consul John Silliman in Guadalajara, Mexico, forwarded to Director of the Foreign Section of the Committee on Public Information Will Irwin several photographs of the reading room "being well supplied" by the Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Mexico City, Robert H. Murray. The photographs are available in the Online Supplement, Appendices A.1–A.4. These photographs illustrate the types of window displays created for passers-by, as well as rooms stocked with literature and posters supporting the war effort. (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 14, Murray—Corres—March–June 1918) In Mexico, reading rooms were also established in Mexico City, Vera Cruz, Aguascalientes, Leon, Durango, and Irapuato. (*Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information*, page 162)

25. **Letter From the Committee on Public Information
Commissioner in France (Kerney) to the Chairman of the
Committee on Public Information(Creel)**¹

Paris, June 28, 1918

My dear George:

I suppose we all of us get credit for a lot of things that we don't have so much to do with. I know I got a great deal of glory out of "America's Answer to the Hun" that really belongs to E.B. Hatrick and C.J. Hubbell.² It is easily the best piece of propaganda that we have had in Europe, and I am certain that you will find it of untold value in America.

They have many times risked their lives, and their deeds of daring have attracted the widest attention in the army. They were the first Americans to get to the Chateau-Thierry front having been sent out in a General Staff car, under a special order from General Pershing. General di Robilant, Military Representative of Italy at the Inter-Allied Council at Versailles, says that the view they made of Chateau-Thierry, while the shelling was the fiercest, is one of the best pictures, from the viewpoint of the artillery technician, that he has ever seen.

From the time of their landing here they have been most energetic in their efforts and their work for the Committee on Public Information has been of the very highest value. Hatrick has been instrumental in reorganizing the Signal Corps photographic service, and in having shipped to America all original negative films. As you know, when they first came to France, the Signal Corps was badly demoralized in its photographic end. The Signal Corps now has seventeen operators in the field and is able to render highly efficient service.³

With kindest regards, I am

Very sincerely yours,

James Kerney⁴

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 11, Hatrick, E.B. No classification marking.

² For *America's Answer*, see the Online Supplement, Appendix A.5.

³ On July 31, Creel wrote to Edgar B. Hatrick: "In the matter of motion pictures for war records and publicity purposes, it was not only the case that you showed rare courage, risking your life time and again, but you also acted throughout with judgment, discrimination and intelligence." (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 11, Hatrick, E.B.)

⁴ Printed from a copy that indicates Kerney signed the original.

26. Telegram From the Embassy in Italy to the Department of State¹

Rome, July 1, 1918, 6 p.m.

1789. Compub for Irwin from Merriam. Film situation Italy requires immediate attention French British Italian propaganda films. Public resent laudatory films as most material dull and forced. Exceptional opportunity here because popularity films as Italian amusement and fact papers not as effective in certain provinces as films. Disappointment over many films sent this office and Y.M.C.A.; only twenty per cent usable with careful reediting and censoring; much material dull and old; need livelier stuff. No highly organized booking system here but if had sufficient amount proper material could use powerful existing organizations such as Mutilati military hospitals etcetera and cover Italy thoroughly together with usual commercial channels. Italians in general have no conception United States resources, war actualities or life. Good popular American dramas best for front as cannot give much war material or industrial films there. Braden² of Italian Y.M.C.A. receiving complaints that United States film material not live[ly] enough for Italian front. Film theater situation altogether different from France; in Italy varied programme not shown; only one long five reel, dramatic subject.

Suggest this office [be] made official headquarters all American films imported Italy and no other American films permitted to be exhibited unless obtained from this office that the (?)³ Red exclude Y.M.C.A. and other organizations wishing United States films get material from us. To meet present demand require the following subjects specially suited as follows: first, negative or not less than ten copies of Wednesday and Saturday releases of Pathe Universal and other weeklies and specials of interest. This is most important category; wish to distribute bright weekly current events without obvious propaganda or official markings and add amusing war caricature by popular Italian artists.

Feel positive if weekly film properly developed can have enormous influence supplementing press; second, send only panoramas of the United States, one negative or two copies weekly; third, for the front

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 733, 103.93/461. No classification marking. Red. No Distribution. Received on July 2 at 7:42 p.m. Patchin wrote on the first page of the telegram: "Sent to Irwin 7/3/18. File. P.H.P."

² George Braden, sent by the YMCA to work in Italy with U.S. and Italian soldiers.

³ As in the original. Presumably it signifies an omission or garbled text in the transmission from Rome.

and American camps to be distributed to Y.M.C.A. and Italian soldiers good feature dramas essential, one negative or ten copies per week, paramount, Goldwyn Triangle subjects not older than six months; fourth, one negative ten copies of comedies Keystone, Sidney Drew Universal weekly. Only a part of this organization self supporting; film would be rented to Y.M.C.A. and Red Cross; most of our films must be distributed gratis to reach proper places. These suggestions may seem novel but are result hard work and study Italian situation.

Nelson Page

27. Letter From the Chief of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff (Churchill) to the Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information (Irwin)¹

Washington, July 10, 1918

My dear Mr. Irwin:

The following information is transmitted to you in furtherance of our cooperation in the matter of propaganda into enemy countries.

The Military Intelligence Branch is sending to the A.E.F. a group of seven officers as the first step in putting into effect the plan agreed upon by yourself, Mr. Creel, Captain Blankenhorn, and myself in the conference of June 20th.² The officers are Captain Blankenhorn, Capt. Lippmann, Lt. Griscon, Lt. Merz, Lt. Ifft, Lt. Miltenberger, and Lt. Woolley.³ The reason for sending these officers is made plain by recalling the conference of June 20th.

At that conference it was agreed that in the case of propaganda into enemy countries the conditions of cooperation between the Committee on Public Information and the Military Intelligence Branch should be reversed: that is, that the Military Intelligence Branch should have executive responsibility for such propaganda while the Committee on Public Information should cooperate by supplying propaganda

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence and CPI Agreements. No classification marking.

² No minutes of the June 20 meeting have been found, but see Document 29.

³ Ifft is George Nicholas Ifft II. Griscon, Merz, Miltenberger, and Woolley are not further identified.

for distribution. In allied and neutral countries the Committee has executive responsibility while the Military Intelligence Branch cooperates with information and criticism, as before.

In accepting executive responsibility for enemy countries the Military Intelligence Branch saw the necessity for obtaining the fullest possible information on all the conditions affecting such propaganda. This information is only obtainable abroad. Therefore the above named officers are being sent primarily to obtain the necessary information for recommending a definite plan of action and secondarily for beginning the organization abroad necessary to put the plan into effect.

The Secretary of War, who is also a member of the Committee on Public Information, has personal knowledge of our plans.

Will you keep us informed as to your progress in obtaining men for your Editorial Boards abroad?

M. Churchill
Colonel, General Staff
Chief, Military Intelligence Branch
Executive Division

28. Letter From the Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information (Irwin) to the Chief of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff (Churchill)¹

Washington, July 12, 1918

Dear Colonel Churchill:

Your communication of July 10th² states the thing perfectly satisfactorily with one exception. Paragraph III, perhaps, does not quite express my understanding of the agreement between the Committee on Public Information and the Intelligence Department. Rather, perhaps, this paragraph needs further definition to prevent any kind of misunderstanding after I leave the department.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence and CPI Agreements. No classification marking.

² See Document 27.

The agreement, as I interpreted it, was that the Intelligence Department should have control of the distribution of propaganda into enemy countries, while the Committee should furnish the material therefor. So far my idea perfectly agrees with the statement in your letter; however, I wanted it to be understood that the Committee should have final judgment upon the character of the propaganda, and that the work should be laid out by the American representative on the Inter-Allied Board for propaganda into enemy countries which has its headquarters in London. I further expressed myself at that meeting and now repeat in writing, that we should arrange for the heartiest cooperation and exchange of ideas between the two branches—that the Military Intelligence should be consulted as to its ideas on the character and policy of the propaganda, while the Committee on Public Information should assist in every manner in its power with the work of distribution.

We have virtually appointed Dr. G.H. Edgell of Harvard University³ head of our propaganda work into enemy countries through Italy. He should be on his way to his post in a few days. By the next steamer we are sending over Lieutenant Ferdinand Pisecky to act as writer and interpreter in the Bohemian language. Lieutenant Pisecky is a native Bohemian who deserted as early as possible from the Austrian army, was incorporated into a Jugo-Slav division organized by the Russians and fought with them until the collapse of Russia, when he was sent to the United States by the Czecho-Slovak National Council to organize their work here. He has warm recommendations from Captain Voska.⁴

I telegraphed to Europe asking James Keeley, former publisher of the "Chicago Herald", to act as general director of our work in Europe and as a member of the London board.⁵ He has not yet returned an answer, but I think he will accept.

May I express my appreciation of your prompt action in sending an investigating committee abroad.

Yours as ever,⁶

³ George Harold Edgell, historian of architecture.

⁴ Captain Emanuel Voska of the Millitary Intelligence Branch, assigned to the Committee on Public Information because of his expertise on Central Europe.

⁵ Keeley was the CPI representative to the Inter-Allied Board for Propaganda Against the Enemy, which met regularly under Lord Northcliffe's direction. Lord Northcliffe (Alfred Charles Williams Harmsworth) directed British propaganda in enemy countries.

⁶ Printed from an unsigned copy.

29. Letter From the Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information (Sisson) to the Chief of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff (Churchill)¹

Washington, July 23, 1918

Dear Colonel Churchill:

The working arrangement between the department of Military Intelligence and the Committee on Public Information on the matter of Propaganda into Enemy Countries is based fundamentally upon the closest cooperation between the operating forces of both organizations.

On both labor and responsibility the line division of activities is of the simplest. The parallel is that of Industrial Manufacture and Distribution.

The Committee on Public Information is equipped to prepare and manufacture the product, utilizing both its own and Army Intelligence sources of material. The mechanical responsibility for their manufacture will be upon the operating forces of the Committee, in France and in Italy—that is, editorial preparation, translation, printing, etc. In this work it will have the advisory aid of the representatives of Military Intelligence.

The responsibility for distribution, both as to mechanical means, and choice of operating field at the fronts will be upon Military Intelligence, that problem being wholly military.

The Inter-Allied Enemy Propaganda editorial board, containing representatives of Great Britain, the United States, France and Italy will have the oversight of the editorial policies, and the American member of the board, James Keeley, will be the active head of the Committee on Public Information's operating forces, with headquarters at Paris. Professor G.H. Edgell, who will be the head of the Committee's Italian unit on Enemy Propaganda, will be under the general supervision of Mr. Keeley. Both the French and the Italian units will be supplied with forces of writers, translators and advertising men as needed. Mr. Keeley will be in Paris in time to consult with Captain Blankenhorn

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence and CPI Agreements. No classification marking. On July 23, Sisson wrote Creel that Churchill had "received no letter from Irwin or from you" on an agreement between CPI and MIB. He therefore drafted the letter printed here and asked Creel to "countersign both copies" if it "meets with your views." (Memorandum from Sisson to Creel; National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 7, Creel, Geo. June–August 1918)

and his superiors by the time the Military Intelligence party arrives in Paris.

To summarize, the Committee on Public Information will manufacture the product, utilizing to the full the advisory aid of Military Intelligence in securing useful material. Military Intelligence will distribute the product. The essence of the agreement is the spirit of cooperation on mutual problems.

This letter is going to you in two copies. If it meets your approval will you countersign one copy and return it to the Committee?

Yours very sincerely,

Edgar Sisson

General Director Foreign Section

APPROVED

M. Churchill

Colonel, General Staff

Chief, Military Intelligence Branch

Executive Division²

² To the left of Sisson's and Churchill's signatures, Creel wrote: "Approved. George Creel." Because it bears all three signatures, this copy was apparently forwarded to Churchill on July 24 and returned by him on July 30. (Letter from Sisson to Churchill, July 24, and letter from Churchill to Sisson, July 30; both in the National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence and CPI Agreements)

**30. Letter From Edwin Björkman of the Division of Work
Among the Foreign Born, Committee on Public Information,
to David F. Swenson¹**

Washington, July 31, 1918

My dear Mr. Swenson:—

Your pamphlet containing “The Spirit of America in the War” and your Independence Day address, arrived this morning.² Looking over the pamphlet I found on page 11 the following note:

“Written for the Committee on Public Information, for translation into Swedish, to be circulated as American propaganda in Sweden; first published in the Minneapolis Journal Sunday May 19, 1918.”

As soon as I read this I sent you the following wire:³

“Must protest against note in your pamphlet saying Spirit of America in War written for Committee on Public Information quote to be circulated as American propaganda in Sweden unquote. Please hold pamphlet if not already distributed. Statement of note incorrect and injurious to American cause. Letter follows.”

I am extremely sorry that you should have included a reference to American propaganda in Sweden in your pamphlet, which, under such circumstances, is likely to prove as harmful as otherwise it might prove useful. They are extremely sensitive in regard to this kind of thing in Sweden, and we have been most scrupulous in respecting their feelings on this score over there. I may add that the American government is strongly averse to any form of work among other nations that may be described as propaganda in the sense given to that word by various German activities during the present war.

While, in writing you to obtain the article in question, I mentioned that it would be published in Sweden, this did not imply any carrying on of propaganda on our part. The whole tone of my confidential circular, of which I enclose a copy,⁴ shows that we desired merely to obtain certain expressions of feeling and opinion among the Swedes in this country that would convince Sweden, both for our sake and for

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director’s Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 4, Bjorkman—August 1–20. No classification marking. Swenson was Professor of Philosophy at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

² The pamphlet is *ibid.* For “The Spirit of America in the War,” see Online Supplement, Appendix A.6.

³ Dated July 31; a transcript is attached but not printed.

⁴ Confidential circular 2, April 29; attached but not printed. The circular states that articles “will not only be published in Sweden, but they will also be syndicated for simultaneous (free) use by the entire Swedish press in this country.”

its own, that the American nation stands absolutely united in the pursuit of the war.

I hope you can see your way to withdrawing the pamphlet from publication in its present shape. There is no objection to your mentioning that "The Spirit of America in the War" was written at the request of, or for the Committee on Public Information, but it is more than inadvisable, it is incorrect, to say that it was written "to be circulated as American propaganda in Sweden."

I think so much of your work, your personality, and your general attitude, that I am extremely sorry to appear in the part of a critic, but I have no choice in this matter.

Hoping to hear from you as soon as possible, I remain,
Very sincerely yours,⁵

⁵ Printed from an unsigned copy. In a letter of July 31, Björkman informed Creel of the problem, advising that the pamphlet be "suppressed until the offending note has been amended." (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 4, Bjorkman—August 1–20) On August 5, Guy Stanton Ford, Director of the Committee on Public Information's Division of Civic and Educational Publications, wrote a note to Sisson: "Professor Swenson is a sensible, well balanced philosophic sort of man and his use of the phrase 'Propaganda in Sweden' was purely a slip. Bjorkman is perfectly right in calling his attention to it. I think he will straighten it out in the best way and with less fuss and display than Bjorkman's letter might suggest. I think their two temperaments will neutralize each other so the matter will work out amicably." (Ibid.) Sisson wrote a letter to Bjorkman on August 6 in which he commented: "I fancy the situation has smoothed itself out by this time." (Ibid.)

31. Letter From Heber Blankenhorn of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff to the Chief of the Military Intelligence Branch, Department of War General Staff (Churchill)¹

[Paris,] August 1, 1918

Dear Col. Churchill:

We are by no means ready to make final reports, but I write informally just after our first real move since coming over.

We had a fast trip, a funny reception at the port of debarkation, a busy two days in Paris, then Lippmann and I reported at G.H.Q. and planted Ifft there as a temporary liaison officer because it was already obvious to us, as it was to Col. Nolan,² that the main office for the job will have to be in Paris.

We expected to find three organized and working Inter-Allied Propaganda Boards, one in Paris, one in London and one in Padua, which would be landmarks in the field, with which we would have to deal and to which we could immediately designate liaison officers. Those Boards are ghosts. This afternoon we sat-in at a session of the so-called Board here. It is essentially the new French Army Board for propaganda into enemy countries, headed by Commandant Chaix,³ and International only by virtue of the fact that an Italian, an Englishman, three Belgians and three Americans (Hugh Gibson, Lippmann and I) were present to hear what the French had done and were planning. We were announced as having ideas. We declared ourselves there to listen, not to exploit plans.

Here in a nutshell is the situation. The French at last are doing quite a good deal of propaganda in a precise, intelligent fashion, freely playing the American card as their trump, and mainly through the energy of Major Chaix, a Clemenceau personal appointee, attempting to expand their efforts with an intensified air program, greater use of smuggling through Switzerland, and reaching out to touch off Albania and Bulgaria. All the propaganda the American Army has distributed, be it noted, is this French propaganda, not "scrutinized by myself" as specified by Secretary Baker. The British in the second compartment of the nutshell are also doing a good bit, mainly with balloons but not

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 5, Blankenhorn—Military Information Abroad. No classification marking. The letter was forwarded to Sisson by Captain Francis Churchill Williams "for your information" under an August 26 covering memorandum.

² Dennis Edward Nolan.

³ Edmond Aimé Louis Chaix.

with aeroplanes. The Belgians are anxious to have the whole program center around the distribution of Belgian newspapers and literature. What the Italians are doing was not indicated at the meeting today. All this means that there is considerable stirring of the ground but no clear and scientific ploughing and not an American machine on the whole farm.

For us the matter is simple! Far from being hampered by Allied activities, we cannot even count on very effective help and must build up our own organization. I think this is fortunate. It will mean slower work in the start. Just now America is in the position of being so utterly laggard that the American word which is the big noise in the propaganda field is being spoken solely by our Allies. They are yelling it.

We are just beginning to foresee something of the size and character of the various divisions of the organization which the Army will have to have. The main use of our present force of course is to do the Intelligence job of finding out what is needed. I had set August 15 as a date on which to send back a first rough draft of organization and needs, but I suspect such date will be nearer August 30. Much depends on the trip to London, which begins the day after tomorrow.

All in the party are well. Many inquiries concerning you and the fortunes of the Branch were addressed to us at G.H.Q. we just missed Van Deman but hope to see him within a fortnight. He seems to be doing what I should call surplus jobs. All G.H.Q. is fired these days with elation over the record of our men of July 4 and 14⁴ and marvelous tales of unbelievable praise by men around Foch are current. For one thing this indicates the ripening of time for propaganda.

Most sincerely yours,⁵

Heber Blankenhorn

⁴ July 4 was the Battle of Hamel, in which Australian and U.S. troops defeated the Germans. While the July 14 reference is unclear, it may refer to the Second Battle of the Marne (July 15–18), also an Allied victory.

⁵ Printed from a copy that indicates Blankenhorn signed the original.

32. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State¹

London, August 9, 1918, 11 a.m.

937. Urgent. For Creel and Sisson Compub from Keeley. Conference Inter-Allied Board starts next Wednesday August 14th² and lasts remainder week. French, Italian Governments sending expert staffs various phases propaganda and British staff be present to report and advise. After conference called to order by Northcliff Representatives of the four nations would be formally called upon to present position of their Governments as to the Extent of Cooperation matters of policy, technical methods of distribution, plans of getting information into enemy countries by other than military methods, the use of agencies in neutral countries including press, moving pictures, personal efforts &, the education of prisoners of war, the constitution of a permanent central organization arising out of the deliberations of the conference. As United States is newest participant in work conference practically called to give us details of what other nations have done and to afford us opportunity of defining our positions. I cabled over week ago asking for statement of position of Government.³ Regard it imperative that I have fullest possible statement to present to conference and urge you secure from all necessary quarters information and scope of powers it is desired to intrust to me for presentation. Have arranged for captains Lippman

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 733, 103.93/644. No classification marking. Blue. No Distribution. Received at 1:10 a.m. on August 10. Patchin wrote on the first page of the telegram: "Copied to Creel + Sisson. Aug 12, 1918. File. PHP." An attached note by Patchin, August 12 (misdated July 12) reads: "NB, Dear Salmon, Attached marked Urgent rec'd 1.10 a.m. Friday got to me about 4:30 p.m. today. PHP." The response, August 13, reads: "Dear Patchin: This was rec'vd 1:10 A.M. Aug. 10th. Even at that it is bad and I regret it was not called to your attention if not before surely on Sunday. More 'Pep' is required and I trust you will have no further cause for complaint. D.A.S." (Ibid.) David A. Salmon was Chief of the Bureau of Indexes and Archives, Department of State.

² Keeley represented CPI at the Inter-Allied Conference on Propaganda in Enemy Countries, which met in London August 14–16. Minutes of the conference are in the National Archives, RG 63, Entry 115, Reports of the Inter-Allied Conference on Propaganda in Enemy Countries, Held at London, Aug. 14–16, 1918.

³ Not found.

and Blankenhorn to attend conference but Lippman says they will be present as observers only.⁴

Page

⁴ Creel and Sisson responded in telegram 755 to London, August 13, sending Keeley a "synopsis" of the agreement between the CPI and MIB (see Document 29). They also informed Keeley of the following: "Blankenhorn and Lippmann advisory only. Army spending million dollars for automatic balloons. Committee bearing expense of printing." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 733, 103.93/672f)

33. Memorandum From J.F. Abbott of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of War General Staff to Francis Churchill Williams of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of War General Staff¹

Washington, August 29, 1918

SUBJECT

U.S. Propaganda in Japan

1. During the past winter there was shown throughout Japan the film which under the title "Battlecry of Peace" (?) was given much publicity in this country during the campaign for preparedness two or three years ago. The purpose of this film here was to dwell upon—even to exaggerate the military impotence of the United States and one feature of it showed the sack of New York City by an invading power. It is obvious that while the purpose of this propaganda film in this country was not misunderstood, yet the Japanese populace who saw it by thousands gained quite different impressions. An additional bad feature lay in the fact that it is a Japanese custom to have an "explainer" (benshi) who conducts an explanatory monologue while a film is being shown. It may be inferred that in the present instance the benshi everywhere rose to the occasion as patriotic Japanese.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence, Sept 18-Feb 19. No classification marking.

2. It occurs to the writer that it would be well worth while to provide for some such counter action to the impression produced by the film mentioned by providing for the immediate production in Japan of the Official film “America’s Answer.”²

3. The Universal Film Company is the largest organization in Japan, having many theatres all over the country which it supplies. The national agent in Tokyo is thoroughly loyal and anxious to serve the United States and without doubt would be glad of the opportunity to put on this film.

4. To short-circuit the *benshi* it would be advisable to have the “titles” done in Japanese. The writer will be glad to take the personal responsibility for this end of the matter if the proposal is approved.

5. The growing chauvinism in Japan incident to the dispatch of troops into Siberia makes it advisable that such a project be carried out soon.³

J.F. Abbott⁴
Captain U.S.A.

² For *America’s Answer*, please see the Online Supplement, Appendix A.5.

³ On August 3, the United States announced that it was dispatching troops to Vladivostok in cooperation with Japan “to render such protection and help as is possible to the Czecho-Slovaks against the armed Austrian and German prisoners who are attacking them and to steady any efforts at self-government or self-defense in which the Russians themselves may be willing to accept assistance.” (*Foreign Relations*, 1918, Russia, vol. II, pp. 328–329)

⁴ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

34. Letter From President Wilson to Acting Secretary of War Crowell¹

Washington, September 5, 1918

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Recurring to what I spoke of for a moment yesterday in our little war conference,² may I not ask for information about [illegible—activities?] I am very jealous about?

I am told that the War Department is, through its intelligence officers, in some way interesting itself in the matter of propaganda abroad, and I would be very much obliged if you would make inquiry and find how far this is true and what is being attempted, because it is my wish to keep the matter of propaganda entirely in my own hands and I had not known that any other agencies than those I had set up were attempting to interest themselves in it. I regard nothing as more delicate or more intimately associated with the policy of the administration than propaganda, and if any agency of the Army is attempting to organize propaganda of any sort or to take a hand in controlling it, I would be very much obliged if you would “call them off”. You will know how to do so kindly and without intimating any criticism on my part, but only my sense of the absolute necessity of my directing that whole matter.

Cordially and sincerely yours,³

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 99, 1918 Aug. 20–Sept. 16. No classification marking. Also printed in *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 49, p. 449.

² Although no other record of Crowell and Wilson’s “little war conference” was found, on September 4 Lansing informed Wilson that Lippmann and Blankenhorn were working on propaganda issues. (*Ibid.*, pp. 433–434)

³ Printed from an unsigned copy.

35. Letter From Acting Secretary of War Crowell to President Wilson¹

Washington, September 8, 1918

My dear Mr. President:

Referring to your letter of 5th September,² concerning the interest of the War Department in the matter of propaganda abroad, General March³ advises me that the whole question of the propaganda abroad with which Captain Lippman was concerned was handled by Secretary Baker personally. The Secretary, after conferences with representatives of the Bureau of Public Information; and with the Military Intelligence Division, at which the Chief of Staff was present; and in response to the initiation of this propaganda by the Bureau of Public Information, directed the organization of the party consisting of Captain Blankenhorn, Captain Lippman, Lieutenant Merz and Lieutenant Ifft. These officers were to proceed to France to carry out confidential instructions which were given to them by Secretary Baker in person. Secretary Baker also wrote to General Pershing a letter in which he defined the objects of this mission and gave General Pershing necessary instructions as to his attitude toward it.

A part of the propaganda proposed consisted of getting into the territorial limits of the Central Powers certain information concerning activities of the United States in connection with the war. The Bureau of Public Information has not been able to successfully get such information into Germany and Austria hitherto. The scheme involved the preparation of certain propaganda matter which Secretary Baker proposed to visé himself or have viséd by responsible officers who would carry out his policy in the matter, so as to prevent exaggerated statements being used in the propaganda.

In accordance with the general scheme, the War Department has placed orders for a number of balloons of small dimensions, which it is proposed to start toward German territory from a base with the American Expeditionary Force when the wind is favorable, these balloons having a relatively small radius of travel so that they will be sure to get to land within the limits of the Empire of the Central Powers. The orders for these balloons have actually been placed and the carrying out of the general scheme of this propaganda would be impossible

¹ Source: Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 99, 1918 Aug. 20–Sept. 16. No classification marking. Also printed in *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 49, pp. 487–488.

² See Document 34.

³ General Peyton March, Army Chief of Staff.

without the coordinated work of the military establishment. You will recall that in order to obtain the money for the purchase of these balloons, it was necessary to ask you for \$76,000 from your war fund and this money was allotted by you for this purpose at the personal solicitation of Secretary Baker, and it was understood that Mr. Creel acted at the same time in obtaining this amount.

Captain Lippman was placed upon this committee at the suggestion of Secretary Baker himself. The committee arrived abroad and shortly after its arrival in France a cablegram was received from General Pershing announcing in general terms that the committee apparently was well selected for the purpose in hand.

In accordance with your instructions, orders have been given to the senior officer of this committee, Captain Blankenhorn, to discontinue any further activity and to report to Secretary Baker upon his arrival. A cablegram has also been sent to Secretary Baker to be delivered to him upon his arrival, announcing what your action has been in this matter and it is expected, as the entire matter was handled by Secretary Baker personally, that he will then communicate with you concerning it.

While the War Department, of course, intends to carry out exactly what you desire in this matter, it would seem that the field for propaganda of the class indicated could only be reached by the assistance of the military establishment. In propaganda work in other countries the Military Intelligence Division has never assumed any control or direction. The Military Attachés at Madrid, Berne, and other places have been told to place themselves at the disposal of the representatives of the Bureau of Public Information and to cooperate with them to any extent that they desire, but they have never attempted to initiate any such propaganda themselves.

Sincerely yours,

Benedict Crowell
Acting Secretary of War

36. Memorandum From the Director of the Military Intelligence Division, Department of War General Staff (Churchill) to the Military Attaché in Rome (Buckey)¹

Washington, September 30, 1918

SUBJECT

Cooperation of Military Attachés with Committee on Public Information

1. Your attention is invited to the enclosed copy of a circular letter sent from this office to all military attachés serving in neutral countries.² The object of this letter was to insure the complete and hearty cooperation of our military attachés with the representative of the Committee in the country in which they are located.

2. In this connection it is desired to inform you that our own relations with the Committee here in Washington are the very best that can possibly exist. General Churchill, Director of the Division, and Mr. Creel, Chairman of the Committee are both serving on numerous committees where there is a complete and satisfactory understanding and exchange of views. Our liaison between ourselves and the Committee's Office and representatives in Washington is complete in every detail, and a very frank and agreeable exchange of information and data is carried on every day.

3. We keep one thing and one thing only in mind, and that is that we are all members of a common cause and are all working together in the interests of the United States looking towards a successful conclusion of the war in which we are now engaged.

4. A letter recently received from the Committee indicates that possibly there has been some lack of cooperation between your Office and their representative, Captain Charles E. Merriam in Rome, and we are taking the liberty of going over the various points that have been brought to our attention with a full assurance that our belief in your

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 4, Censorship Board. No classification marking. Drafted by Lieutenant Colonel Walter F. Martin (Cavalry, U.S. Army). Churchill forwarded this memorandum and the September 9 circular (see footnote 2 below) to Creel under cover of an October 2 letter. (Ibid.) Mervyn C. Buckey was the Military Attaché in Rome from February 14, 1918.

² Attached but not printed is a September 9 memorandum from Churchill to all military attachés stating: "The Military Intelligence Division, and Military Attachés in particular, have, however, no authority whatever to initiate propaganda nor to interfere with or criticize the work, methods or personnel of the representatives of the Committee in this field. The Committee on Public Information is absolutely its own judge as to the nature and the amount of propaganda material it shall select and the methods and avenues to be employed in the distribution of propaganda."

tact and judgment is so well founded that these little minor differences can easily be corrected and obviated in the future.³

5. The differences that have been brought to our attention are, that having known of available space for committee offices you did not inform the representative, although requested to do so. That you did not cooperate in the attempt to have the premises requisitioned by the Italian government. That you kept Kingsley Moses for a month as a clerk after the Ambassador had been persuaded to bring him from Foggia for Captain Merriam. That in the absence of the Ambassador, Moses was transferred to your office for work as a clerk, while he was acting as head of the Speakers Bureau there. That you declined to furnish blocks of passes to the C.P.I. representative for Y.M.C.A. and Red Cross with the result that they are inconvenienced and pay money for speakers who might take slightly different routes from those deemed necessary when starting from Rome.

6. While we do not ask for a report on the above mentioned matters, we do think that a closer cooperation would be productive probably of better results. Plainly speaking, what we want is that you and Captain Merriam get together and iron out all the difficulties or misunderstandings that may possibly exist.

7. Another report is to the effect that you did not notify the Committee's representative of the arrival of troops at Genoa, thus preventing proper publicity and the taking of moving pictures, although requested to do so. Also that you failed to notify them of the arrival of troops from France, with the same effect, although requested.

8. With respect to these last items, it may be possible that you were acting under orders to maintain secrecy with respect to these movements, or that there may have been some other good and well founded reason for not informing the Committee's representative. This, of course, we are unable to judge from this distance.

³ Telegrams documenting the Embassy's complaints about CPI Commissioner Merriam, including Merriam's disputes with Buckley, are in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 735, 103.93. An October 18 letter from Thomas Page to Lansing summarized the complaints. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 735, 103.93/1193) Merriam recorded his views in "A Report on Lieut. Tedeschi, Liaison Officer of Col. Buckley, American Military Attaché at Rome," dated September 21. (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917-Apr. 1919, Box 12, Merriam—Corres.—Oct—Dec 1918)

9. In closing, we do, however, wish to once again call your attention to the necessity of the very closest cooperation that can possibly be had, and by so doing you will receive and have the full support of this your Home Office.⁴

M Churchill⁵
Brigadier General, General Staff

⁴ Wilson commented on the situation in a letter to Lansing on October 5: "I know Merriam and know his quality so well that it is hard for me not to believe that there has been some misunderstanding on Page's part." (Library of Congress, Papers of Woodrow Wilson, Series 2: Family and General Correspondence, 1786–1924, Reel 100, 1918 Sept. 17–Oct. 13)

⁵ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

**37. Letter From J.F. Abbott of the Military Intelligence Division,
Department of War General Staff to the Director of the
Division of Films, Committee on Public Information
(Beeman)**¹

Washington, October 3, 1918

Dear Sir:

I take pleasure in transmitting herewith the Japanese version of the titles for "America's Answer",² which has been delayed owing to my "leave" intervening. I have taken the liberty of altering the text in the following particulars:

1. The second person has been altered in every case to the impersonal statement.

2. #3 has been rendered much as in the original. I have doubts however as to whether the allusion to tyrants and tyranny will pass the Japanese censor. If the whole title were out it would not make a great deal of difference.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 13, Military Intelligence, Sept 18–Feb 19. No classification marking. In an October 4 letter, Byoir thanked Abbott for his suggestions. (Ibid.)

² For *America's Answer*, see the Online Supplement, Appendix A.5.

3. #5 "Your Leader" I assume is President Wilson and the translation reads "President Wilson, Commander in Chief of the American Forces on Land and Sea."

4. #17—omitted—to anticipate the Japanese censor who will not permit any allusion to "liberty" on a film. (This is of my personal knowledge.)

5. #42 Reference to "democracy" omitted for same reason.

6. #47 Reference to Kaiser's sons omitted as unintelligible to Japanese audience and likely to be misunderstood.

7. #67 Approximately translated "Some collection of hats!" The Jap wouldn't understand hat-checking.

8. #79, Reduced to prosaic statement.

9. #92 Translated "Digging for Independence"—not very good but the word 'democracy' is absolutely banned.

10. #100 Not remembering whether the "couriers" are birds or men—translated merely "a narrow escape."

11. #135 Allusion to "Over there" omitted.

I suggest that you have the titles set up in the size of type desired, by one of the Japanese papers in New York, (Japanese-Amer. Commercial Weekly), and the proof sent to me. It will expedite matters if you attach my section designation (M.I.2.) to my address.

Very sincerely,

J.F. Abbott³
Captain U.S.A.

³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

38. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Argentina¹

Washington, November 5, 1918, 9 p.m.

For Sevier from Sisson. If Germany accepts armistice terms, Committee work of news distribution in foreign countries will still continue throughout period of session of peace conference, as Committee's service will be the means of interpreting views of Unistates at that conference, where Committee will have staff and distributing facilities. Keep your news distributing organization at high pitch of efficiency.

Lansing

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910–1929, Box 735, 103.93/1218e. No classification marking. Blue. Cipher. A stamped notation on the first page reads: "Signed by A.A. Adee." Also sent to Beijing, Tokyo, Archangel, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago, Paris, London, The Hague, Lima, Stockholm, Vladivostok, Bern, Mexico City, and Copenhagen. The text of each telegram is identical except those to Rio de Janeiro, Beijing, and Tokyo, in which the final sentence is stricken out.

39. Editorial Note

As the war drew to a close, the Committee on Public Information employed numerous means to distribute material in foreign countries. Examples are included in the Online Supplement.

Appendix A.7 is a "catalog insert supplied to American firms" for inclusion in U.S. commercial catalogs shipped abroad. Although the sample is undated, it is attached to an October 1918 report from Edward Bernays, Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information. (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 16, Poole—Report Sept 1918)

Appendix A.8 is a pamphlet version of President Woodrow Wilson's September 27, 1918, speech in New York on the League of Nations. It was sent to Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information, Edgar Sisson under cover of an October 7 letter from Frank J. Marion, Committee for Public Information Commissioner in Spain. Marion wrote: "We made a rush job of the President's speech on The League of Nations and got it out in pamphlet form, 5000 copies,

and distributed it to the atheneums, schools, libraries, officials etc. of Spain within four days of its delivery. It was our first effort at pamphleting and I think it was a good start. Am sending you copies under another cover. We have the country covered with pictures of the President—very timely just now.” (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director’s Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 19, Attention of Mr. Sisson) For the text of Wilson’s speech, see *Foreign Relations*, 1918, Supplement 1, The World War, volume I, pages 316–321.

Appendix A.9 is a portrait of Wilson created for distribution in Italy. It is attached to an October 18 letter from Henry Atwater, Director of the Division of Production and Distribution, Committee on Public Information, to Associate General Director of the Foreign Section, Committee on Public Information, Carl Byoir. (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director’s Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 3, Atwater-Donald Lee Oct 18–Mar 19)

Appendix A.10 is an article published in the Swedish newspaper *Socialdemokraten* on October 18. It was forwarded by Eric Palmer, Committee on Public Information Commissioner in Sweden, to Sisson on October 19. Palmer wrote: “I enclose herewith Mr. Henry von Kramer’s first article on his visit to France, where he was sent by Compub at my suggestion.

“This is a rather remarkable article and I recommend that it be used in the United States as the impression of a wellknown Swedish journalist, with the further distinction of being stepson to Hjalmar Branting. The material can also be used in Compub service to other countries.

“I am arranging to distribute the von Kramer article throughout Sweden in places where the Socialdemokraten does not reach.

“Copies of the von Kramer article are also going to Mr. Björkman.” (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director’s Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 21, V)

**40. Letter From the Director of the Foreign Press Bureau,
Committee on Public Information (Poole) to the Chairman of
the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹**

New York, November 15, 1918

Dear Mr. Creel:

I want to give you my reasons why it seems to me, from over a year's constructive work as director of this division, that work along these lines should be continued on a permanent basis as a part of our government's administration in relation to foreign countries.

As to my own part in such work—while feeling it a privilege to have served in this way during the war and assuring you of my willingness to continue serving through the coming three or four months of world wide discussion, if you care to have me do so—I shall then expect to be relieved, to continue my work as a writer. The work here is for an editor. I know that my own value is much greater as a writer, and I feel that for the kind of writing that I wish to do, there will be a large field of usefulness in the years ahead. My feeling is strong in this matter and my decision final.

My opinion is, however, that in some manner this work should go on. You may say that work of this kind belongs to the State Department. Perhaps it does, and it seems to me that a bureau along these lines should either be attached to the State Department or at least cooperate closely with it both here and in foreign countries, as we have been doing during the war. But the need of such work being permanent appears to me plain and urgent. If we are entering an era of more and more open diplomacy, in order to make the policies of this government most effective abroad we must use the legitimate methods of publicity to reach widely the great masses of people in other countries with the significant facts about the life and purposes of this nation. To present such facts widely we need men especially trained in reaching the large public by presentation in popular form.

Such work is by no means simple. If the proposed League of Nations becomes a reality, countless questions will arise of such immediate moment that this nation will need to present quickly to all countries its policy on each question, the reasons for its policy, and also the support of such policy by the nation at large, as evidenced in U.S. editorials, statements of prominent citizens, organizations, etc. There

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 16, Poole—Reports Nov. 1917–April 1918. No classification marking. The armistice took effect on November 11.

may be certain great crises where the delay of a few days or even hours in the transmission of such news will work considerable harm. The prompt and accurate work required will need a *cable service* from the U.S. reaching out all over the world.

Again, this nation will doubtless have many large aims and policies of a more permanent nature for which it wishes to build up support in the court of world opinion. For this it will rely, I presume, not on a tremendous army but on a campaign of fair and open discussion throughout the world. Moreover, as in each nation the trend seems to be more and more toward democracy, the need will increase for a wider and wider appeal to the great masses of people in each land, in the building up of such friendly support. This will require a *mail service* here, an adequate staff in this country to gather news and opinion to a much fuller extent than the limited cable service can do.

Such a mail service would also write or edit articles of all kinds dealing with significant aspects of our national life and growth, and would illustrate some of the best possible photographs, cuts, mats, etc. Such work will be of the first importance—for to gain agreement abroad with our foreign policies we must gain the good will of the world and arouse a friendly interest in all the aspects of life and work in the U.S.

For this part of the work there will be needed a large *film service* as well—for I believe that every year the medium of films will be used more and more to reach the hundreds of millions of people for whom the moving pictures make a much stronger appeal than does the written article.

So much for the home part of the service. There will also be needed in each of the countries men able wisely to select from the cabled and written material sent them, and translate it in colloquial style—men thoroughly familiar with the means of distribution in that country through the daily press, the weekly and monthly periodicals, technical journals, window display, photographs, lectures, film theatres, etc.

All this, of course, should be done in cooperation with the embassies or legations abroad and in harmony with the policy of our State Department.

Such a service, however, if it is to be of real value, must not be of the "official propaganda" sort which has been employed recently by many foreign governments. Although it must be reliable and strictly in conformity with the policies of our State Department, it must be more than this. It must be a service so well written, in the foreign style, so well edited and planned, that foreign editors will use it widely because of their certainty that it will interest their readers. Nothing will more quickly prevent such use than a service evidently "propaganda" and "official." Remember that in years to come, as the nations [are] brought together, in each country more and more news, from

other lands will compete for a place in newspapers and magazines. Our material must therefore be put into the most presentable form.

You may be sure that other nations will continue and increase the work of this kind which they are already undertaking in a much larger way than we have done. And when such nations develop policies hostile to our own, they will campaign in this way against us, and their points will have to be met unless we are willing to suffer defeat in each big national purpose.

It will also be urgent to clear away all points of misunderstanding or misconception that already prevail or will arise in foreign countries in regard to this nation, its life, work, ideals and opinions, its purposes both here and abroad. This means that we must inform foreign countries not only on current news and opinion here, but that also through various articles and pamphlets of authoritative opinion and interpretation we must inform them of the growth in past years, of certain chief aims and tendencies of ours as they now affect the outside world. In brief, we shall have to explain to them in popular form not only our present but our past.

Also it will tremendously help such new democracies as will probably arise in Russia, through the Balkans, Central Europe and elsewhere, if we can send them sound practical articles giving them the benefit of our experience during the long slow process of building up a democracy here. They will be eager to learn of all the various ways and means, both political and industrial, by which we have steered a safe course between the extremes of autocracy and anarchy, the methods found to be practical in self-government of all kinds, how our government is able to help the people and how the people control the government—both federal, state and municipal. All such material, presented through popular but authoritative articles, through pictures, films, etc. will be immensely valuable to liberal groups in each country who are trying to steer the same safe middle course. There are signs that the world is entering now a critical stage of transition with dangers of reaction on one side and Bolshevism on the other. It will greatly promote the safety of true democracy everywhere if the liberal groups in each country can be thoroughly informed of each other's work.

Just to give one example, it will help the Russian liberals if we can show, by articles, pictures and especially films to the millions of Russian peasants, the life of the American farmer, his use of modern machinery, schools for his children, automobiles, newspapers, rural delivery and all the other advantages he enjoys. Our embassy and consular service in Russia as at present organized is not adequate for this task. It will mean, through papers, periodicals, agricultural journals, lectures, film theatres, etc. reaching out to all classes of people there and showing them what we have done and are doing, giving them the benefit both

of our successes and mistakes in the many experiments we have made, picturing the life of our farmers and our workingmen, our children in cities and villages, our free schools and colleges, all kinds of free education here, public health work of all kinds, work of industrial welfare. It will be especially urgent to overcome a widely prevailing opinion in Russia that our exporters are looking on Russia as a field for huge and unfair profits in the future. We must show our real purpose, which will be, I suppose, to open up legitimate trade connections on a basis of mutual advantage.

Again in our approach to the peoples of Germany and Austria it will be of the utmost importance quickly and convincingly to explain to them what attitude we decide to take, in order to avoid on the one hand any danger of another German militarism arising and on the other hand to meet the menace of a permanently embittered nation that might become a breeding ground for trouble in Europe in the generations to come.

Our foreign trade to all countries will doubtless have an immense expansion in the near future. With this will go a great advertising campaign abroad conducted by exporters here through their export journals to foreign countries, through window displays, through foreign newspapers and all other possible mediums. They will use every possible device, including films, to promote their campaigns. The pictures they give of American life and national aims will closely affect our relations with such foreign countries, and should therefore, it seems to me, be balanced and controlled by the friendly cooperation of this government in all such campaigns, so as to insure against possible blunders and misstatements. For upon our commerce will depend the good or bad will toward us that will arise throughout the world. This will be especially true in the near future when the world will have special need of our manufactured products. In many countries it has been said by hostile propagandists that we are to become a huge imperialistic commercial power using our domination in ways unfair to other nations in the world's market. Such attacks need to be answered by a campaign to show our real policy—a free field for all.

It will be the same with our food products. For years to come the world will face a shortage of food and will be eager to know the extent of our supplies of such products. It will immeasurably strengthen the good will of the world toward this country if we can show both the abundance of our resources and our generous purpose to share to the greatest possible extent our bounty with others who need it most. In this connection I have already spoken of how the life of the farmer can be used to show to other people what a free but orderly government can do for the man who tills the soil. Such informative work means reaching not only the popular press but also agricultural journals.

Again, in the field of education it will immensely increase the good will toward us if we can keep other countries informed of the thousands of young men and women who will doubtless be trained in our schools and colleges to go abroad in all kinds of foreign work connected with our industries, commerce, education, etc. Moreover, if there is to be a more liberal and brotherly world, no better means of building it up could be found than to bring together the teachers of all countries in a great international exchange of ideas of all kinds as to the education of children and the moulding of the citizen who will run the world of tomorrow. This can perhaps best be done through the world's educational journals. In this field we have much to offer in the way of suggestions drawn from our experience in our educational system, federal, state and municipal. But we have also much to learn. And certainly, in all parts of such a service, we should take pains to avoid any too superior attitude. We should show ourselves ready and eager to learn. Some say that in the coming age the one great word will be Education. If so, it is certainly urgent to provide a means by which the best ideas of each country can be given at once to all the rest.

This applies also to the field of medical service and public health. For the popular and medical press abroad we should describe all such activities here that may be valuable suggestions for public health in other countries and we should also show how we benefit here from the many suggestions from abroad. In this section, we should show our willingness to help in all kinds of relief and reconstruction work in Europe, and in this field we can also show our own essential democracy, in the great progress that all movements for public health have made over here in the last twenty years. Also in every possible way should be shown how the new international order can help the progress of medical science and how medical science can strengthen the new international order.

To promote such special news exchange, in the more important foreign countries, as now we have a commercial attache at our embassies or legations, it might be well to add educational, agricultural and possibly medical attaches as well.

At any rate there should be in each important foreign country a Bureau of the kind here described, with cable, mail and film divisions, cooperating with our consular and diplomatic service. And here in the United States there should be the same three divisions to gather and send the material.

As for the actual organization, I can make suggestions only for the mail division, in which I have had experience here.

Briefly, in this office we have been organized as follows. First, we have a news feature service made up of extracts and "re-writes" from about 200 daily newspapers from all sections of the United States and

giving all shades of opinion; also from several hundred general and technical magazines, trade journals, etc., as well as from all sorts of federal and state government reports, and reports of private organizations.

We have also special men here dealing with various fields of activities, such as agriculture, food conservation, industry and finance, labor, education, religion, medicine.

In connection with these is a section supplying to hundreds of U.S. exporters printed and picture material to be distributed by them in the hundreds of thousands of business letters, catalogues, etc. which they send to foreign countries.

In addition, we have had on our staff or connected with this Bureau men with a special knowledge of Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, France, England, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany and also Latin American countries.

Finally, we have an art department which produces photographs, cuts, mats, etc. to illustrate articles, and large re-prints to be placed in the several thousand shop windows now available to us in foreign countries; also posters and picture post-cards showing forth war aims and activities.

Some such organization perhaps might be valuable as a basis to build on.

I have not tried to set all this out in order or in any detail but merely to make suggestions for what seems to me a tremendous need. I hope that if this meets with the approval of the government, minds far abler than my own will combine my suggestions with others and draw up a strong and adequate system of publicity work abroad, without which it seems to me that the effort to build a new international order will meet with little or no success in the critical years ahead.

Should some such plan be adopted, there exists in our records here a vast wealth of suggestion for one who is to build up on a permanent basis such a service for the United States. There are also, I think, some men on this staff who would be exceedingly valuable for such work if they could be persuaded to undertake it. For the main direction of such a service I know of no one more fitted than yourself.

Sincerely yours,

Ernest Poole²

² Printed from a copy that indicates Poole signed the original.

41. Letter From the Assistant Director of the Division of Foreign Picture Service, Committee on Public Information (Tuerk) to the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information (Creel)¹

New York, November 25, 1918

Dear Mr. Creel:

We understand that Select Pictures plans to release on December 1st, a five reel subject, THE ROAD THROUGH THE DARK featuring Clara Kimball Young.

We reviewed a copy of this picture at our office on November 23rd, and beg to advise that many of its features make it objectionable both for exhibition in the United States, and for export to other countries.

In this picture Clara Kimball Young plays the part of Gabrielle, a French girl, in love with an American student. The scene is laid in France. To separate Gabrielle from her lover, her parents send her to live with an aunt in a village on the Meuse. She corresponds with her lover by means of a love code which makes their letters appear innocent to her parents.

This picture is prejudicial to the French because it shows the inhabitants of this village as offering no resistance to the Hun invaders. Gabrielle's aunt gives her gold with which to buy off the Huns "as they did in 1870".

This picture also makes a very strong bid for sympathy for Germany. It shows the German officer too honorable to accept gold. He prevents a private from carrying off Gabrielle. He treats her with great kindness and consideration. Acts of barbarism and the attempted burning of the village are portrayed as committed by privates, contrary to explicit orders from the Imperial Government.

The German officer, Von Strelitz, takes Gabrielle as his mistress to Berlin. So far as the audience can tell, she turns pro-German. The last few hundred feet of the picture reveal that she has been acting as a spy for the allies all through the picture and communicating the information which she gathers to her American lover by means of their love code.

The presence of many laboratory titles in the print which we projected indicates that this picture has under-gone a drastic revision, to adapt it to the change in the military situation. As it stands the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 1, General Correspondence of George Creel, Box 3, Brulator, Joseph C. No classification marking.

picture abounds in technical errors and is wholly inconsistent with American public opinion.

Capt. Gleason's² office of the Military Intelligence is acquainted with these facts having viewed the picture with us. We hope to see a complete copy of this picture before it is released and to receive complete title sheets so that we can discuss the picture more in detail.³

Yours very truly,

DIVISION OF FOREIGN PICTURE SERVICE

John Tuerk

Assistant Director

² Not further identified.

³ The film was released later that year.

42. Telegram From the Consulate in Irkutsk to the Department of State¹

Irkutsk, March 7, 1919, 11 a.m.

168. Following from Irkutsk. "March 7, 11 a.m. Subject opinion Consular Officers Siberia on continuance Compub struggle. Consul Caldwell² at Vladivostok says "Believe Compub has been successful and could do good by continuing". Consul Emory³ at Omsk says "It was evidently a mistake to demobilize the Russian division of Compub at this time. This mistake was all the more to be regretted because Compub was helping more than any other one American organization to explain away other mistakes in our Siberian policy. Compub at Omsk was doing splendid work and enjoyed great popularity with Russian public and press which was increasing daily."

Vice Consul Ray⁴ at Novo Nicolaevsk says "I have many requests for these bulletins and believe they have done much to enlighten the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Decimal File 1910-1929, Box 735, 103.93/1557. No classification marking. Sent via Beijing. Received March 11 at 5:08 a.m.

² John K. Caldwell.

³ Reference is to John Augustus Embry.

⁴ Apparent reference to Lacey Gray.

Russian public relative to our ways of doing business, education and farming and American life in general. In my opinion it should be continued”.

Vice Consul Williams⁵ at Cheliabinsk says “Concerning proposed liquidation in American Press Bureau I call attention to importance of its store house just now. The store is in charge of a Russian who has opened a branch in the city where American publications are given out and he has often fifty calls daily for them. Recently he circulated this district with some publications and a letter requesting recipient to advise if he wished further publication of bureau and inquiring in what he was especially interested. Henceforth letters were sent to representative people from lists secured from Zemstvos cooperatives and other reliable sources and replies now being received evince much interest. A Russian from the front called on me yesterday stating he had seen press bureau pamphlet concerning Imperial Government of Germany in Russia, that this pamphlet was in great demand and he had called to see how many copies he could get for front where publications explaining present situation in Russia are so needed. In the present lack of understanding of our attitude toward Russia it seems unfortunate to draw out [*withdraw?*] an institution of reliable information in a territory where rumor and inaccurate statement circulate often as the only source of information as (*)⁶ for people as for the course of the world movements of this present time. Most likely withdrawal of such a work will cause much comment because of the recent publicity given it through letters mentioned. The press has already stated that this action is with the mobilization plans of the allies which makes appear that our interest in Russia in this respect was only account of loans and it would seem that America cannot afford to demobilize such institutions in Russia at this stage”.

Vice Consul Thomas⁷ Krasnoyvsks says “consider it very unfortunate that Compub not to consider its useful work. Press and all classes people have shown greatest interest in publications. This work was especially helpful to Proletariat in discouraging struggle work out good scheme of cooperation. This class does not understand our institutions but nevertheless feels that our democracy must be its model and looks to us to be their teachers.”

Vice Consul Hadley,⁸ resigned says “The demobilization of the Compub is most unfortunate particularly at this time and if the demobi-

⁵ George W. Williams.

⁶ As in the original. Presumably it signifies an omission or garbled text in the transmission from Irkutsk.

⁷ Edward B. Thomas.

⁸ Howard D. Hadley.

lization means the discontinuance or serious curtailment of the work it was doing in Russia it will mean that still another wonderful opportunity to do work helpful alike to Russia and to America has [been] allowed to pass. The Compub was doing splendid work in interpreting America to the Russians and this work was sure to prove very helpful not only to Russia but to the farmer the laborers and the business men of America but the mistake that has been made in demobilizing the Compub can still be largely remedied if the help it was doing shall be carried on by other American agencies in Russia. Very much can be done in the way of revival of the Russian newspapers in both news and editorial columns from the spread of interesting helpful news about America. This work can be done to a large extent by Consular Officers on their own initiative. What is needed is patience tact work with the owners and editors of daily papers. Had no serious trouble as Vice Consul in getting practically all Compub material into the Orenburg and Novo Nicolaevsk dailies and the cooperative magazines. I also succeeded in getting the leading daily of Novo Nicolaevsk to publish a special American number. This thirteen long articles in it about America”.

Vice Consul Palmer⁹ Ekaterinburg says “at first I thought little of the Compub but always tried to help along as far as possible. But after looking into the question more closely and having seen their work while Brown was here I have come to think much in their work and certainly believe it should be continued if at all possible. I gave Compub representative here a letter in which I expressed regret that his work had been so unexpectedly cut off, that I believe the Compub was the basis of a great trade getting movement and that I had hoped that finally it might be fused into and become part some sort of a practical organization or perhaps better call it information office and that I felt in this way they would do good for America. At least they were getting well into connection not only this people here and especially with the papers but were reaching a class of people in the district which is not a reader of newspapers and yet is to my mind a class of potential bulk not to be neglected. I believe however, that telegraph service should be improved as we generally get news too late *peddle* out here. The Compub should certainly not only be continued but pushed to the limit”.

Consul Thompson¹⁰ Irkutsk says “I have been identified with this work since August 1917 when begun by Consul General Summers¹¹ *this*

⁹ Henry Palmer.

¹⁰ Alfred Ray Thompson.

¹¹ Maddin Summers.

(under?) appropriation [*appropriation?*] and having worked *this* (under?) Department of State/Compub representative in Irkutsk and can testify to increasing local demand for weekly bulletin on the part of military organizations, peasants associations and great middle classes who are grasping blindly for same democratic ideals but who are unable to find expression of same through primitive Russian press. Feel this work should be continued Department of States appropriation for at least of (a?) year longer as it is very important for the Department of State to have the machinery for explaining to Russians American aims particularly in connection with railway control to offset the propaganda of certain disgruntled Russian railway officials who will be deprived of opportunity of receiving bribes.

My own views on subject have been fully set forth in my number 126 February 20, 6 p.m.¹² Have been informed that Japan is establishing a Compub in Siberia. In short time I shall send Department an estimate of funds needed to continue this work.” Harris.¹³

Reinsch¹⁴

¹² Not found.

¹³ Ernest Lloyd Harris, Consul General in Irkutsk.

¹⁴ Paul Samuel Reinsch, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to China.

43. Report by the Director of the Scandinavian Branch of the Division of Films, Committee on Public Information (Smith)¹

undated

REPORT OF GUY CROSWELL SMITH, DIRECTOR
SCANDINAVIAN BRANCH OF THE DIVISION OF FILMS OF THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION.

Upon my arrival in Stockholm on April 1, 1918, from Petrograd where I had been connected with the Committee's office, I was appointed to take charge of the distribution of American official films in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Upon investigation of the situation I found that an immense amount of German propaganda and drama films were being presented in the picture theatres throughout these countries. The Scandinavians like films very much and to the large attendance at the five hundred odd theatres was constantly being conveyed a broad influence—always of course, for the German point of view. The propaganda films showed the success of the Germans and Austrians, scenes in German cities, munition factories, etc., all tending to demonstrate how Germany was winning the war. And there was absolutely no representation as to what the United States was doing. In Sweden, particularly, the German film propaganda was especially damaging toward the existence of any ideas of fair neutrality for the reason that the Swedes were practically all inclined to be pro-German and the influence of these films was a constant stimulus in the same direction.

I foresaw that our films would have to be forced upon the theatres and distributing companies in some way. The supply of American drama films in the country was limited on account of the embargo that had existed, which for a time, had excluded the possibility of importing films from the United States. This condition had made it easy for the German film producers to get in their product but they sold only with the provision that some German propaganda subjects would be taken with the drama films.

After conferences with the representatives of the War Trade Board in Stockholm, Christiania and Copenhagen I formulated the following plan which in its operation practically drove German propaganda and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 21, Smith, Buy—Berne—Cables Jan June '19. No classification marking. Smith forwarded the report to Rickey under a June 1 covering letter written from New York.

drama films from the Scandinavian market. Shortly before my arrival in Stockholm, the export prohibition on American drama films had been provisionally raised and shipments again began to come—addressed to the American Legations in the various countries. Before releasing these to the consignees, they signed agreements that the films would never be shown in any programme with a German drama or propaganda film and that one reel of official American would always be shown with them. This agreement they in turn made with the theatres before distributing. The three largest companies controlling theatres in Scandinavia further agreed that they would never permit any films previously received to be shown in the same programme with German subjects. Inasmuch as American films were much more popular with the public on account of their superiority, the effect of these agreements were quickly evident. German films were gradually forced out to such an extent that in three months after my arrival it was difficult to find a theatre showing German drama films and the German propaganda films had been completely driven out and replaced by our official films. I kept a close check on the programmes throughout the three countries and in the few instances where theatres did not keep their agreement and showed a German film their ability to get American film was discontinued.

During the eight months I was in Scandinavia, I distributed about 100,000 feet of official films. This included American industrial subjects; Hearst-Pathé and Universal Weeklies showing the Allies war activities and events in the United States; “Pershing’s Crusaders”² and the Allied War Review. These pictures were first shown in the best theatres of the capitals—Stockholm, Christiania and Copenhagen and then went in rotation to the smaller houses in these cities and afterward throughout the other cities and towns of the three countries. Thus, where previously this immense number of theatregoers had received pictured war news, only through German eyes they now saw what we were doing, and, in the industrial subjects, the big American interests, and the drama films thoroughly American in subject and characters instead of German.

In the motion picture announcements of a recent copy of a Stockholm newspaper I noticed that out of twelve theatres, eleven were showing completely American programmes and one French, but no German films were announced. Apparently German lines have not come back although it is several months since our control ended.

Guy Crosswell Smith

² For clips from *Pershing’s Crusaders*, see the Online Supplement, Appendix A.11.

44. Editorial Note

In the final report of the Committee on Public Information, dated June 1, 1919, Director of the Foreign Section Edgar Sisson wrote: "From Paris the first Sunday in February, 1919 [February 2], I cabled around the world demobilization orders for all offices of the committee, except those of New York, London, and Paris. The offices demobilized by that order were Copenhagen, Stockholm, The Hague, Berne, Prague, Rome, Madrid, Buenos Aires, Santiago, Lima, Colon, Mexico City, Peking, Vladivostok, Harbin, Irkutsk, Omsk, and Archangel.

"To the Siberian and Russian offices the chief leeway in time was granted, but it was impossible to allow them to operate beyond March 15. The last members of the group did not reach the United States until late in June, 1919." (*Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information*, page 213)

Despite the cut-off, some offices continued to produce material well into 1919. See the Online Supplement, Appendix A.12 for an example of such work. This newsletter was produced by the CPI for distribution in Russia, where the civil war was ongoing, on March 17, 1919. (National Archives, RG 63, Entry 106, Correspondence, Cables, Reports, and Newspapers Received from Employees of the Committee Abroad, Nov. 1917–Apr. 1919, Box 2)

Commissioners of the CPI at the various overseas offices submitted their final reports to Chairman of the Committee on Public Information George Creel, which are included in *Complete Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Public Information*, pages 149–290. President Woodrow Wilson formally abolished the Committee on Public Information by means of Executive Order 3154 of August 21, 1919.

Appendix A

A.1. Photograph¹



¹ Reading Room of the Allies Right Hand Show Window. [Caption is in the original. See Document 24.]

A.2. Photograph¹



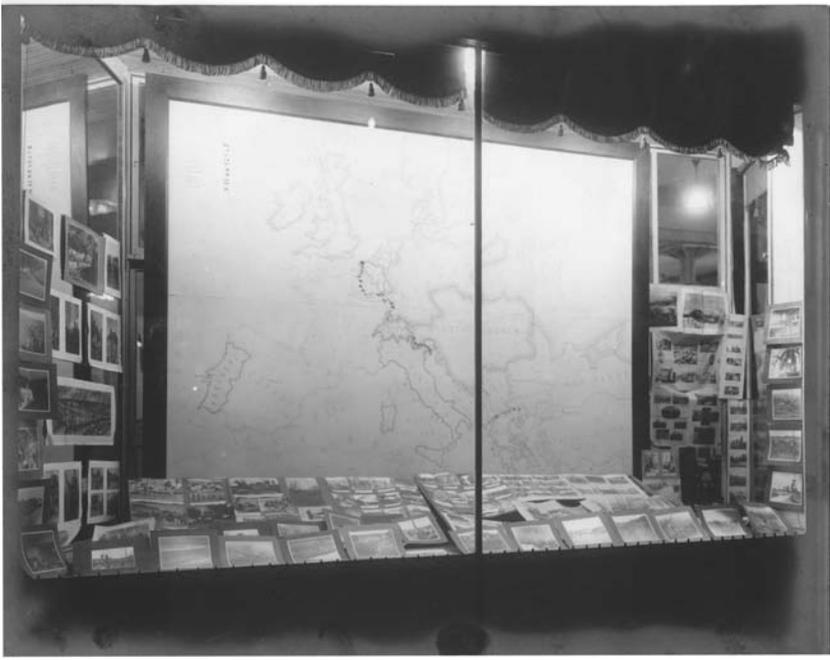
¹ Reading Room of the Allies. Interior. Partial View. Note the American flags and War poster. Serious looking gentleman in shirt sleeves is the Manager. [Caption is in the original. See Document 24.]

A.3. Photograph¹



¹ Reading Room of the Allies. Interior. Partial View. [Caption is in the original. See Document 24.]

A.4. Photograph¹



¹ See Document 24.

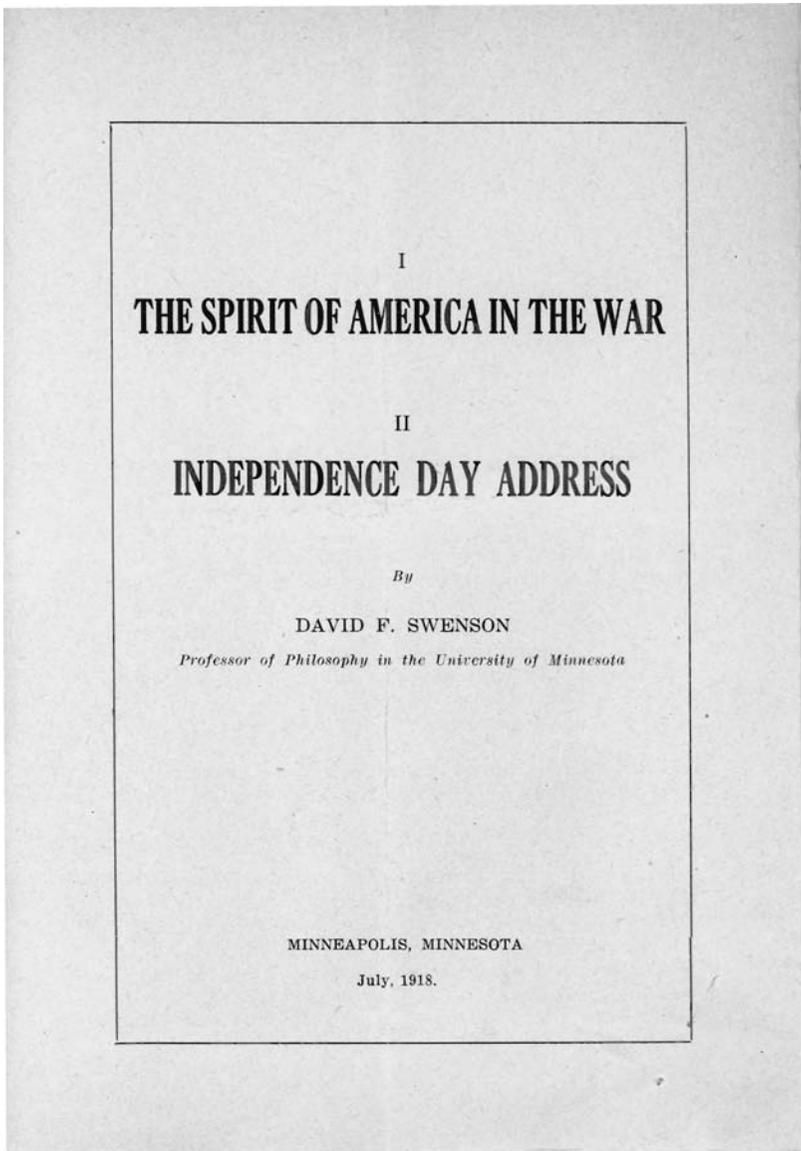
A.5. Movie Still¹



¹ *America's Answer* (1918).

Source: National Archives, RG 111, Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer (1960–1985), Documentary Films, ca. 1914–ca. 1944. Distributed by the Committee on Public Information. 9 reels.

A.6. Pamphlet¹



¹ *The Spirit of America in the War*

Source: National Archives, RG 63, Entry 105, Director's Office of the Foreign Section, General Correspondence, Box 4, Bjorkman—August 1–20.

A.7. Catalog Insert¹

Type of catalogue insert supplied to American friends

OS ESTADOS UNIDOS DA AMERICA DO NORTE E A LUCTA UNIVERSAL

Pelo que estamos luctando

"Não procuramos vantagem material de especie alguma. Não temos fins egoistas a satisfazer. Não desejamos conquistar nem dominar. Não buscamos nenhuma indemnisações para nós proprios, nem compensação material pelos sacrificios que teremos de fazer livremente."

"Luctaremos pela Democracia, pelo direito d'aquelles que se submettem á autoridade para que tenham voz activa nos seus proprios governos, pelos direitos e liberdades das nações pequenas, pelo dominio universal do direito, por um tal concerto de povos livres que traga paz e segurança e torne o mundo livre emfim."

"O que buscamos é a soberania da lei, baseada sobre o consentimento dos governados e sustentada pela opinião organizada do genero humano."

Woodrow Wilson

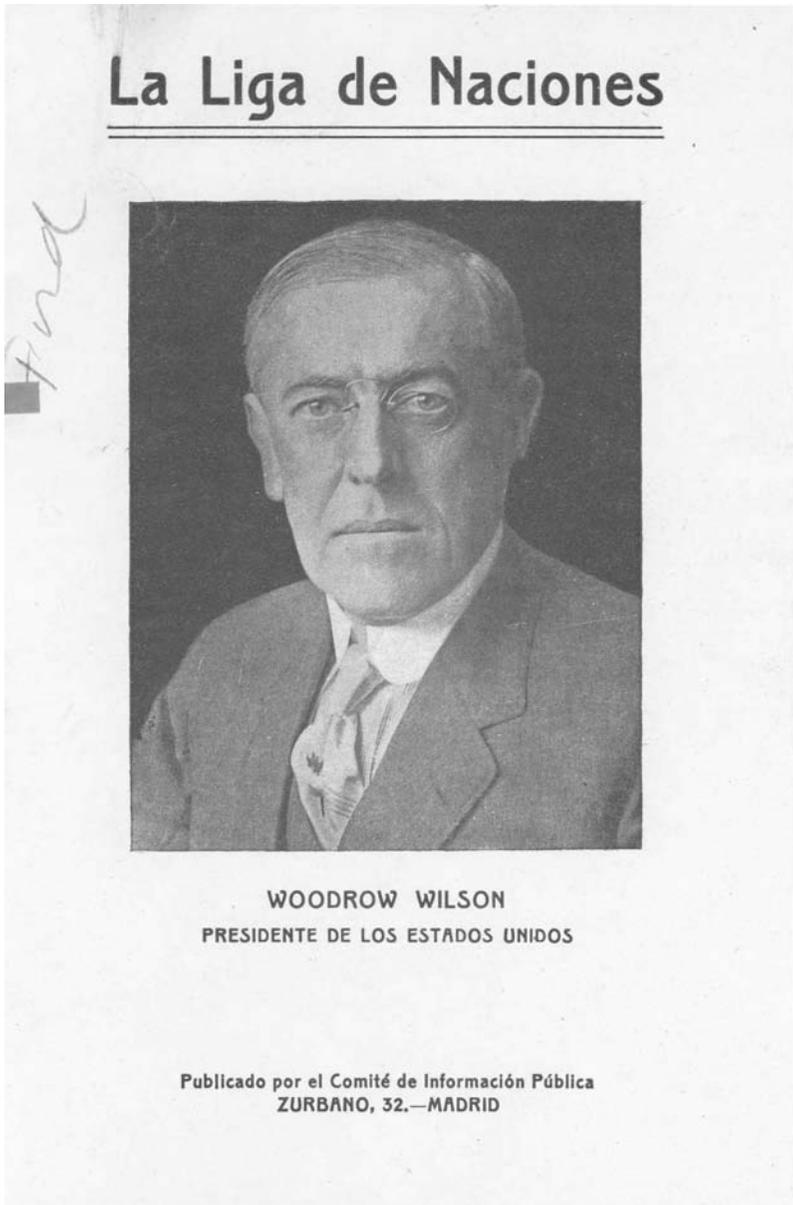
Como estamos luctando

(Algarismos compilados de fontes officiaes, em 1 de setembro de 1918)

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Tropas actualmente no estrangeiro..... | 1,750,000 |
| Tropas armadas nos E. U. e possessões insulares | 1,450,000 |
| Tropas que estarão em França em junho de 1919 | 4,000,000 |
| Em 1 de janeiro de 1917, a marinha mercante dos E. U. tinha um total de (navios de mais de 500 toneladas, brutas) | 2,750,000 toneladas brutas |
| Em 1 de setembro de 1918, havia dentro da jurisdicção da Junta de Navegação dos E. U. um total de..... | 9,511,915 toneladas brutas |
| Em agosto de 1917 havia nos E. U. | 61 estaleiros |
| Em 1 de setembro de 1918, havia | 203 estaleiros |
| O programma da junta de navegação exige a construcção de | 2,963 navios |
| Estes navios comprehendem uma tonelagem bruta de | 16,305,004 toneladas brutas |
| A colheita de trigo em 1918 monta ao total de..... | 899,000,000 bushels |
| A colheita de milho em 1918, total de..... | 2,572,000,000 bushels |
| A exportação mensal de trigo media..... | 11,000,000 bushels |
| Augmento em 1918 de productos alimenticios a mais que em qualquer anno de paz, total..... | 1,000,000,000 bushels |
| Em industrias de guerra estão..... | 1,500,000 mulheres |

¹ See Document 39.

A.8. Pamphlet¹



¹ See Document 39.

A.9. Portrait of President Wilson¹



“Il popolo degli Stati Uniti ha contemplato con profonda simpatia e calda ammirazione gli sforzi e i sacrifici del popolo d'Italia. Ci sta a cuore il presente ed il futuro benessere d'Italia, e ci ralleghiamo di trovarci associati ad un popolo, con cui uniscono tanti legami di affetto intimo e personale, in una lotta che non ha altro scopo che la liberazione, la libertà, il diritto delle genti e delle nazioni a vivere la loro vita propria ed indipendente, a determinare la propria loro fortuna, mantenendo i diritti così dei deboli come dei forti, e sostenendo la giustizia per la forza irresistibile di nazioni libere, unite ed alleate a difesa dell'umanità.

Con forza sempre più aumentantesi, con risoluzione sempre più ferma, l'Italia e l'America staranno unite nella sacra causa comune. L'America saluta il coraggioso, il cavalleresco Regno d'Italia e prega Dio ch'EI l'abbia in guardia.”

WOODROW WILSON.

¹ See Document 39.

A.10. Newspaper Article¹

SOCIAL-DEMOKRATEN Fredagen den 18 Oktober

U. S. A. i Frankrike.

Brev från Frankrike för Social-Demokraten.

1.
Det allmänna intrycket.

Paris sept. 1918.

Som yngling för undertecknad en gång till Amerika och fick sina ideal skamflädd, och har sedan skrivit en bok om sina intryck från landet. Den som läst boken ifråga, skall medge att kritiken, som där serveras över U. S. A. är, som recensionerna i pressen också sade, ganska bitter. **Walden** bör alltså icke kunna beskyllas för partiskhet på förhand till amerikanernas favör, och jag vet mig skriva utslutande som socialdemokrat och svensk, ty jag skall alltid vara glad att få vara till hjärtat svensk.

I dessa dagar sker avgörande om de små nationernas rätt till självständigt liv. Bebyggarna av **Anders** **Taa** kring **Ostasjön** ha ej mistat haft

ga bland oss, att det svenska folket skall bli beskydd för att som helhet stå på kejsarmakternas sida mot världens demokratiska nationer. För min del kan jag icke fatta varför alltid blott den svenska högerpressen varit representerad och hörd utomlands. Jag minns som ett exempel, att i Ryssland har jag endast träffat på de ärgaste svenska chauvinistörarna, däribland naturligtvis med särskild fördrick Åfonblad, som representanter för svensk tankering!

Detta är dock för absurd. Massan av det svenska folket har allt flera vänner i Amerika än i Tyskland, och dess hjärta och sympatier ligga naturligt i **Jeanne d'Arc**'s och **Revolutions** Frankrike gent emot Bis-

men ännu icke träffat på en stramt typ, en snobb. Någon gång en smula för säker på sig, och hittills blott en enda obehaglig individ. Men ingen har visat överåtteri, militaristiskt eller kastväsendeartat. — folkandan skulle absolut icke tolerera det. Så mycket känner jag Amerika, att sådana fauser, av något slag tolereras icke.

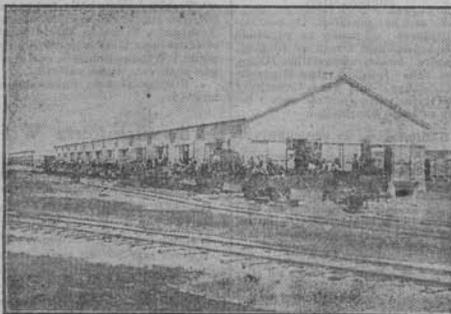
Jag har blivit angenämt överraskad, och något av min gröna ungdoms tro på Amerika som frihetens land har kommit tillbaka (fast ju ändå U. S. A. är den hänsynslösa plutokratins förlovade land!). Här ser man amerikanen, fri från juktandet, med ett väldigt, historiskt mål för egonen, och han går till verket med en enkelhet som verkar högst sympatisk. Och måhända är det nyttigt för honom att få lära känna Europa något, att vara tvungen att slås och lida och så tillsammans med utlänningar (dessa man gäller om engelsmännen), att för sin nationella trygghets skull behöva resa över i miljön till Europa, som han förut blott betraktat som ett någonstans, varifrån de mindre önskvärda icke-amerikanerna kommo.

Det är ännu för tidigt för mig att skriva om yankeen som soldat, som officer, ty då måste man se honom vid fronten först. Men det jag hittills sett av honom vid de stora anläggningarna, fabriker, dockorna och föräden, är en typisk amerikan, iklädd en uniform, påminnande om den belgiska, slätkrad, med den karakteristiska hakan, med cigarr, tuggande — ty hela nationen tuggar alltid på något — men med en oavviklig säkerhet, en nästan praxislik säkerhet.

Hela det amerikanska företaget i Europa är specialiserat, varje man får göra det han bäst kan. Man sätter sig noga för att ta en mekaniker till fronten — nej, man ställer honom "någonstans" vid en svare eller till att sätta ihop automobilier. Jag är säker på, att de alla dessa yankees här i Frankrike ta saken mycket lugnt, som vare det fråga om ett vanligt jobb. Det kan göras, det skall göras, damn it!, och så slår han näven i handen, flyttar över cigarrarna och så blir saken gjord.

Man tar en "vakuumig", t. ex. en bas från Bethlehem, och säger åt honom: här är material, här är folk, här ligger marken det skall göras på. Om en månad skall ni ha en sagn, ett valverk färdigt här. Allt right: om en månad är det färdigt.

Amerikanerna ha i högsta grad förväntat Frankrike med att på otroligt kort tid skapa jättenläggningar utav intet. Härmed ett förslag: Vi skicka över, med vederbörligt till-



Ett av amerikanernas stora varuhus.

anledning reflektera över den saken under det senaste året, då Tysklands makt stötte i senit. Vi ha nog ej glömt i Sverige prof. Ostwalds halvt officiella mission i vårt land, då han sökte bygga för den tyska världshägnen med Gustav Vasas efterföljare som hantlangare i Norden.

Men de planerna ha nu stöts på petru. Dessa brev äro ett bevis på den patrullens art och dimensioner från ett håll: amerikanernas begynnande insats i kriget.

Det kejserliga Tysklands försök är hopplöst — det är det stora totalintrycket för den som sett de enorma förberedelser U. S. A. har börjat och delvis slutfört allerede i Frankrike.

marks och Wilhelms Tyskland.

Men det börjar klarna! Det har fallit ord från ledande män å Förenta staterna, som ha en äkta, uppriktig demokratisk kläng. Och man får känslan att det är uppriktligt när U. S. A. säger sig kämpa för demokrati och internationell rätt, när man talar med de amerikanska officerarna och med manskapet i deras arméer i Frankrike.

Den amerikanske officeren gör ett egendomligt intryck. Det är svårt att klassificera honom, socialt såväl som militäriakt.

De flesta amerikanska officerarna komma från universiteten och af-

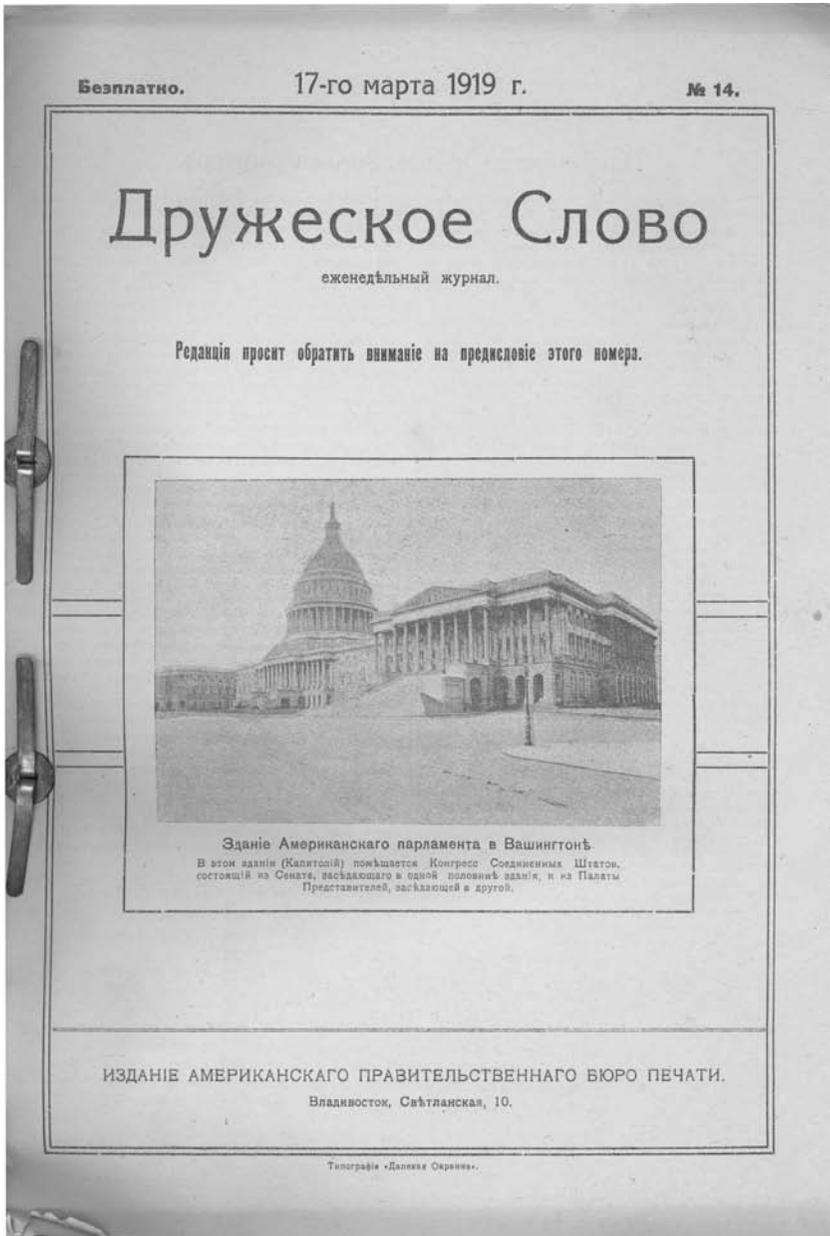
¹ See Document 39.

A.11. Movie Still¹



¹ *Pershing's Crusaders* (1918).

Source: National Archives, RG 111, Records of the Office of the Chief Signal Officer (1960–1985), Documentary Films, ca. 1914–ca. 1944. Distributed by the Committee on Public Information. 3 reels.

A.12. Newsletter¹¹ See Document 44.

