

CHAPTER 16

“THE WORLD’S GREATEST ADVENTURE IN ADVERTISING”: WALTER LIPPMANN’S CRITIQUE OF CENSORSHIP AND PROPAGANDA

SUE CURRY JANSEN

[T]here is no way of evading the fact that liberty is not so much permission as it is the construction of a system of information increasingly independent of opinion.

—Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News*¹

After World War I private industry converted wartime technology to peacetime use. And they also applied wartime propaganda methods to launching peacetime services and products.

—Edward Bernays, *Biography of an Idea*²

THE Great War, as the First World War was known to those who experienced it, is regarded as a transformative moment in human history. It marked the end of the Western world’s faith in the inevitability of human progress; it was the first industrial war; the first total war in which civilians as well as combatants were deliberately targeted; and it was also the first global information war.

Propaganda and even psychological warfare are ancient arts that played important roles in warfare long before there was a critical vocabulary to describe these activities. During the First World War, however, they were practiced on a scale never before imagined as modern technological and organizational knowledge and resources were

effectively mobilized to "fight the Hun." So, effectively, in fact, that after the war, German generals and some independent analysts claimed the war was not lost in the trenches but in the minds of the German people, who succumbed to British and American propaganda.

The generals were determined that this would never happen again. German authorities not only mastered propaganda tactics and strategies, they perfected them in the next decade and a half. This was not just a defensive effort to determine how things went wrong in 1914–1918 and to rectify a strategic knowledge gap; once the Nazis came to power, they looked beyond military science to Madison Avenue and Hollywood to create deadly new forms of spectacle.

The Allies also reconsidered the propaganda successes of the Great War, some triumphantly, others with sober regrets as they reassessed the Faustian powers that they had helped to organize and unleash. The most prominent postwar critic of America's wartime propaganda machinery was young Walter Lippmann (1889–1974). A nationally prominent figure while still in his early twenties, Lippmann was involved in the propaganda effort at multiple levels. First, he was a founding editor of *The New Republic* magazine, which had strongly advocated U.S. entry into the European war. Second, the Wilson administration asked Lippmann to create a plan for a publicity bureau to deal with war information, although it did not adopt his plan. Third, Lippmann was the youngest member of a secret government group, the Inquiry, which drafted Wilson's Fourteen Points, establishing the U.S. terms for ending the hostilities. Some of his wording was used in President Wilson's famous speech clarifying the U.S. position.³ Fourth, he served as a captain in the army intelligence unit, the Military Intelligence Branch, which wrote propaganda leaflets urging German soldiers to surrender. Fifth, he was a strong critic of the propaganda activities of the Committee on Public Information (CPI), set up by the Wilson administration to mobilize public support for the war, conveying his concerns privately to the administration during the war and publicly after the Armistice.

Lippmann was deeply disillusioned by his wartime experience: by the enormous success of America's propaganda efforts, by the suppression of free expression by the president that he had so enthusiastically supported, by the administration's decisions to deploy the U.S. military to Russia and Siberia to bolster anti-Bolshevik forces during the Russian Civil War and to deceive the American public about the purposes of the invasion, by the administration's mismanagement of negotiations at Versailles, by the poor performance of the press during the war and at the peace conference, and by his own susceptibility to propaganda.⁴ He identified with the so-called lost generation of the 1920s and spent the postwar years assessing what had happened to American democracy during the war and what it revealed about the nature of public opinion in the emerging age of mass communication.

Woodrow Wilson, celebrated by the French press as "the prince of peace" when he arrived at the Versailles peace talks in 1918 and the titular author of the slogan "the war to end all war," bears ultimate responsibility for the violence done to language and liberty by the new machinery of propaganda.⁵ His deputies; Colonel House, his chief

advisor, and George Creel; a former muckraking journalist who headed the CPI, actually implemented "America's First Propaganda Ministry," as the CPI was known by insiders.⁶ The CPI controlled all domestic U.S. propaganda during the war and developed a vast international network for the distribution of American propaganda that extended as far as Russia.

Under critical fire from the Republican Congress, which suspected the CPI was embellishing President Wilson's achievements to advance the interests of the Democratic Party, the CPI was abolished immediately after the signing of the Armistice. Republican loyalists accused Creel of corruption, patronage, and press censorship, which he denied.⁷ To defend himself, as well as the thousands of writers, artists, and ordinary citizens who voluntarily participated in the CPI's efforts, Creel quickly produced a book, *How We Advertised America* (1920), which described in great detail the CPI's work, albeit in hyperbolic terms.⁸ Despite Creel's self-promoting bravado, it provides a valuable inventory of the vast scale of the CPI's efforts.

Most members of the CPI contributed their efforts on a voluntary basis while continuing their regular careers, so that even participants who were sincerely motivated by patriotism sometimes found that their government work and their corporate interests intersected in opportunistic ways. Some of those opportunities bore immediate fruits, but the greatest rewards were harvested in the postwar period when America became the media capital of the world. For aspiring "captains of consciousness," service on the CPI was the networking opportunity of a lifetime. It also offered state-of-the-art training in advanced techniques of mass persuasion, as well as privileged access to startling evidence of the apparent gullibility of the American public.⁹

After the war, many former members of the CPI turned the propaganda skills that they had acquired during the war to civilian use by becoming corporate propagandists: the term Edward Bernays used openly to describe his activities as late as 1928.¹⁰ In addition to Bernays, who claimed the title of "father of public relations," other pioneers of public relations, including Carl Byoir and Arthur Page, were also alumni of the CPI, as was John Young, founder of the Young and Rubicam advertising agency. In less than a century, the corporate propaganda business has gone from a distinctly American practice, primarily focused on undermining the labor movement and promoting pro-business policies and public attitudes, to a global enterprise that, by one estimate, employs as many as four-and-a-half million practitioners.¹¹ This spectacular growth led the author of a recent scholarly article to proclaim triumphantly, "We are all in PR now."¹²

This chapter examines the propaganda of the Great War and its aftermath, which created the template for government- and corporate-mediated propaganda that is still with us today, albeit in much more technologically advanced forms. Yet, what CPI historians James Mock and Cedric Larson wrote in 1939, as America was facing the prospect of another world war, is as true today as it was then: "if another war should come to this country, no American would need to read the story of the CPI. He would be living it."¹³ Indeed, it is remarkable how many of the jingoistic propaganda techniques that were used in the Great War reappeared in eerily familiar forms

in the United States in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 terroristic attacks: techniques that continue to fuel Islamophobia in the United States and Europe today. Retrospective examination of this template is useful precisely because it exposes the present architecture of our propaganda and promotional culture in a simpler more transparent form. In its early incarnation, this template came under intensive postwar scrutiny by Congress and regulatory agencies, as well as by critics like Lippmann and John Dewey.¹⁴ That scrutiny fueled intense interest in propaganda research during the interwar period and inspired a national movement to educate citizens to resist propaganda.¹⁵ But that movement was terminated by its organizers when it became apparent that America was mobilizing to enter the Second World War. When the war was over, the animus cultivated by wartime propaganda was rechanneled into Cold War hostilities just as hatred of the Hun was immediately transferred to the "Red Peril" after the First World War.

The application of "wartime propaganda methods to launching peacetime services and products" has continued without interruption since the Great War. Creel proudly claimed that the CPI elevated advertising to the status of a respectable profession. Although Walter Lippmann did not share Creel's enthusiasm and would certainly not have bestowed the mantle of professionalism upon advertising, he did not object to advertising as long as it was not advertising disguised as news. Public relations is advertising disguised as news; as such, it violates the tenets of information transparency upon which Lippmann believed a workable democracy depends. It contaminates news at its source.

Few writers of clear, luminous, critical prose have been subjected to as much misinterpretation as Lippmann. His propaganda critique has been inverted in ways that obscure its critical power and its continuing relevance. His near contemporaries, Bernays and political scientist Harold Lasswell, co-opted Lippmann's analysis and turned his critique of propaganda into an apology for it. Their inversion was widely accepted, and it continues to be reproduced and amplified by media critics and scholars today.¹⁶

To fairly grasp Lippmann's intent, it is necessary to return his argument to the historical context in which it originated, to carefully attend to his use of language, and to position Lippmann's propaganda critique in relation to the broader objectives of his larger body of work. To achieve these ends, the chapter will (1) describe the U.S. government's propaganda efforts during the Great War in some detail; (2) review Lippmann's wartime experience, which was the immediate impetus for his interest in propaganda and public opinion; (3) examine the development of Lippmann's propaganda critique by focusing primarily on two early efforts, *Liberty and the News* (1919–1920) and "A Test of the News," co-authored with Charles Merz (1920), which were essential, but frequently neglected, stepping stones to Lippmann's great theoretical synthesis, *Public Opinion* (1922); and (4) briefly attempt to counter a few of the many layers of misunderstanding that have accumulated around Lippmann's work.

THE GREAT WAR AND THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Spanish-American War (1898) is known as the "newspaper war" because flamboyant publisher William Randolph Hearst claimed credit for producing it. Hearst exaggerated, but that war did demonstrate that when nationalism, capitalism, and modern communication technologies work together, they can produce very effective war machines. Those responsible for planning America's entry into the Great War sought to ensure total cooperation among these forces.

Woodrow Wilson ran for reelection in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." A month after his inauguration, the president told a joint session of Congress that "the world must be made safe for democracy" and asked that body to approve a declaration of war against Germany, which it did on April 6, 1917. Wilson's advisors encouraged him to form a panel of prominent citizens, intellectuals, and journalists to oversee war information, but he rejected this plan. A week after the declaration, George Creel, manager of Wilson's campaign publicity and a longtime supporter, was appointed chairman of the CPI. He later described the CPI's charge as

the fight for the minds of men, for the "conquest of their convictions" ... the battle-line ran through every home in every country... What we had to have was no mere surface unity, but a passionate belief in the justice of America's cause that should weld the people of the United States together into one white-hot mass instinct with fraternity, devotion, courage and deathless determination.¹⁷

Creel's industrial metaphor is telling: totalitarian in conception, it views the public as raw material to be reengineered to the CPI's specifications.

In addition to Creel, the president also appointed the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, and the Secretary of the Navy to the CPI. According to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, however, with the president's approval, "Mr. Creel soon assumed all authority and ran the Office of Public Information in accordance with his own ideas."¹⁸ In effect, the CPI preempted the State Department's public diplomacy role.

Claiming that the generals were clamoring for censorship of the press, Creel framed himself, disingenuously, as a champion of the free press.¹⁹ Instead of government censorship, imposed by the generals, he advised "voluntary" media self-censorship, based on guidelines created by the CPI. Similarly, he declared that the CPI would not practice propaganda "as the Germans defined it, but propaganda in the true sense of the word, meaning the 'propagation of faith.'²⁰ But the president also created a Censorship Board and appointed Creel to it. The dual role allowed him to claim disingenuously that CPI's censorship was voluntary, but his membership on the Censorship Board gave Creel the authority to request that the Justice Department bar any publication from the mails.²¹

The power of the CPI was further augmented by a series of immediate, but unrelated, presidential proclamations directed at enemy aliens, primarily unnaturalized German immigrants. Congress also enacted emergency laws, including the Espionage Act, the Trading-with-the-Enemy Act, and the Sedition Act, which made it a crime for anyone to criticize the president, Congress, the government, the constitution, the military, or the flag.²² Thousands of aliens were deported and hundreds of people, including Eugene Debs, Max Eastman, Scott Nearing, and radical labor leader "Big Bill" Haywood, were arrested and prosecuted for violations that carried sentences of up to twenty years.

The CPI itself had two major sections, Domestic and Foreign, with each having at least two dozen divisions within it. The immediate goal of the Domestic section was to convert or suppress opponents of the war, especially German Americans who might harbor sympathy for their mother country; Irish Americans because Ireland was neutral and the Irish were agitating for separation from Britain; African Americans, despite a pledge by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to support the war, since many were rightly skeptical about Wilson's crusade to make the "world safe for democracy" when they had yet to experience democracy at home; and pacifists, socialists, and labor groups who saw the conflict as the "Capitalists' War."²³ The CPI soon penetrated every aspect of American life, using every available form of media, recruiting artists, writers, scholars, journalists, cartoonists, the film and advertising industries, clergy, school teachers, citizen volunteers, women's clubs, and virtually anyone who had access to an audience, however small. School teachers were provided with suggested lesson plans. Radical professors were purged from universities.²⁴ The foreign-born were pressured to buy war bonds to prove their loyalty, and the CPI helped establish loyalty leagues among members of every ethnic group of European extraction.

If "truth is the first casualty of war," language is its weapon. For example, war undertaken in the name of peace led the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to suspend its mission and turn over its facilities and personnel to the government for the duration. Churches celebrated "War Sunday."²⁵ The CPI strategy of producing centralized guidelines for shaping uniform public opinion was emulated by some states and municipalities, and many private groups conducted their own patriotic campaigns, including the Red Cross, YMCA, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, the Jewish Welfare Board, and others, thus producing a multiplier effect. Some localities outlawed teaching German, speaking German in public, and performing German music; sauerkraut was renamed "liberty cabbage" and hamburgers "liberty sandwiches." The CPI recruited more than 75,000 volunteers to serve as Four-Minute Men, who gave talks promoting the war effort in movie theaters and other gathering places. It provided them with outlines for major themes, a list of "important points for all speakers," and "suggestions for opening words and phrases."²⁶ At first, the CPI advised the Four-Minute Men to stick to the facts, but, by 1918, they were encouraged to use atrocity stories.²⁷ The Speakers Division and the Four-Minute Men effectively achieved the uniformity and reach of mass communication before radio broadcasting.²⁸

The Division of Advertising urged patriotic publishers to donate advertising space to the war effort, and, by war's end, eight hundred publishers of newspapers, magazines, trade papers, and other publications had donated space. Billboards, streetcars, post offices—virtually every place the public gathered—displayed CPI materials, and every form of mass entertainment promoted patriotic unity. The Division of Cartoons, for example, issued a weekly *Bulletin for Cartoonists* that coordinated the work of the nation's cartoonists; it identified desirable themes and specific messages that the cartoons should carry.²⁹ Traveling war expositions held exhibits in all the major cities. The Division of Films produced propaganda films, and the major film stars of the day—Theda Bara, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford—energetically promoted the purchase of Liberty Bonds, illustrating the emerging power of celebrity testimonials. Export licensing agreements enabled the CPI to ban export of gangster films, which presented negative images of America, and, more importantly, the CPI required that when any American film was shown abroad, a CPI propaganda film had to be shown with it.³⁰

Every news item was censored "at the source, in transit, or in the newspaper office in accordance with 'voluntary' rules issued by the CPI."³¹ The war was presented to the public the way the CPI wanted it pictured: sanitized, with heroic allies fending off a brutal aggressor. In some instances, Creel invented inspiring news stories; a few were exposed, giving coinage to the term "creeling," which meant Washington hot air.³² The News Division produced a daily newspaper, *The Official Bulletin*. This was the president's idea, initially opposed by Creel. Wilson had long been critical of the press, even though coverage of him had been generally positive. He thought the press focused on trivial matters, and he avoided contact with reporters as much as possible. The *Bulletin* was his own, largely successful, attempt to set the agenda for the press. The CPI achieved a virtual monopoly over information resources, and, as Mock and Larson note, "uniformity of testimony is convincing."³³

The CPI did its work "so well that there was a burning eagerness to believe, to conform, to feel the exaltation of joining in a great selfless enterprise."³⁴ The end of the war did not immediately bring an end to the emotionally driven patriotism that the CPI had aroused: during the Red Scare of 1919–1920, many loyalists simply transferred their fury to the Bolsheviks, anarchists, and the labor movement. Republican reaction against the excesses of the CPI contributed to the defeat of the Covenant of the League of Nations in the U.S. Senate, so that, even though Wilson won a Nobel Peace Prize for proposing it, the United States never joined the League and the Peace Treaty was not ratified by the United States until after Wilson left office.

What Creel had created was, as he was quick to announce in 1920, "the world's greatest adventure in advertising."³⁵ President Wilson agreed, commending Creel's work as "well done, admirably well done," adding, "I have followed what you have done throughout and have approved it, and I want you to know how truly grateful I am."³⁶ Creel remained active in Democratic politics and was rewarded with an appointment as chairman of the National Advisory Board of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935.

WALTER LIPPMANN: PROPAGANDIST AND PROPAGANDA CRITIC

By the time he was twenty-six, Walter Lippmann had published three books and had become a founding editor of *The New Republic*, and Theodore Roosevelt had proclaimed him to be "the most brilliant young man of his age in all of the United States."³⁷ Through *The New Republic*, he developed a relationship with Colonel House, the president's chief advisor. Shortly after the United States entered the war, Lippmann was appointed an assistant to Secretary of War Newton Baker; five months later, he was appointed to the Inquiry, the secret group that developed the U.S. terms for the Armistice, including Wilson's Fourteen Points; once that work was nearing completion, he was appointed a captain in the army's Military Intelligence Branch (MIB), and, four months later, he was appointed to Colonel House's staff in Paris to prepare for the treaty negotiations. Before the negotiations began, however, President Wilson decided to lead the peace delegation himself and replaced House with Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Lippmann's war service was complete at that point, and he returned home in December 1918.

After the war, he had a long, eventful, distinguished, and quite singular career as America's most influential journalist, public philosopher, author of ten major books, and advisor to every U.S. president from Theodore Roosevelt to Lyndon Johnson.³⁸ He was offered chairs at Harvard and the University of Chicago, and the presidency of the University of North Carolina, but remained a journalist and author until his death in 1974. He received numerous honors, both at home and abroad, including knighthood in the French Legion of Honor.

Lippmann's brief career as an army propagandist started auspiciously but, in the end, consisted of writing leaflets urging German and Austrian soldiers to surrender. It began, however, with an appointment to serve as the American observer to the Inter-allied Propaganda Board conference in London, where he was also to act as an official representative of the Inquiry and as the unofficial ears of Colonel House. Lippmann took these assignments seriously and made inquiries with authorities in London and Paris about U.S. propaganda abroad. He learned that both British authorities and the American Embassy in Paris were very unhappy with Creel's propaganda work in Europe, complaining that the staff knew nothing about European journalism or politics. Lippmann reported his findings to House, who in turn reported them to the president. Wilson was not pleased, but his ire was directed at Lippmann, not Creel. The president wrote Secretary of War Newton Baker, "I have a high opinion of Lippmann, but I am very jealous in the matter of propaganda. . . . I want to keep the matter of publicity in my own hands."³⁹ He also instructed House that Lippmann was to ask no more questions about the CPI's work in Europe.

In addition to writing leaflets, Lippmann also interviewed German prisoners of war to assess the effects of propaganda on them, finding that few prisoners could articulate the causes of the war or German war aims. Struck by the fact that combatants were

willing to risk their lives for a cause they did not seem to understand, this experience was a significant source of Lippmann's interest in how people acquire information and form opinions about public affairs.⁴⁰

Lippmann's judgment—and history's—is that the U.S. peace mission to Versailles, as well as the American reporters who covered the negotiations, performed poorly. The rigidly idealistic Wilson was no match for the realpolitik of his British and French counterparts. Lippmann would spend the next several years trying to make sense of the carnage that sent more than 100,000 American servicemen to their deaths in a war fought in the name of peace.

"IMPASSIONED NONSENSE"

In 1955, Lippmann looked back at the war to end all wars and attributed the failure to develop a workable peace to the "impassioned nonsense" that made "public opinion so envenomed that the people would not countenance a workable peace."⁴¹ Lippmann did, of course, bear some responsibility for the impassioned nonsense that he later condemned.

At Colonel House's request, he submitted a plan for a wartime "publicity bureau."⁴² At least two other plans were submitted to the administration: one by President Wilson's former student, journalist David Lawrence; the other, also at House's request, by foreign correspondent Arthur Bullard. Nevertheless, George Creel would later claim that the CPI was entirely his idea.⁴³ It was, however, Bullard's ambitious plan to "electrify public opinion," described in his short book, *Mobilising America* (1917), that won the administration's favor. Evangelical in tone and intent, it became the model for the CPI.⁴⁴ Lippmann submitted his plan on April 12, 1917, one day before the president created the CPI and appointed Creel chairman. Whatever Lippmann may have thought of Bullard's plan, Creel's appointment was a bitter disappointment. Lippmann had recommended that wartime censorship be put in the hands of people possessing "real democratic sympathy."⁴⁵

As early as March 1919, Lippmann began to publicly express his concerns about wartime censorship and propaganda in articles in *The New Republic*, which were collected into a short book, *The Political Scene* (1919):

During this war the deliberate manufacture of opinion both for export and home consumption has reached the proportions of a major industrial operation. This is not the place, nor is it yet possible without breach of confidence to discuss international propaganda freely. But some day the technic must be investigated if the judgments of the people are to escape persistent exploitation. When the story is told, it will cover a range of subjects extending from legal censorship to the reptile press, from willful fabrication to the purchase of writers, from outright subsidy to the award of ribbons. It will include entertainment, and a vast amount of simulated snobbishness, and the right way of conducting sightseeing tours. The art of befuddlement engages able men and draws large appropriations.⁴⁶

By September 1919, however, Lippmann apparently felt free to speak out. In an article in *The New Republic*, he wrote, "One of the great calamities of our part in the war was the character of American propaganda in Europe." He continued with a pointed reference to Creel: "It was as if an imp had devised it to thwart every purpose Mr. Wilson was supposed to entertain. The general tone of it was one of unmitigated brag accompanied by unmitigated gullibility. . . . The outfit which was abroad 'selling the war to Europe' (the phrase is not my own) gave shell-shocked Europe to understand that a rich bumpkin had come to town with his pockets bulging and no desire except to please."⁴⁷

Lippmann began his critical investigations of the "technic" of propaganda by focusing primarily on "the reptile press": those reporters, editors, and publishers who betray the trust that democratic theory places in them. In collaboration with Charles Merz, Lippmann conducted a pioneering study of the *New York Times* coverage of the Russian Revolution, which was remarkably sophisticated methodologically for the time: so much so that it was frequently cited by Charles Merriam, founder and first president of the Social Science Research Council, as an exemplar of the kind of empirical work social scientists might aspire to produce in the future.⁴⁸

Merz had served in the military intelligence propaganda unit with Lippmann in France and was the Washington editor of *The New Republic*. He would later work with Lippmann again at the *New York World*, but he spent most of his career at the *New York Times*. "A Test of the News" was published as a special forty-two-page supplement of the *New Republic* in August 1920.

While working on the collaborative project with Merz, Lippmann also published two essays in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in 1919, on censorship, propaganda, and the news. He added an introductory essay and published them as *Liberty and the News* in 1920. The proximity of these two efforts is important because in "A Test" Lippmann and Merz were practicing the kind of work Lippmann advocated in *Liberty and the News*: testing the credibility of statements against facts, monitoring word usage for words "charged with emotion," applying rigorous logic and laws of probability, assessing the quantitative significance of facts, and exercising self-critical awareness of the limits of the available data.⁴⁹

These two projects focus on news production, assessing the quality of information supplied by the news system. Lippmann's *Public Opinion* would revisit and amplify many of the ideas developed in 1919–1920, but that book's original contribution would be its examination of news reception and the formation of public opinion.

"A TEST OF THE NEWS"

"A Test" is more than twice as long as *Liberty*, but it is much easier for the reader, who is unfamiliar with Lippmann's other writings, to fully grasp because it is tightly focused methodologically and substantively. Lippmann and Merz analyze the *New York Times* coverage of Russia from March 1917 to March 1920, more than a thousand issues of the newspaper, reviewing all of the news items (more than 3,000) about Russia. Lippmann

and Merz selected the *Times* because they considered it "one of the really great newspapers of the world," with resources to independently cover international news.⁵⁰ They chose the Russian Revolution both "because of its intrinsic importance" and because it "aroused the kind of passions which tests most seriously the objectivity of reporting."⁵¹ The revolution occurred at a crucial point in the war, when the United States was considering entering the conflict, and it raised a critical question for the Allies: would Russia continue to fight the Germans on the eastern front?

Lippmann and Merz make it clear that they had no illusions that any definitive account of the Russian Revolution exists or is ever likely to exist and that they make no attempt to "contrast the news accounts with any other account which pretends to be the 'real truth' or the 'true truth.'"⁵² Rather, the reliability of the news is tested against a few "definite and reliable events about which there is no dispute," including that the offensive of the Russian army under the Kerensky government in July 1917 was a failure; that the provisional government was overthrown by the Soviets in November 1917; that the Soviets made a separate peace with Germany in March 1918; that the campaigns of Kolchak, Denikin, and Yudenitch failed; and that the Soviet government remained in power in March 1920.⁵³

Lippmann maintained that the function of the news is to "allow mankind to live successfully toward the future."⁵⁴ Consistent with this premise, the only question "A Test" asked was "whether the reader of the news was given a picture of various phases of the revolution which survived the test of events, or whether he was misled into believing that the outcome of events would be radically different from the actual outcome."⁵⁵ Lippmann and Merz eliminated issues such as the question of atrocities and discussions of the virtues and defects of the Soviet system from their sample because "disinterested observers furnish contradictory accounts."⁵⁶ Under such circumstances, they contend no newspaper can be expected to produce reliable accounts. They focus on news items, not editorials, although they found that the wall that supposedly separated news and editorials was routinely breached in the *Times* coverage of Russia.

Lippmann and Merz offer both qualitative and quantitative analyses of their data. For example, on the important question of whether the Soviet government would last, they show that the *Times* consistently misled its readers with "false news."⁵⁷ At the conclusion of the study, Soviet rule had lasted for twenty-nine months, yet, throughout that period, the *Times* reported that "the Soviets are about to collapse, or have collapsed, or will collapse within a few weeks."⁵⁸ Lippmann and Merz found that the claim that the Soviet regime could not last was "one of the most insistent of all themes in the news of Russia." Between November 1917 and November 1919, they found ninety-one articles "explicitly reporting" an "early break up" of the Soviet system.⁵⁹

They point out that, at times during this period, the dangers of "the Red Peril momentarily overshadows the conception of Soviet power as an institution verging on collapse," but the recurring major theme is "Soviet impermanency."⁶⁰ For each category and subcategory of news reports that Lippmann and Merz examine, they provide similar quantitative analysis of the themes of news items, but they also attend to the use of loaded words like "Red Peril," especially when they appear in captions.

The overall conclusion is that the news was "dominated by the hopes of the men who composed the news organization." It was "a case of seeing not what was, but what men wished to see."⁶¹ Lippmann and Merz contend that "the chief censor and the chief propagandist were hope and fear in the minds of the reporters and editors."⁶² They wanted to win the war and see bolshevism defeated; this led them to tamely submit to the external censorship imposed during the war and to continue to generate anti-Soviet propaganda after the CPI was abolished.

Lippmann and Merz identify some of the practices that contributed to the *Times* failure to pass the severe "test of the news" that the Russian Revolution posed. The *Times* was seriously misled by reliance on official sources of information, whether governments, circles around governments, or leaders of political movements. Use of anonymous sources also produced unreliable information. Some correspondents proved totally untrustworthy because they became partisans of various causes. The "time honored tradition" of protecting the news against editorials broke down as "the Russian policy of the editors of the *Times* profoundly and crassly influenced the news columns." The news, both in emphasis and choice of captions, represented a "blatant intrusion of an editorial bias."⁶³

If a great newspaper like the *Times* failed so miserably under pressures of internal and external censorship and propaganda, Lippmann and Merz reasoned, then lesser papers probably performed much worse. Lippmann and Merz called for fundamental reforms, appealing to the newspaper guild to impose codes of honor comparable to those that law and medical societies use to regulate their members' conduct. They also urged citizens' groups to monitor and criticize the press and to become centers of resistance to abuses of the information system.

"A Test" was a far more effective indictment of the CPI than Lippmann's polemics against Creel, however well warranted they may have been. Both in ambition and execution, it remains a very impressive piece of research. Reviewing "A Test" in 2002, communication researcher Hanno Hardt maintained that "the work remains an extraordinary study, even by today's standards."⁶⁴

According to sources close to Merz, "A Test" brought "epochal results. *The Times* acted vigorously" to change its reporting system and, in doing so, "led a nationwide improvement in international reporting."⁶⁵ Merz was in a position to know, as he was hired as an editorial writer by the *Times* in 1931 and served as editor of the editorial page from 1938 until he retired in 1961.

Yet, as we know, the *Times* failed the test of news again in another situation that "aroused the passions": the run-up to the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. In a May 2004 editorial, the *Times* reviewed that coverage and acknowledged its "lack of rigorous coverage" and its reliance on faulty sources—Iraqi exiles eager for regime change.⁶⁶ Three months later, America's other elite national newspaper, the *Washington Post* followed suit with its own acknowledgment of its failures to adequately cover the run-up to the war and to challenge questionable information about weapons of mass destruction provided by official sources.⁶⁷ These failures were amplified by the fact that many newspapers throughout the nation relied on syndicated news services of these papers, especially

the *Times*. In our time, unlike Lippmann's, however, most Americans get most of their news from television, not newspapers. If newspapers performed poorly, it is fair to say that television did much worse. CNN's top war correspondent, Christiane Amanpour, admitted that CNN practiced self-censorship during the Iraq War: "the press was muzzled," she said, "and I think the press self-muzzled." She continued, "Certainly television and, perhaps, to a certain extent, my station was intimidated by the administration and its foot soldiers at Fox News." Amanpour maintained that, on the question of weapons of mass destruction, "it looks like this was disinformation at the highest levels."⁶⁸ Numerous studies are now available of the propaganda campaigns undertaken by the Bush administration and by the U.S. military to promote the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶⁹ The CPI relied largely on patriotic volunteers to do its work; today, however, the U.S. government outsources that work to global public relations companies and other private contractors who are paid lucrative retainers.⁷⁰

LIBERTY AND THE NEWS

Liberty and the News is a small book with very large implications. Any attempt to summarize it, including this one, is destined to fail to fully probe its depths, which is why it rightly deserves to be considered a classic. But because I argue that interpretations of Lippmann's argument have suffered almost as greatly in the hands of his admirers as his detractors, summary is necessary to establish that we share relatively similar points of departure. Wherever possible, the summary is presented in Lippmann's own words.

Lippmann maintains that, when the press mobilized for war, it abdicated its primary responsibility: to report the facts and tell the truth. The mobilization of the news system did not end with the Armistice: since the war, "the manufacture of consent" has become "an unregulated private enterprise."⁷¹ That is, the war demonstrated the propagandizing power of the press and publishers are now using that power to advance their own interests. The work of reporters is "confused with the work of preachers, revivalists, prophets, and agitators."⁷² At a time when citizens have to deal with more complex questions than ever before, the news system is failing them. This failure has produced a crisis of democracy, which is also a crisis of journalism because, in a democracy, channels for the dissemination of news should be "common carriers." When those who control these channels use them to advance their own views, "democracy is unworkable. Public opinion is blockaded."⁷³ The newspaper is "the bible of democracy, the book out of which a people determines its conduct."⁷⁴ Therefore, the "task of selecting and ordering... news is one of the truly sacred and priestly offices in a democracy... the power to determine each day what shall seem important and what shall be neglected is a power unlike any that has been exercised since the Pope lost his hold on the secular mind."⁷⁵ Lippmann offers tentative suggestions for reform that are intended to make journalism worthy of its high calling but surrounds these recommendations with many qualifiers. They include "making the validity of the news our ideal"; ensuring "as impartial an investigation of

facts as humanly possible"; documenting every article and making false documentation illegal; publishing the names of all staff members to ensure accountability; retracting any false reports quickly; establishing courts of honor in which publishers would be required to appear if they published reports that injured someone through misrepresentation; and supporting the development of an independent journalism that can set a higher standard for the commercial press, better education for reporters, and more public recognition of the important role journalists play in a democracy.⁷⁶ The goal is "disinterested" reporting: the journalist should serve "no cause, no matter how good."⁷⁷ Lippmann acknowledges he is offering "a counsel of perfection," given the present state of knowledge.⁷⁸ To advance that knowledge, he recommends creating "political observatories": independent research centers, institutes, and university research facilities that can assist in the difficult task of separating "fact" from "opinion" because, in a democracy based on public opinion, "liberty is not so much permission as it is the construction of a system of information increasingly independent of opinion."⁷⁹ Lippmann begins the last sentence of the book by claiming, "We shall advance when we have learned humility..."⁸⁰

Liberty and the News has been lauded as a seminal contribution to journalism studies. Some of the reforms Lippmann recommended have become standard practice in newsrooms. Yet, what most journalists and journalism educators, presumably Lippmann's target audience, take away from the book represents, at best, a partial reading, in both senses of the word, if not a misreading of his message. They reduce Lippmann's complex argument to facile advocacy for what media critics call the "professional ideology" or "strategic ritual" of journalistic objectivity.⁸¹ In doing so, journalism ignores Lippmann's warning that there is "no panacea" for the problems that he diagnoses, as well as his counsel that the appropriate journalistic ethos is humility, given that "news comes from a distance; it comes helter-skelter, in inconceivable confusion; it deals with matters that are not easily understood; it arrives and is assimilated by busy and tired people, who must take what is given to them."⁸² In short, it is "complex and slippery."⁸³ Conversely, most apologists for journalistic objectivity present that construct as a panacea, a cure-all secured in naïve realism, which they assert with an authority that borders on hubris.

Journalistic objectivity offers no significant protection against the "manufacture of consent" by those who control the common carriers of the information. Recent history testifies to that. The professional ideology of journalistic objectivity is actually part of "the fighting apparatus" of journalism.⁸⁴ It functions as a defense of what Lippmann called "plebiscite autocracy or government by newspapers," which was the source of the "crisis in journalism" that his argument was intended to expose and oppose.⁸⁵ Journalistic objectivity is power-knowledge designed to protect the interests of the news industry by deflecting criticism as, for example, when Rupert Murdoch's News Corp cynically deploys the slogan "fair and balanced" to describe Fox News, which has long had close ties to the Republican Party. For the reporter on the beat, journalistic objectivity is, at best, a useful fiction that partially represses the potentially paralyzing epistemological dilemma Lippmann identified. This fiction is, however, also a primary source of the cynicism that corrupts journalism: the "cynicism of the trade," which Lippmann claims, "needs to be abandoned."⁸⁶

Lippmann was no naïve realist. *Liberty and the News* is actually an argument against that philosophical stance. Lippmann's approach to observation, method, truth-telling, and science is grounded in pragmatism and humanism.⁸⁷ He makes this clear in a crucially important but frequently overlooked passage where he asserts that, in a world where divine providence has lost its authority, "men are critically aware of how their purposes are special to their age, their locality, their interests, and their limited knowledge."⁸⁸ For Lippmann, then, human purpose and knowledge are social constructs. He may be unduly optimistic in estimating how deeply critical awareness has penetrated the American psyche, but that optimism was widely shared by humanistic philosophers and social scientists when Lippmann wrote these words.

Lippmann affirms the social genesis of knowledge and is particularly attentive to the social constraints, processes, and structures that influence news production. As a pragmatist, he recognizes that news is made, not discovered: that it is selected and constructed from the raw material that enters the newsroom, "an incredible medley of fact, propaganda, rumor, suspicion, clues, hopes, and fears."⁸⁹ Even when a reporter directly witnesses an event, Lippmann points out that it is always from some vantage point: the reporter's report is "perspectival," to borrow a term from the social theorist Karl Mannheim, a near contemporary of Lippmann, who offered a similar account of the sociology of knowledge.⁹⁰ It should be noted that, since arrogance and elitism are often ascribed to Lippmann, when he described the limits of human knowledge and counseled humility, he always included himself within the circle of the limited in need of humility.

Because the material that editors have to work with is so fraught with uncertainty, they exercise a grave responsibility in determining which "perspectives" will become news. This is why Lippmann ascribes such an elevated status to the gatekeepers of the news system: why he claims that "selecting and ordering news is one of the truly sacred tasks in democracy."⁹¹ He recognizes that there are no unmediated reports of events. The standards that editors use to assess the credibility of reports are social and provisional. Yet, the trust democratic theory places in these gatekeepers borders on the suprahuman. This is a conundrum that would continue to vex Lippmann in *Public Opinion* (1922) and *The Phantom Public* (1925).

To read Lippmann without reference to the pragmatic philosophical groundings on which his argument rests is to miss the heart of the matter: the problem of liberty. Such readings render the second chapter, "What Modern Liberty Means," largely superfluous. Here, Lippmann examines the rationales for the universalistic claims of two classic and one (then) contemporary defenses of free expression, the treatises of John Milton, John Stuart Mill, and Bertrand Russell. Lippmann finds all of these defenses deficient because each contains a "weasel clause," which restricts some form of expression that the author finds objectionable. For Milton, it is Catholicism; for Mill, it is expression that threatens social order; and for Russell, it is "possessive impulses."⁹² Lippmann concludes: "Liberty is to be permitted where differences are of no great moment." When people feel safe, "heresy is cultivated as the spice of life," but in times of war or revolution, when people feel threatened, liberty disappears.⁹³

None of these great theories of liberty provided any protection against the censorship and propaganda of the Great War, and, Lippmann maintains, they cannot protect American democracy in the future. He establishes that liberty is not secured by any universal principle. It is social and provisional: a contingent value. It is liberty for something; to secure some socially valued purpose.

As he conceives it in *Liberty and the News*, that purpose, in a democracy based upon public opinion, is "furnishing of a healthy environment in which human judgment and inquiry can most successfully organize human life."⁹⁴ Conversely he warns, "There can be no liberty for a community which lacks the information by which to detect lies."⁹⁵ That is why he calls for the creation of some reasonably transparent standards for assessing the credibility of statements about public affairs to provide reporters and editors with guidelines for deciding what to classify as "fact" and what to treat as "opinion," so that they can be held publicly accountable when they knowingly lie. Yet he is aware that identifying such standards poses a philosophical problem that journalists cannot solve. This is why he calls for the creation of political observatories and expresses the hope that, in the future, scholars might develop "an organon of news reporting."⁹⁶ In the meantime, he advises personal courage: "willingness to be fired rather than write what you do not believe."⁹⁷

The term "fact" remains problematic in Lippmann's formulation; in practice, he seems to apply it, without significant qualifiers, to events like sports, elections, the speed of transatlantic flights, where there are unambiguous outcomes, but it gets murkier elsewhere in his text. Like many other writers who struggle with this problem, he finds it easier to identify lies than to establish firmaments for truth. Conversely, Lippmann's use of the terms "objective" and "objectivity" is actually fairly straightforward in "A Test of the News" and *Liberty and the News*. Objective means external to the reporter: evidence that exists outside of the head of a reporter or eyewitness. Objectivity refers to a nonpartisan or "disinterested" approach to knowledge: not representing any organized "interest," political party, corporation, union, religion, or the like. His later uses of this term would not, however, be as straightforward or consistent.⁹⁸ Lippmann frequently acknowledged his own inconsistencies, explaining that as he learned more or confronted new problems, he sought to correct past errors in his thinking.⁹⁹ But in these two early works, Lippmann's concept of objectivity is social, based on consensus: in "A Test of the News," for example, the reliability of the news is tested against a few "definite and reliable events about which there is no dispute."¹⁰⁰ Lippmann remains a pragmatist here: news, like other forms of knowledge, is social and provisional; "truth" is communitarian, Peircean, a normative standard worth pursuing.¹⁰¹ As pieces of the puzzle are put in place over time, a fuller picture appears. In other words, "truth" is a work in progress.

Lippmann was profoundly aware of the roles emotion and irrationality play in human thought; as he noted in *A Preface to Politics* (1913): "all the light and shadow of sentiment and passion play even about the syllogism."¹⁰² He recognized that human thought is an inseparable mix of reason, impulse, dreams, myths, hopes, fears, and stereotypes. He had few illusions about the human capacity to achieve "real truth," "true truth," or complete objectivity about public affairs, as he would demonstrate more conclusively

in *Public Opinion* and *The Phantom Public*. Historian John Patrick Diggins is right in asserting that Lippmann anticipated the problem of postmodernism.¹⁰³ Much of the misinterpretation of his work is a result of its reception by moderns.

In *Liberty and the News*, Lippmann does not formally spell out the triadic relationship, which he later develops to explain how people make sense of events and react to them, but the elements of the theory are there: a person (1) observes the scene of an action, (2) forms a picture of that action in her mind, and (3) responds to the picture rather than to the action itself.

According to Lippmann, propagandists try to rig the sense-making processes by manufacturing "pseudo-environments" and inserting them into step 2 of the process to manipulate the pictures people form in their heads: in his words, "propagandists and censors put a painted screen where there should be a window to the world."¹⁰⁴ The task of the news editor, who meets the challenge of democracy, as Lippmann conceived it in 1919–1920, is to apply the best available standards of credibility to identify propaganda and eliminate it from the news flow. That is, the competent editor increases the probability that the reader sees more window than screen. Lippmann has no Faustian illusion about the possibility of ever producing fully transparent windows to the world. At best, what may emerge is "construction of a system of information increasingly independent of opinion." It should be strongly emphasized that this is also Lippmann's definition of "liberty" appropriate to a democracy based upon public opinion.¹⁰⁵

Although *Liberty and the News* may be open to multiple good-faith interpretations, no serious reader of the book can justly claim that it is antidemocratic—that Lippmann is advocating rather than opposing the manufacture of consent by governments or private interests or that Lippmann is calling for governance by the experts who would staff his political observatories. Yet all of these views have been imputed to Lippmann by critics and even some apparent admirers of his work. Reading Lippmann's diagnosis as prescriptive rather than descriptive, they have inverted and perverted his argument against censorship and propaganda. In 1955, Lippmann himself affirmed, "I am a liberal democrat and have no wish to disenfranchise my fellow citizens."¹⁰⁶

"A Test" and *Liberty* are attempts to rescue and restore American democracy by identifying and providing strategies for coping with its fundamental weakness: that liberty does not rest on a secure foundation. Throughout his life, Lippmann continued to seek firmer grounds for legitimating American democracy and to advocate for educational reforms that he believed could better prepare Americans to exercise their civic duties because, as he warned in *Liberty*, to deny the educability of "the mass of men" is to deny democracy and "to seek salvation in dictatorship."¹⁰⁷

Nearly a century has passed since Lippmann diagnosed the twin crises of democracy. These crises not only remain unresolved, but they have been compounded by subsequent developments. Information has been liquefied and more fully commodified, its instantaneous electronic transfer has integrated the global economy, digital and satellite communications have vastly expanded the reach of both governmental and private propagandists, a handful of enormous international communication conglomerates now control most of the world's media, the business models of newspaper and book

publishers have collapsed, and the spectacular growth of the global public relations industry has exceeded even Edward Bernays's wildest dreams. Where George Creel depended largely on patriotic volunteers to staff the CPI, today the United States outsources most of its propaganda and many of its public diplomacy initiatives to private contractors. These structural shifts have changed both liberty and the news.

For Lippmann, the rationale for liberty was to achieve some *socially* valued purpose. Tensions between the public good and private gain, democracy and capitalism, have been a hallmark of the American system almost from its inception.¹⁰⁸ However, the rise of neoliberalism in the 1980s stripped liberty of most of its social constituents and redeploied a leaner and meaner version of the idea: one that reduced liberty solely to an engine of economics—a move that even Adam Smith had not sanctioned.¹⁰⁹ That is, neoliberals reconceived market freedom as the source of all other freedoms. In the realm of information, market fundamentalism supports what Ivan Illich described as a new enclosure movement: an enclosure of the cultural commons, which reduces humans to economic units and consumers of information.¹¹⁰

Commenting on a 2007 edition of *Liberty and the News*, one pundit contended that ninety years after Lippmann's critique of media complicity in censorship and propaganda, "we're back at ground zero."¹¹¹ Much has changed, but Lippmann's diagnosis of the problems of media and democracy remains as relevant, even urgent, as it was in 1919–1920. Moreover, his staunch conviction that people, not markets, are the sources of legitimacy in a democracy should remind us of how much we have already conceded. Although Lippmann warned that there are no panaceas, he also demonstrated that a robust democracy requires free and open access to its cultural commons.

NOTES

1. Walter Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995, original 1920), 86.
2. Edward L. Bernays, *Biography of an Idea: Memoirs of Public Relations Counsel Edward L. Bernays* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 205.
3. Lippmann's wording was from a memorandum that Wilson's chief advisor Colonel House asked him to write, which summarized the points in terms of their practical implications for the Allies. Lippmann delegated summarizing the last point, on the League of Nations, to respected journalist and Lippmann's future boss at the *New York World*, Frank Cobb.
4. Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997, original 1922), 10.
5. The phrase has been used in both singular and plural forms "war to end all war" and "war to end all wars," with the plural version of more recent currency than the singular. Long attributed to Wilson by historians, a recent Wilson biographer, John Milton Cooper, Jr., casts doubt on whether Wilson actually ever uttered the phrase. It may have originally been used in newspaper accounts of Wilson's April 2, 1917, speech declaring war on Germany. It is not in the speech itself. The broad attribution of the term to Wilson may actually have been a triumph for British propaganda, which had targeted American neutrality aggressively. According to Cooper, British Prime Minister David Lloyd George actually popularized the phrase. See Cooper, *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York: Random

- House, 2009). However, according to Northrup Frye, H. G. Wells was its author. In 1914, Wells published *The War That Will End War*; and, in 1934, Wells told *Liberty Magazine*, "I launched the phrase 'The War to End War' and that was not the least of my crimes." "Northrup Frye on Modern Culture," in Jan Gorek (ed.), *Collected Works of Northrup Frye*, v. 11 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 363, n. 5.
6. Robert Jackall and Janice N. Hirota report this is the way most of the leaders of the CPI actually referred to the CPI "without embarrassment, at least in private." See Jackall and Hirota, "America's First Propaganda Ministry: The Committee on Public Information during the Great War," in Jackall and Hirota (eds.), *Propaganda* (London: Palgrave, 1994), 158.
 7. Creel was never found guilty of any wrongdoing.
 8. George Creel, *How We Advertised America* (New York: Harper and Brothers), 1920.
 9. Jackall and Hirota, "America's First Propaganda Ministry." See also Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of American Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).
 10. In his biography, he reported that he and his wife and business partner, Doris Fleischman, actually coined the term "public relation counsel" in 1920; nevertheless, he entitled his 1928 book *Propaganda*. He said he changed the name of his practice to "public relations counselor" because propaganda became a pejorative term. Bernays, *Biography of an Idea*.
 11. Toni MuziFalconi, *How Big Is Public Relations (and Why Does It Matter)?*, Institute for Public Relations, November 2006; www.instituteforpr.org.
 12. Trish Evans, "We Are All in PR Now," *British Journalism Review*, 21(2), 2010, 31-36.
 13. James R. Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words That Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information 1917-1919* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1939), 346.
 14. FARA, the Foreign Agency Registry Act, was passed by Congress in 1938, at least in part as a response to the activities of public relations pioneer Ivy Lee's on behalf of the Nazi and Soviet regimes. FARA requires public relations agencies and lobbyists advocating for the interests of foreign governments to register as foreign agents.
 15. Brett Gary argues that postwar "'propaganda consciousness' contributed significantly to the chastened democratic faith of an entire generation of U.S. liberal intellectuals." He reports that more than 3,000 articles or books on propaganda appeared between 1919 and 1946. See Gary, *The Nervous Liberals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 2. J. Michael Sproule documents the decline in propaganda studies in social science research after the Second World War, although Christopher Simpson points out that secret government research on propaganda conducted by social scientists continued during the Cold War. Sproule, "Propaganda Studies in American Social Science: The Rise and Fall of the Critical Paradigm," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73(1), 1987, 60-78; and Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Department store magnate Edward Filene financed creation of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis in 1937, which was designed to educate the American public about the dangers of propaganda. Filene may have been motivated, at least in part, by Lippmann's work. He did consult Lippmann in the 1920s about funding a study of the news. Lippmann (in a letter to Charles Merriam, March 31, 1924) indicates that Filene's Twentieth Century Fund is interested in funding a study of newspapers (Walter Lippmann Papers, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library).
 16. For a fuller discussion of some of these interpretations, see Sue Curry Jansen, "Walter Lippmann, Straw Man of Communication Research," in David W. Park and Jefferson

- Pooley (eds.), *The History of Media and Communication Research*, 71–123 (New York: Peter Lang, 2008); and Jansen, "Phantom Conflict: Lippmann, Dewey, and the Fate of the Public in Modern Society," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 6(3), 2009, 221–245.
17. Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 3, 5.
 18. Robert Lansing, *War Memories of Robert Lansing* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1935), 322–324.
 19. Creel may have believed his own press releases. In his biography, *Rebel at Large*, written three decades after his propaganda work, he still writes about the CPI and Woodrow Wilson with breathless enthusiasm. Most historians do not deal kindly with him. David M. Kennedy is an exception, at least comparatively speaking. Compared to Postmaster Burleson, Attorney General Gregory, and even at several points President Wilson himself, Kennedy maintains Creel was more cautious about abridging First Amendment protections. See George Creel, *Rebel at Large: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1947); Kennedy, *Over Here* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
 20. Creel, *Rebel at Large*, 158.
 21. Mock and Larson, *Words That Won the War*.
 22. Michael Yockelson, "The War Department: Keeper of Our Nation's Enemy Aliens during World War I," paper presented to the Society for Military History Annual Meeting, April 1998.
 23. Thomas Fleming presents an especially thorough account of the concerns of and about African Americans and Irish Americans. See Fleming, *Illusions of Victory* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).
 24. Columbia University President Nicholas Murray Butler announced in June 1917, for example, that although the university might be a haven for heterodox views in peace time, with the advent of war, "conditions sharply changed. What had been tolerated became intolerable now. What had been wrongheadedness was now treason. What had been folly was now treason." He subsequently dismissed Professor Henry W. L. Dana for working with peace groups, and Professor James N. Cattell for petitioning Congress not to send draftees to Europe. The *New York Times* praised Butler for doing his duty (Butler quoted by Kennedy, *Over Here*, 74). For additional accounts, see Willis Rudy, *Total War and Twentieth Century Higher Learning: Universities of the Western World in the First and Second World Wars* (Cranbury, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991). In fact, many prominent university professors rallied to the cause and participated extensively in CPI activities; for an extensive account, see Stephen L. Vaughn, *Hold Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).
 25. Mock and Larson, *Words That Won the War*, 26.
 26. Jackall and Hirota, quoting from "The Four-Minute Men," bulletin no. 22 (January 28, 1919) in "America's First Propaganda Ministry," 150.
 27. Vaughn, *Hold Fast the Inner Lines*.
 28. Working men were placed under careful scrutiny. Creel had an enthusiastic ally in Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, who saw the war as an opportunity for ridding the labor movement of its more radical elements, especially his longtime enemies, the socialists. The CPI created a Division of Industrial Relations and also funded the American Alliance of Labor and Democracy, headed by Gompers, which was charged with the responsibility of "keeping labor industrious, patriotic, and quiet." Aside from ensuring workers' contributions to the war effort itself, some capitalist warriors exploited the emergency to quash labor activism of any kind and to equate demands for

- pay raises with sedition. Leaders of the radical International Workers of the World were systematically harassed and jailed; the union itself did not survive the war. Mock and Larson, *Words That Won the War*, 190-191.
29. Jackall and Hirota, "America's First Propaganda Ministry."
 30. For use of film, see "The Moving Picture Boys in the Great War" (Videotape, Post-Newsweek Productions and Black Hawk Films, Davenport, Iowa, 1975); and Leslie Midkiff DeBauche, *Reel Patriotism: The Movies and World War I* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).
 31. Mock and Larson, *Words That Won the War*, 6-7.
 32. Fleming, *Illusions of Victory*.
 33. Mock and Larson, *Words That Won the War*, 8.
 34. *Ibid.*, 9.
 35. Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 4.
 36. Wilson quoted by Creel in *Rebel at Large*, 221.
 37. Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980).
 38. My list differs slightly from one by Lippmann's biographer, Ronald Steel, who identifies nine major books and thirteen compilations of Lippmann's articles, columns, and talks. Steel excludes *Liberty and the News* from the major book category. Although two of the three chapters were previously published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, I believe it nonetheless qualifies as one of Lippmann's important books. Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*.
 39. Wilson quoted by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Walter Lippmann: The Intellectual v. Politics," in Marquis Childs and James Reston (eds.), *Walter Lippmann and His Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1959), 199. Wilson's opinion of Lippmann was, however, subject to change depending on his audience.
 40. Lippmann attributed his interest in public opinion to his wartime experience. *Reminiscences of Walter Lippmann*, 1969, Columbia Center for Oral History, Columbia University.
 41. Walter Lippmann, *Essays on the Public Philosophy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955), 21.
 42. Francine Curro Cary describes Lippmann's plan in detail. It would (1) act as a clearinghouse of information for the activities of government; (2) invent a form of publicity to enlist attention to prosaic tasks of industrial warfare; (3) supply articles that support government policy; (4) monitor public opinion; (5) monitor and report on the allied, neutral, and enemy press; (6) deal with the motion picture situation; and (7) run down rumors and lies. See Cary, *The Influence of War on Walter Lippmann 1914-1944* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1967), 38. Lawrence's plan was even more ambitious: it included monitoring cables of foreign correspondents, launching a secret propaganda mission in Central and South America, censoring military information, and publicizing the American cause. His plan is described in Vaughn, *Hold Fast the Inner Lines*, 6-7.
 43. Creel, *Rebel at Large*.
 44. At Wilson's request, Creel invited Bullard to help organize the CPI. He served on the CPI in Washington, Western Russia, and Siberia for the duration of the war, and from 1919 to 1921 as the chief of the Russian Division of the State Department. Vaughn, *Hold Fast the Inner Lines*.
 45. Lippmann's low opinion of Creel's judgment and ethics predated the CPI. Two years earlier, in an unsigned editorial in *The New Republic*, Lippmann had denounced Creel for his reporting on a Colorado labor dispute as "a reckless and incompetent person . . . determined

- to make noise no matter what canons of truthfulness he violates." Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 125.
46. Walter Lippmann, *The Political Scene: An Essay on the Victory of 1918* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1919), 38.
 47. Lippmann quoted by Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 47, from Lippmann, "For a State Department," *The New Republic*, September 17, 1919.
 48. Sue Curry Jansen, "Forgotten Histories: A Road Not Taken—The Charles Merriam and Walter Lippmann Correspondence," *Communication Theory*, 20(2), 2010, 127–146.
 49. Lippmann uses the phrase "words charged with emotions" in *Liberty and the News*, 76.
 50. Walter Lippmann, "A Test of the News," special supplement to *The New Republic*, August 4, 1920, 1. Lippmann and Merz added an update, "More News from the Times," published in the magazine the following week, August 11, 1920, 299–302.
 51. "A Test," 1.
 52. *Ibid.*, 2.
 53. *Ibid.*
 54. *Liberty*, 79.
 55. "A Test," 2.
 56. *Ibid.*
 57. *Ibid.*, 10.
 58. *Ibid.*
 59. *Ibid.*
 60. *Ibid.*, 11.
 61. *Ibid.*, 3.
 62. *Ibid.*
 63. *Ibid.*, 42.
 64. Hardt contends that Lippmann and Merz anticipated theoretical and methodological issues that would arise three decades later when content analysis became the standard method for analyzing international news coverage; he also reports that "A Test" anticipated many concepts that would later be developed and tested by media and communication researchers. Hanno Hardt, "Reading the Russian Revolution: International Communication Research and the Journalism of Lippmann and Merz," *Mass Communication and Society*, 5(1), 2002, 25–39. Although Lippmann always emphasized "method," the reader may be surprised by the methodological rigor of this work. However, Charles Merriam, founder and first president of the Social Science Research Council, frequently cited "A Test of the News" as an exemplar of the kind of empirical work social scientists might aspire to produce in the future; see Sue Curry Jansen, "Forgotten Histories: A Road Not Taken—The Charles Merriam and Walter Lippmann Correspondence," *Communication Theory*, 20(2), 2010, 127–146. Lippmann was also known in this period for his debate with psychologists over intelligence testing, which he challenged on both methodological and democratic grounds; see "Debunking Intelligence Experts: Walter Lippmann Speaks Out," www.historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5172/.
 65. The quote is attributed to *Editor and Publisher*, but the issue or date is not provided. See anonymous biographical essay, the New York Community Trust, the Founders of the Charles Merz and Evelyn Scott Merz Memorial Funds, <http://www.nycommunitytrust.org/Portals/o/Uploads/Documents/BioBrochures/Charles%20Andrew%20&%20Evelyn%20Scott%20Merz.pdf>.
 66. "The Times and Iraq," *New York Times*, May 26, 2004, www.nytimes.com.

67. Howard Kurtz, "The *Post* on WMDs: An Inside Story," *Washington Post*, August 12, 2004, www.washingtonpost.com.
68. Peter Johnson, "Amanpour: CNN Practiced Self-Censorship," *USA Today*, September 14, 2003. In 2007, Walter Isaacson, CEO of CNN from 2001 to 2003, confirmed that people in the Bush administration and in large corporations complained that CNN was "anti-American" when it showed civilian casualties in Afghanistan. Isaacson acknowledged that he ordered CNN to balance such coverage by reminding viewers of the 9/11 attacks. History Commons at http://www.historycommons.org/entity.jsp?entity=walter_isaacson_1.
69. For example, Lee Artz (ed.), *Bring 'Em On: Media and Politics in the Iraq War* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004); Sheldon Rampton and John Stauber, *Weapons of Mass Deception: The Uses of Propaganda in Bush's War on Iraq* (New York: Penguin, 2003); Paul Rutherford, *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Marketing the War against Iraq* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), and many more.
70. According to a Government Accountability Office report released in 2006, the Bush Administration spent \$1.6 billion on advertising and public relations between 2003 and 2006, with the Department of Defense spending most of the money (\$1.1 billion). Representative Henry A. Waxman, Press Release, February 13, 2006. For detailed accounts of some of the media contracts, see Franklin Foer, "Flacks Americana," *New Republic*, May 20, 2002; Renae Merle, "Pentagon Funds Diplomacy Effort," *Washington Post*, July 11, 2005; and Mark J. Prendergast, "The Right to Know," *Stars and Stripes*, July 12, 2010.
71. *Liberty*, 8.
72. *Ibid.*, 11.
73. *Ibid.*, 13.
74. *Ibid.*, 44.
75. *Ibid.*, 44-45.
76. Direct quotations from *Liberty*, 64, 65.
77. *Liberty*, 78-79.
78. *Ibid.*, 79.
79. *Ibid.*, 86.
80. *Ibid.*, 92.
81. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1980); Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News* (New York: Basic Books, 1981).
82. *Liberty*, 37.
83. *Ibid.*, 16, 74.
84. *Ibid.*, 24.
85. *Ibid.*, 55.
86. *Ibid.*, 74.
87. I emphasize science here because Lippmann is sometimes accused of scientism due to the emphasis he places on method and expertise. However, in the last two chapters of *Drift and Mastery* (1914), Lippmann clearly recognizes that science is a fallible human enterprise.
88. *Liberty*, 12, emphasis added.
89. *Ibid.*, 44.
90. Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1951). Essays collected and edited by Paul Kecskemeti, from unpublished works of Mannheim (1893-1947), including some written early in Mannheim's career. Mannheim was best known in the United States for a more popularized version of his sociology of knowledge, *Ideology and Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1936, original in German 1929).

91. *Liberty*, 44.
92. *Ibid.*, 26–27, 33.
93. *Ibid.*, 29.
94. *Ibid.*, 34.
95. *Ibid.*, 58.
96. *Ibid.*, 18.
97. *Ibid.*, 19.
98. In *The Phantom Public* (1925), Lippmann seems to call into question the ideal of “disinterested” intelligence when he suggests that “competence exists only in relation to function” so that “only the insider can make decisions, not because he is inherently a better man but because he is so placed that he can understand and act.” Here, he characterizes the outsider as “necessarily ignorant, usually irrelevant and often meddling because he is trying to navigate the ship from dry land.” See *The Phantom Public* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005, original 1925), 140. He positions himself among the outsiders there and thus seems to call into question his own authority as a political commentator. But in later (1931) discussion of the mission of the press as providing an “approximation of objective fact,” he reverts to the earlier usage (“Two Revolutions in the Press,” *Yale Review* XX, 3 [1931], 40). Similarly, he reaffirms the value of disinterested inquiry in “The Scholar in a Troubled World” (1932). Distinguishing the scholar who “gives his true allegiance, not to the immediate world, but to the invisible empire of reason” from the man of affairs: the insider who makes practical decisions by feeling his conclusions first, and understanding them later. In Lippmann’s view, both are necessary, but it is clear that he identifies with the “the men who have stood apart . . . who were cool and inquiring, and had their eyes on a longer past and a longer future.” See “The Scholar in a Troubled World,” *Atlantic Monthly*, 148, 149, 152.
99. John Mason Brown, *Through These Men: Some Aspects of Our Passing History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1952).
100. “A Test,” 2.
101. William James’s pragmatism was strongly influenced by C. S. Peirce, even though Peirce claimed James misunderstood him. George Santayana was also influenced by Peirce, both through James, his teacher, and independently. Both James and Santayana strongly influenced Lippmann when he was a Harvard student. Santayana’s critical realism sought a firmer hold on truth than James could offer. Santayana maintained that there are some elements in nature that transcend the social and provisional, for example, the color blue, which may mean different things in different cultures; however, it possesses the same chemical properties everywhere. In this sense, he is closer to the phenomenologists than to the pragmatists, with whom he is generally identified. In his early writing, Lippmann seems to lean more toward James’s pragmatism, but Santayana’s influence, always present, becomes stronger later. But like Peirce and Santayana, Lippmann does assume that knowledge is communitarian: we know more about the world today because we stand on the shoulders of giants who made discoveries in the past.
102. Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Politics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965, original 1913), 163.
103. John Patrick Diggins, “From Pragmatism to Natural Law: Walter Lippmann’s Quest for the Foundations of Legitimacy,” *Political Theory*, 19 (4), 1991, 519–538; and Diggins, *The Promise of Pragmatism: Modernism and the Crisis of Knowledge and Authority* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

104. *Liberty*, 14.
105. *Ibid.*, 86.
106. Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1955).
107. *Liberty*, 88.
108. Even Jefferson, who harbored so many American paradoxes, incorporated this one as he extolled the benefits of agrarian over industrial values, while at the same time operating a very successful nail factory. Ethan M. Fishman, *The Prudential Presidency: An Aristotelian Approach to Presidential Leadership* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001).
109. Margaret Thatcher is famously credited with abolishing the social. Margaret Thatcher, "Interview for Women's Own" ("no such thing as society"), September 23, 1987, Margaret Thatcher Foundation; www.margarethatcher.org/speeches/. Reaganomics was, of course, the U.S. counterpart to Thatcherism.

Amartya Sen is particularly insistent in asserting that Smith was no market fundamentalist. Sen maintains that, for Smith, the market never stood alone: Smith defended the role of the state in providing services such as education and poverty relief and recognized values other than profit seeking, including humanity, justice, generosity, and public spirit. See Sen, *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). In effect, Sen argues, market fundamentalists have reinvented Smith. A similar selective memory argument can even be made about Ronald Reagan and Reaganomics; Sally Kahn argues that "By today's Tea Party standards, the Republican icon would have been a Leninist-Marxist-Socialist American hater" (Kahn, "Forgetting Reagan," *American Prospect*, September 8, 2011, prospect.org/cs/articles?article=forgetting_reagan).

Ivan Illich, "Silence Is a Commons: Computers Are Doing to Communications What Fences Did to Pastures and Cars Did to Streets" (1982), *The Forum on Privatization and the Public Domain*, <http://www.forumonpublicdomain.ca/ivan-illich-%E2%80%99Csilence-is-a-commons%E2%80%9D-1982>.

110. *Ibid.*
111. Sidney Blumenthal, "Journalism and Its Discontents," afterword to Princeton University Press's reissue of *Liberty and the News*, reprinted by Salon at www.salon.com/opinion/blumenthal/2007/10/25/walter_lippmann/print.html, p. 8.

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