

PERCEPTION MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES
FROM THE GREAT WAR TO THE GREAT CRASH

by

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B.A., Virginia Commonwealth University, 2000
M.A., Virginia Commonwealth University, 2003
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2012

Abstract

This study argues that after World War I, corporate executives continued a strategy of perception management (PM) to control Americans' choices in the commercial sphere and to shape the economic and cultural landscape of the 1920s. The state used PM on an unprecedented scale in 1917 and 1918 to promote a model of loyal American behavior (as part its effort to manage the mobilized U.S. society), but the use of PM did not end after the Armistice. While many historians have seen wartime propaganda measures as the result of special fears and circumstances tied to a sense of pervasive national emergency, they fail to explain the continuation of comparable methods into the period of peace supposedly characterized by a return to "normalcy." Whereas most historical studies sharply delineate between *political* propoganda and *commercial* advertising, this study stresses leaders' continuous use of PM to promote their notions of what constituted typical, normal, even loyal American behavior in times of both war and peace.

While not a contemporary term in the early twentieth century, PM offers an appropriate conceptual framework to analyze a deliberate strategy at that time. This study defines it as actions used to convey or deny selected information to audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning, resulting in behaviors and actions favorable to the originators' objectives. During WWI, policymakers and bureaucrats concealed the state's effort to control people's behavior with claims of defending liberty and democracy. After the war, corporate executives used PM to manufacture consumer demand and encourage Americans to think of themselves foremost as consumers. A cross section of political, economic, and cultural history, *Perception Management in the United States from the Great War to the Great Crash* offers an

original perspective that emphasizes the consistency between the wartime and postwar eras by highlighting leaders' ongoing use of perception management to control Americans' behavior.

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Acknowledgements

The completion of this project would not have been possible without assistance, guidance, criticism, friendship, and support from many individuals. First, I want to express my thanks to the members of my committee, Dr. Derek Hoff and Dr. Michael Krysko from the Department of History, and Dr. Charles Griffin from the Department of Speech. I would like to especially thank my Major Professor, Dr. Donald Mrozek, for his mentorship, humor, insight, and candor. Dr. Mrozek not only provided invaluable advice, suggestions, feedback, and criticisms as I wrote this dissertation, but he has greatly influenced the way in which I view history as a subject and as a profession. Shelly Reves in the History Department, Angie Pfizenmaier at the Graduate School, and Betsy Edwards in the thesis office at Hale Library were great sources of information and assistance, especially when I was completing my dissertation far removed from campus. I also am deeply thankful for being awarded the Leroy and Mary Sullivan Page travel grant and the Anne Stewart Higham Prize through the Kansas State University Department of History.

The completion of this project would not have been possible without the support of many friends, colleagues, and co-workers in my time both on active duty and in the civil service of the United States Army. Among the most conspicuous supporters of my academic and professional endeavors during my time on active duty in the U.S. Army were Sergeant First Class Phillip Lucksavage, Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Nebiker, Scott Simpson, Staff Sergeant Randall George, Sergeant First Class April Summers, and Captain Semone Dilworth.

After fulfilling my obligation to the Army in 2009 and becoming a historian and curator at Fort Bragg's Airborne and Special Operations Museum, I had great supporters in Colonel (Ret.) James Huggins, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) David Yow, and Dr. John Duvall. In the

process of supporting his stateside lecture at the U.S. Army Airborne and Special Operations Museum, I had the pleasure of befriending Dr. Stephen Badsey of the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom. Dr. Badsey, whom I had met at a symposium at Fort Leavenworth in August 2009, offered very reassuring encouragement, advice, and suggestions. It was an honor to have him take a genuine interest in the topic of my dissertation. In late 2010, I accepted a position as a historian for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command where I received great support from my superiors, Dr. Charles Briscoe and Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, and my colleagues Dr. Troy Sacquety, Dr. Mike Krivdo, and Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Eugene Piasecki.

Finally, I would like to thank the reference and archival staff at the Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Jonathan Casey and his staff at the National World War I Museum, Liberty, Missouri; Lynn Eaton and the collections staff at the John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Spencer Howard at the Hoover Presidential Library; Harry Miller at the Wisconsin Historical Society; and Gary Borkan for granting copyright permission for use of poster photos from his book, *World War I Poster Art*.

Dedication

To my wife, Jessica, and my three kids, Eden, Landen, and Everett.

Preface

The war brought business and the government together; they can never again be antagonistic.¹

Bruce Barton, 1928

After November 1918, many senior corporate leaders, especially in marketing and advertising, continued the use of perception management (PM), a strategy effectively employed by the state during World War I, to control Americans' economic decisions. By definition, perception management encompassed actions used to convey or deny selected information to audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning, resulting in behaviors and actions favorable to the originators' objectives.² Most historians sharply distinguish between political propaganda and commercial advertising. This study instead argues that governmental and corporate leaders' deliberate, systematic use of psychological tools to influence Americans' behavior was not peculiar to a particular set of national circumstances. Perception management, then, did not apply only to a time of perceived emergency, and its continued use beyond 1918 bridged the supposed split between wartime and peacetime.

While not a contemporary term in the early twentieth century, perception management offers an appropriate conceptual framework to analyze deliberate governmental and corporate strategies at that time. While PM existed prior to 1917 and continued after 1929, this study

¹ Barton to Edward Streeter, January 5, 1928, Box 77, Marshall Fields and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

² Headquarters, Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-13, *Information Operations: Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/FM%203-13%20-%20Info%20Ops%20Doc,%20Tactics,%20Tech,%20and%20Proced%5B1%5D.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2011). The definition of perception management in this study is adapted slightly from that contained in the army field manual, since the latter focuses on swaying foreign audiences rather than domestic audiences.

focuses on WWI and the 1920s because the government portrayed the war explicitly as one to save democracy and because the postwar decade has historically been portrayed as one of unprecedented affluence, unbridled consumerism, and vast economic freedom.³ According to historian David Horowitz, the "swift and contradictory changes of the years around World War I . . . prepared the ground for a new vision of a consumer society that emerged in the 1920s The war was one of those moments when traditions and new possibilities stood uneasily side by side and thus produced an especially intense and often contradictory examination of a higher standard of living." In sum, "What emerged in the 1920s was a new vision of the consumer society."⁴ The use of perception management during and after the war contributed significantly to this occurrence.

A cross section of political, economic, and cultural history, this study bridges the gap between two sizeable bodies of literature covering wartime propaganda and peacetime commercial activity. Political scientist Harold Lasswell and historians James Mock, Cedric Larson, David Kennedy, Steven Vaughn, and Susan Brewer discuss the state's propaganda effort in WWI in great detail but, understandably, they limit their studies to the years 1917 and 1918. While these authors (save for Lasswell) make extensive use of primary documents, they rely heavily on *How We Advertised America*, the "final report" of George Creel, the wartime head of the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Because Creel published the book in 1920, the

³ On the latter point, for instance, historian Gary Cross argues, "Consumer goods allowed Americans to free themselves . . . gave people a sense of freedom [and] the means to establish new personal identities." He concluded the thought by stating that consumerism "redefined democracy, creating social solidarities and opportunities for participation that transcended suffrage rights or political ideologies." Gary Cross, *An All-Consuming Century: Why Commercialism Won in Modern America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2.

⁴ Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes toward the Consumer Society in America, 1875-1940* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 109, 114, 133.

former chairman believed that the CPI's methods of influencing Americans' behavior could only have been accomplished in a time of total war. He makes no mention that similar techniques might have commercial application. Of the historians of wartime propaganda, only Steven Vaughn alludes to the private sector's continuation of PM beyond the war. He argues that the "success of the [CPI's] Division of Advertising and of a sister bureau, the Division of Pictorial Publicity, helped produce a veritable new industry in the 1920s. Old-time salesmanship was transformed, its crudities sublimated. There arose a feeling that with proper advertising (its enemies described it as scientific misrepresentation) one could sell anything." However, Vaughn does not explore that idea further.⁵

Many historians of the postwar decade briefly acknowledge a link between wartime propaganda and commercial advertising but do not further define that relationship. For example, in *Why the American Century?*, Olivier Zunz explains that many corporate executives in the 1920s "worked on the ways mass opinion could be whipped up as the [Committee on Public Information] had shown so well with its propaganda efforts of the First World War."⁶ While Zunz expertly explains how business leaders, social scientists, and others helped shape institutions in order to manage the growing pluralistic society, he elaborates no further on the postwar continuation of the type of psychological measures taken during WWI. In *Modern*

⁵ Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1938); James Mock and Cedric Larson, *Words that Won the War: The Story of the Committee on Public Information, 1917-1919* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1939); David Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 142; Susan Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶ Olivier Zunz, *Why the American Century?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 62.

Temper, a study of ethnic heterogeneity, social conservatism, and modern culture in the early twentieth century, Lynn Dumenil quotes Edward Logan, a contemporary researcher of political lobbies, who wrote, "No doubt much of the recent activity in applying high-power salesmanship and propaganda methods by groups owes its origin to ideas derived from knowledge of the work of the Bureau [Committee] on Public Information during the war." However, Dumenil quotes Logan to the make point that the lessons of the CPI "contributed to the shape of future efforts to influence public policy," not that corporate leaders used the same methods to sell products and inspire Americans to think of themselves first as consumers.⁷

In *New World Coming*, Nathan Miller argues that "during the war, the Wilson administration established an immense internal propaganda machine that served as a model for the modern public relations industry."⁸ Roland Marchand's *Advertising the American Dream* similarly posits that the "wartime crusades proved that advertising was no mere commercial tool, but a great moral and educative force."⁹ It is interesting, then, that historians never follow that lead simply because of the lower stakes following U.S. victory in WWI. *Perception Management in the United States from the Great War to the Great Crash* concludes that PM was not merely an aspect of war, but rather a deliberate political *and* corporate strategy to unify Americans nationwide. Looking primarily through the prism of institutional change, historian Ellis Hawley argues:

⁷ Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 41.

⁸ Nathan Miller, *New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2003), 153.

⁹ Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), 8, 10, 31.

The major concerns of the prewar years had revolved around the challenges posed by industrialization, urbanization, immigration, and pluralistic diversity. It was the search for new institutions to cope with these challenges that had produced much of what was called "progressive reform." And while the paths along which this search moved were altered by the war experience, the quest itself persisted and continued to shape both the institutions and the political behavior of the 1920s. Nor did the developments of the postwar years constitute anything approaching breaks with the past. Such phenomena as the technological and moral revolutions, the advent of a mass consumption economy, and the revolts staged by urban minorities and cultural rebels all had their roots in the prewar era.¹⁰

This study does not necessarily contradict Hawley's thesis that a pattern of using institutions to deal with national problems and to achieve political and economic aims existed prior to 1917, but it does argue that PM—officially sanctioned and conducted on an unprecedented scale during WWI, and continued with even greater effectiveness in the 1920s—represented a modern, psychological approach to shaping Americans' views of themselves and each other. Using PM as a conceptual framework to bridge the wartime and postwar years, this study moves beyond traditional explanations that emphasize legislative or institutional solutions to national problems.

Wartime PM did not overturn existing marketing, advertising, and public relations conventions, but mobilization for total war allowed for an unprecedentedly large and aggressive PM campaign that, in turn, provided many lessons and a model to postwar planners. In *The Making of Modern Advertising* (1983), historian Daniel Pope recounts how American advertising traced its roots back to 1704 in the *Boston News-Letter*. Advertising occurred only on a limited scale until after the Civil War when corporate organization, mass production and increased distribution of goods, and newspapers' greater dependency on advertising revenue helped lay the groundwork for the professionalization of the industry. By World War I, total expenditures on advertising exceeded one billion dollars annually, with some companies spending more than one

¹⁰ Ellis Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc., 1992), 2.

million dollars each year. When the CPI was established for PM by President Wilson in April 1917, it hired and consulted many professionals from the private sector precisely because marketing, advertising, and public relations firms had already proved their ability to influence people's behavior. However, the key difference between marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants in the 1920s from those of preceding generations was their strong belief, in Pope's words, "that their skills could unify American society," a theme that "became more insistent during World War I."¹¹ Indeed, after November 1918, marketers and advertisers continued using PM to help break down the vestiges of the earlier popular consensus that, according to historian Kathleen Donohue, valued the producer over the consumer.¹²

While explaining many practical, methodological, and doctrinal aspects to demonstrate the continuation of PM beyond 1918, this study also concentrates on the people who deliberately continued to use it to influence the public's choices in the commercial realm, often against protests. In the 1920s, many marketing, advertising, and public relations firms hired people who had helped orchestrate the state's PM campaign during WWI. These individuals held generally condescending views of ordinary Americans. Planners and executors of PM firmly believed in their ability, right, even their obligation, to alter the habits of the American public using PM. Some of the more noteworthy figures bridging the gap between wartime and postwar PM included Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays (author of *Crystallizing Public Opinion* and *Propaganda*), Bruce Barton (author of the corporate gospel *The Man Nobody Knows*), and Carl Byoir, each of whom became prominent in advertising and public relations in the 1920s. John Price Jones, a

¹¹ Daniel Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 4-6, 12.

¹² Kathleen Donohue, *Freedom from Want: American Liberalism and the Idea of the Consumer* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

reporter for *Washington Post*, *New York Globe*, *New York Press*, and *Sun*, and advertiser in the H.K McCann advertising agency, helped the government promote Liberty Loan drives in New York City, a task into which he, in public relations scholar Scott Cutlip's words, brought an "urge for system, detail, and planned procedures to bear on the campaign[s]." On November 23, 1919, Jones founded John Price Jones, Inc., a company devoted to public relations and PM.¹³

John Watson, James Webb Young, and Orlando Clinton Harn each served in the federal government during WWI and became major players in the conduct of postwar corporate PM. During the war, John Watson, a scholar and pioneer in behavioral psychology, conducted psychological tests on military pilots for the War Department. After the war, he conducted experiments on human behavior with particular focus on behavioral patterns of children, the most notorious of which was likely the Little Albert experiment of 1920.¹⁴ After Watson left academia in 1920, the J. Walter Thompson Company (JWT) hired him for his expertise in behavioral psychology, indicating the manipulative qualities of corporate PM.¹⁵

¹³ Bruce Barton raised money for the Young Men's Christian Association and "directed the national publicity campaign" of the National War Work Council" (raising over \$300 million) during the war, inspiring the Young Women's Christian Association, Jewish Brotherhood, Salvation Army, Knights of Columbus, and other organizations to look deeper into the advantages of marketing and public relations. For the Salvation Army, Barton created the famous slogan, "A man may be down but he is never out." Scott M. Cutlip, *The Unseen Power: Public Relations: A History* (Hillsdale: Lawrence Earlbaum, 1994), 226-227, 246-247; *Public Service Magazine* (January 1922), Biographical Sketches and Correspondence, Box 4, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; Warren I. Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), 126.

¹⁴ Watson and a graduate student, Rosalie Raynor, conducted the Little Albert experiment to test the "fear reflex" of infants by associating a white rat, of which 11-month-old Albert had no baseline fear, with an extremely loud noise created by banging metal together. By the end of the experiment Albert was terrified of the rat because he had come to identify it with the startling noise. See, e.g., Paul Creelan, "Watson as Mythmaker: The Millenarian Sources of Watsonian Behaviorism," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 24 (June 1985): 194-216.

James Webb Young, co-founder of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4 A's) in 1917 and advertiser in the J. Walter Thompson Company in the 1920s, believed that corporate leaders had the right and the obligation to control mass opinion and behavior. He too had supported the state's PM campaign during the war. According to an unpublished biography produced by the JWTC, the government recruited Young in summer 1918 "to prepare a plan of propaganda 'from an advertising point of view' to use against German troops at the Western Front and against Germany's civilian population." His plan focused on "the inevitability of defeat," causing (in one historian's generous estimate) German soldiers to "[surrender] by platoons." After Pearl Harbor, he formed the War Advertising Council (WAC) "to use advertising in a systematic and orderly way for public service" and "draft the support of the country's leading advertisers, agencies, and media," all of which supported the state's PM during WWII.¹⁶ Young argued against the objections of public relations titan Bruce Barton, who believed that using certain psychological means to control Americans' opinions and behavior should only occur during a national crisis, if at all.

During WWI, Orlando Clinton Harn sat on the Board of Directors of the CPI's Division of Advertising and supported governmental PM. Harn also worked for the National Lead

¹⁵ "The Adventure of the Behaviorist," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

¹⁶ "His Other Advertising Hats," Folder "James Webb Young Biographical Information," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. The Advertising Council drew criticism from no less an industry influence than Bruce Barton, who in 1946 cited the abusive tendencies of propaganda bureaus during war and argued the War Advertising Council "should have put an honorable end to its activities with the ending of the war." Barton to James Webb Young, September 19, 1946, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Box 1, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Company and H.J. Heinz, served as president of the Association of National Advertising Managers and the Technical Publicity Association, and chaired the National Advertising Commission of the Associated Advertising Clubs. An article from *The Fourth Estate* dated February 1927 reported that Harn received the medal for "distinguished personal service to advertising," a prize category in the 1926 Harvard Advertising Awards (also known as the Bok Awards). Among other influential corporate executives, Watson, Young, and Harn consciously, deliberately, and shamelessly continued the use of PM after 1918.

While not overstating a congruity of values or similarity of purpose between the public and private sectors, this study argues that each sector elected to use PM to pursue its own goals and interests and make its vision for American society a reality. Rather than dwell on the distinctions between *political* propaganda and *commercial* advertising, it demonstrates leaders' continuous attempts to influence Americans' behavior and perceptions for personal, professional, and institutional gain, regardless of sector or national circumstances. Moreover, PM was a tool to get people to think and act in accordance with a predetermined vision of how American society should be. Far from just engaging in efforts to understand what Americans wanted so as to provide products and services that met their naturally developing demand, leaders in government and commerce were committed to shaping what Americans wanted. This permitted a subjective feeling of control on the part of consumers at the time of purchase, even though this subjective feeling covered an illusion. The public had been conditioned to want what the elites intended them to buy. *Perception Management in the United States from the Great War to the Great Crash* concentrates less on selling "things" than on leaders' ongoing efforts to shape the political, social, and commercial landscape of the U.S. in the early twentieth century.

CHAPTER 1 - The State, the "Foes of Democracy," and the "Terrorization of Public Opinion"

Censorship is one of the penalties of war, a part of its armor . . . and one of its most loathsome features.¹⁷

Lt. Col. Frederick Palmer, Chief Press Censor, AEF

Censorship laws . . . even though they protest that the protection of military secrets is their one original object, have a way of slipping over into the field of opinion, for arbitrary power grows by what it feeds on.¹⁸

George Creel, Chairman of the CPI

A political graveyard is being prepared in the public mind for a long list of men holding office in Washington.¹⁹

Allen W. Ricker, publisher of *Pearson's Magazine*

In 1917 and 1918, the U.S. government identified and rebuked the "foes of democracy" within the United States. Through censorship, coercing publishers to print only favorable news about the war, and silencing those who sought to undermine the nation's altruistic motives for fighting in Europe, the Wilson administration deliberately adopted a strategy of perception management as a way to define and enforce loyal, patriotic behavior. This chapter argues that even from the period of neutrality and preparedness, many elected and appointed officials including President Woodrow Wilson identified those behaviors which were patriotic, loyal, and obedient; that those officials held a dubious attitude toward ethnic pluralism and used PM to "Americanize" its constituency; and, simply, that they used undemocratic means to promote the

¹⁷ Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1931), 2:51.

¹⁸ George Creel, *How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information that Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 17.

¹⁹ Ricker to Woodrow Wilson, August 3, 1917, in Arthur Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), Volume 43: 382 (hereafter cited as volume: page), written after finding out that the Post Office had tampered with his personal mail.

democratic principles supposedly driving U.S. involvement. The state's wartime efforts to control public opinion are familiar to many historians, but the extent to which the Wilson administration enforced a model of acceptable American behavior deserves closer attention as a preliminary to the discussion of how corporate leaders promoted acceptable American behavior in the 1920s.

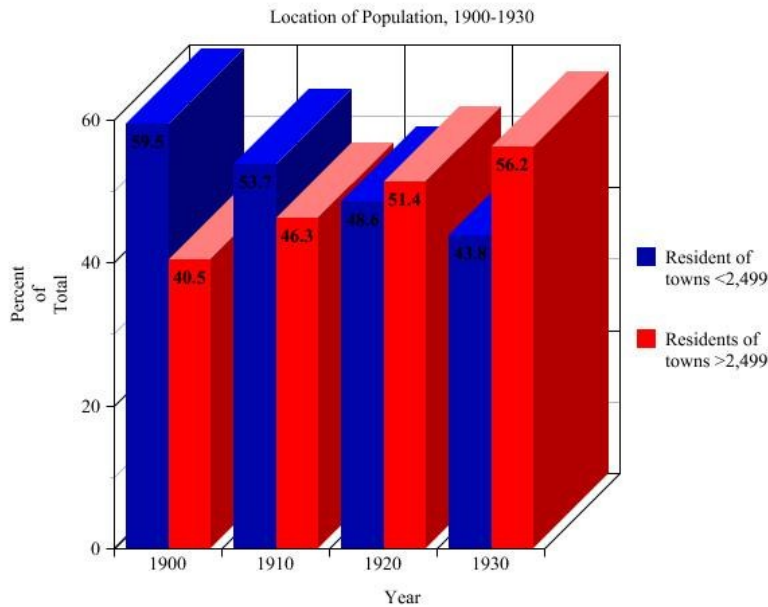
During World War I, the state used perception management in part to "Americanize" its diverse constituency. In the years leading up to U.S. involvement, immigration and urbanization had both increased drastically within the United States. Native-born Americans had feared for some time that the nation (especially its cities) was being overcrowded with immigrants and was becoming "hyphenated." The government's concern about immigrants' divided loyalties after April 1917, especially among the nearly 8 million people who thought of Germany as their homeland, compounded the already daunting prospect of managing the resources and industry of a vastly heterogeneous nation.²⁰ During the war, Wilson's administration used perception management to promote nationalism, harness the nation's emotional energies, and, given the size of and diversity within the American population, to smoke out potentially threatening internal ideologies. A brief review of the demographic landscape between 1900 and 1917 suggests the difficulty that the federal government faced when trying to define and manage its constituencies.

From 1900 to 1917, the U.S. population increased from 76 million to 103.2 million people. In 1910, most Americans resided in the Northeast. A third of the population resided in the South, and less than a tenth of it in the West. Perhaps most significant for the years 1900 to 1920 was the drastic increase in urban dwellers. While those residing in towns of 2,499 or fewer still outnumbered those in urban settings by a margin of 53.7 percent to 46.3 percent in 1910, the

²⁰ Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 3.

spread had narrowed significantly since 1900 (59.5 percent to 40.5 percent). In 1910, slightly over four million more persons resided in "rural" areas than in 1900; by way of comparison, nearly twelve million more added to the ranks of urban dwellers in the same period. In 1910, 38.8 percent of the total population resided in the 778 locations within the United States containing more than 8,000 inhabitants. This meant that only 7.5 percent of the population lived in areas between 2,500 and 7,999 inhabitants. The increase of population and urbanization presented an unwelcome dilemma for the central government which, during World War I, assumed a much larger role in managing the nation's resources and industry.²¹

Figure 1.1 Location of Population, 1900-1930



Ethnic pluralism concerned the Wilson administration immensely because it feared divided loyalties. According to historian David Kennedy, "the gaudy presence in American

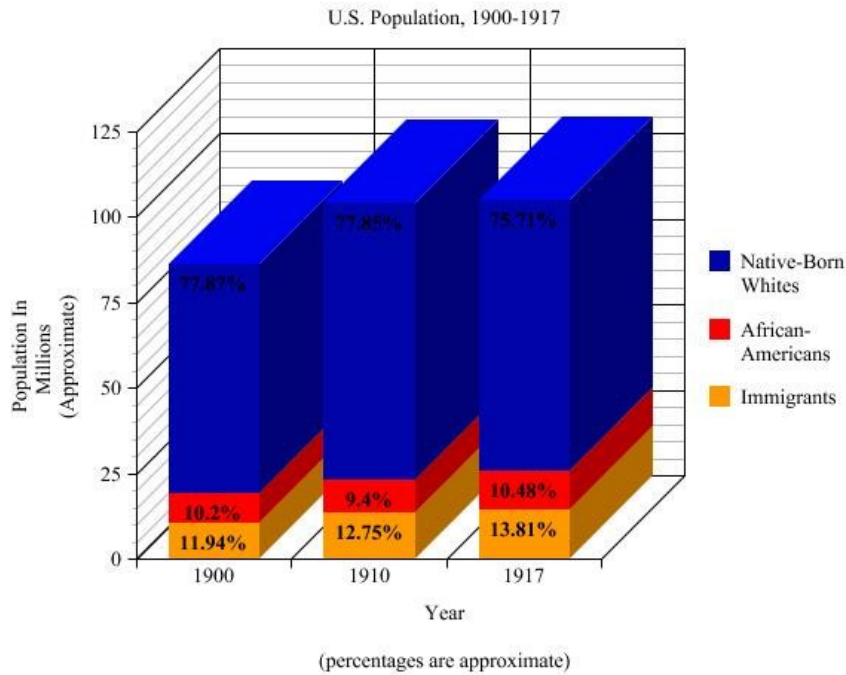
²¹ Population Estimates Bureau, Population Division, United States Census Bureau, June 28, 2000, <http://www.census.gov/popest/archives/1990s/popclockest.txt> (accessed February 8, 2010); U.S. Census Bureau, "General Reports and Analysis Introduction, Number and Distribution of Inhabitants," Thirteenth Census of the United States, <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/36894832v1.zip> (accessed September 6, 2011): 15-125.

society of millions of unassimilated immigrants" pestered policymakers and administrators.²² The issue of foreigners' loyalties eventually became a key factor for the rise of a deliberate federal policy of perception management. Between 1900 and 1910 the native population increased 19.5 percent from some 76 million to almost 92 million, while foreign-born persons living in the U.S. jumped 30.7 percent from 10.3 million to 13.3 million. In 1917, the total foreign-born population exceeded 14.5 million. Ethnic diversity was most pronounced in urban areas which, according to Kennedy, had become "polyglot cauldrons broiling with astonishingly various ethnic ingredients." After April 1917, the state refused to allow diversified loyalties to reduce natives' faith in American greatness. For example, in May 1918, George Creel, the presidentially appointed head of the Committee on Public Information (CPI), created a subordinate Division of the Foreign Born to address the problem of immigrants. Josephine Roche headed the division and created fifteen sub-divisions for each of the nation's largest ethnic contingents. The CPI also encouraged the National League for Woman's Service (NLWS), a women's group devoted to establishing a solid domestic production base, to send foreign language speakers into cities with significant ethnic populations. Immigrants became key targets of the federal government's perception management campaign in 1917 and 1918.²³

²² Kennedy, *Over Here*, 62-63, 142-143

²³ George Sylvester Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate* (New York: Horace Liverlight, 1930): 180; Abstract of the Thirteenth Census of the United States, 4, 188-189; U.S. Census Bureau, "Color or Race, Nativity, and Parentage," Thirteenth Census of the United States, <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/36894832v1.zip> (accessed September 6, 2011): 126-246; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 213; Arthur Link and Richard McCormick, *Progressivism* (Arlan Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1982), 101-102; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 62-63, 142-143. In 1910 women numbered 45 million (8 million more than in 1900). Of these nearly 5 million were African-Americans, 1 million so-called mulattoes, nearly 150,000 foreign-born non-whites, 5.8 million foreign-born whites, and the remaining majority native whites. Men outnumbered women in all states except Massachusetts, Maryland, and the Carolinas, and by an increasing margin the further west one traveled (and by over 20 percent

Figure 1.2 U.S. Population, 1900-1917



Due to heightened racial tensions and calls for civil rights, African Americans represented another dilemma for the national government, especially when the U.S. declared war. Blacks constituted a large segment of the population and Wilson believed that they, like immigrants, had dangerous potential if they opposed the state's policies. In 1890, African Americans numbered 7.4 million; ten years later, 8.8 million; and in 1910, they numbered 9.8 million. Blacks were still most numerous in the South and constituted the majority in both South Carolina and Mississippi. The state actively sought support from blacks only when racist German propaganda became too problematic to ignore. It also clamped down on African-American organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored

more in California and its border states). Generally there was close parity between sexes in urban areas, save for the foreign-born population. Among white immigrants, men outnumbered women 1.2 to 1; among non-white immigrants, men outnumbered women 5 to 1. Across the board, men outnumbered women in rural areas (populations of less than 2,499), significantly in some cases, and again most markedly in the case of the non-white foreign-born.

People (NAACP) and the National Equal Rights League (NERL) when they stepped up on behalf of blacks to claim the democratic promises made by Wilson.

The ethnically and racially diverse population of the U.S., much of it situated in crowded cities, obfuscated the idea of an American "public," presented major problems for the state in the practical sense of governing, and confused contemporary notions of modern democracy. If the domestic arena was not problematic enough, across the Atlantic Europeans were slaughtering each other by the thousands in a titanic struggle. Two and a half years after the Great War began, the United States became a participant, a decision which forever changed the dynamic between the central government and the American people and which would prove the lengths to which the government would act in defense of American democracy. The state's perception management campaign began as a direct result of mobilizing for that war.

Beginning as a result of events following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in June 1914, the Great War in Europe mattered little to most Americans. Initially, the United States maintained a diplomatic policy of neutrality. Wilson commanded Americans to be "neutral in fact, as well as in name, during these days that are to try men's souls." On August 19, 1914, two weeks after Britain declared war on Germany, Wilson said publicly, "Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality, which is the spirit of impartiality and fairness and friendliness to all concerned."²⁴ Before the U.S. had become a belligerent, Wilson had begun dictating how the patriotic American "will act and speak" during wartime. The wartime PM campaign had begun, and thenceforth Wilson continually inundated the public with notions of what it meant to be "American."

²⁴ Wilson address to Congress, August 19, 1914.

Neutrality was a noble ideal, but Americans debated what the war meant, who caused it, and what the U.S. had to gain or lose depending on who won. Between 1914 and 1917 members of the press argued along those very lines. According to J.A. Thompson, most publicists blamed the war on "a handful of captains, kings, and cabinet officers," but common opinion stopped there. For example, progressive politician Gifford Pinchot, journalist and co-founder of the NAACP Charles Edward Russell, and publishers at the *New Republic*, *Harper's Weekly*, and the *Independent* openly supported the Allies. In contrast, former U.S. Senator and historian Albert Beveridge thought that Germany embodied social progress and a proper equilibrium of labor and privilege.²⁵ The diversity of opinions within the press was a microcosm of the diversity of opinions simmering underneath the surface of neutrality. According to Wilson's definition, people who spoke out in favor of one side or the other did not love America. He would not tolerate such supposed disloyalty after April 1917 during the major state-sponsored PM campaign. The construction of a model of acceptable American behavior during wartime began years before U.S. troops arrived in France.

Americans also debated about preparedness during the period of neutrality. For example, progressives Frederick Howe, Paul Kellogg, and Amos Pinchot actively supported the Union Against Militarism, an anti-preparedness organization between 1915 and 1917. According to Thompson, progressives Walter Weyl and Ray Stannard Baker, among others, approved of the judicious use of force "as a means to the promotion of a new international order." William Allen White, a progressive editor and journalist, and George Creel, the future head of the CPI, saw

²⁵ J.A. Thompson, "American Progressive Publicists and the First World War, 1914-1917," *Journal of American History* 58 (September 1971): 364-373; Gary Gerstle, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism," *The American Historical Review* 99 (October 1994): 1052-1053.

preparedness as a window for advancing progressive reforms. By late 1916, Creel believed that preparedness provided for "for the defense of the nation" and "for the daily demands of citizenship." Creel also argued that opponents of preparedness "are as much the foes of democracy as those wretched persons who talk in terms of blood and iron," a telling statement by the future head of the government's wartime information agency and senior leader in its perception management campaign.²⁶

The U.S. was not, and probably could not have been, actually neutral between 1914 and 1917. Wanting to keep up its exports to Europe, it had tried to maintain diplomatic neutrality *and* its commercial relationships with the warring powers. Neutrality thus did not translate into non-involvement in Europe's affairs, and this policy gradually became untenable as German U-boats kept sinking American merchant ships (and ships carrying Americans) bound for Britain. When Wilson cried foul in response to those incidents, publisher William Randolph Hearst accused the president of being an Anglophile and violating his own principle of neutrality.²⁷ Even William Jennings Bryan, Wilson's Secretary of State and staunch advocate of neutrality, resigned in protest when the president called for accountability for the sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915. The pretense of neutrality had all but evaporated by February 1917, at which time the U.S. severed diplomatic relations with Germany and announced that it would arm merchant ships. Wilson's presidential campaign phrase "He Kept Us Out of War," a clever use of

²⁶ Thompson, "American Progressive Publicists," 364-373; Gerstle, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism," 1052-1053; George Creel, "Universal Training and the Democratic Ideal," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science in the City of New York* (July 1916): 146-151.

²⁷ John Winkler, *William Randolph Hearst: A New Appraisal* (New York: Hasting's House, 1955) provides a great amount of detail on Hearst's anti-British and isolationist worldview.

perception management in its own right, was a statement of fact widely misinterpreted by the electorate as a prediction of non-involvement in the war.

As the situation on the seas deteriorated with Germany's reinstatement of its policy of unrestricted warfare in early 1917, Wilson knew that, in the event of U.S. belligerency, he would have to enforce loyal American behavior with a massive PM campaign. On April 2, 1917, Woodrow Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war on Germany. "Our object now," Wilson said, "is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governed peoples of the world such a concert of purpose and of action as will henceforth insure the observance of those principles."²⁸ War alone could save the U.S. and its principles. "Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its people, and the menace to that peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will, not by the will of the people."²⁹ Wilson's words echoed the idea that the power of government rests in the consent of the governed and described the superiority of democratic principles. The federal government's subsequent perception management strategy was laced with that kind of language.

In that same address he called for "the organization and mobilization of the country to supply the materials of war and serve the incidental needs of the Nation in the most abundant and yet the most economical and efficient way possible."³⁰ Wilson believed that the central government had to consolidate and expand its power to defend democracy, which happened after

²⁸ Wilson address to Congress, April 2, 1917.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Congress declared war on April 6, 1917. Its expansion of power, which it attempted to rationalize to the public through a proactive PM campaign, made no organizational sense if it was not done to manage the broadened, impersonal concept of "The Nation." For example, months before the declaration of war, Wilson had established the Council of National Defense (CND) to investigate and make recommendations regarding the nation's ability to wage war from an industrial standpoint. It functioned as a bureaucratic parent to many other public and private organizations, particularly after April 1917. Its members came directly from the President's Cabinet, including the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior, Labor, Navy, and War. The CND established an internal Advisory Commission consisting of financier Bernard Baruch; Howard Coffin, Vice-President of Hudson Motor Company; Hollis Godfrey, President of the Drexel Institute; Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor; Franklin Martin, Secretary-General of the American College of Surgeons; Julius Rosenwald, President of Sears, Roebuck, and Company; and Daniel Willard, President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The Advisory Commission's purpose was "to advise and assist the Council [of National Defense] in the execution of its functions and to create relations that would render possible the immediate concentration and utilization of the resources of the Nation."³¹ "The Nation," a disembodied entity standing in for millions of individual Americans, would serve as the target for PM during WWI and after it.

In addition to the CND, the government established the War Industries Board, the War Trade Board, the U.S. Food Administration, the Fuel Administration, the Railroad

³¹ Council of National Defense, *Minutes of the Council of National Defense, 1916-1918* and Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, *Minutes of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense, 1916-1918* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Records Administration Microfilm Publication Series, 1979), Reel 1, C1, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Administration, the National War Labor Board, and the Committee on Public Information, all of which centralized federal power. Many historians have suggested that the gargantuan growth of federal power during World War I set the stage for the subsequent growth of the state in the New Deal welfare state.³² Lynn Dumenil notes, "The multiplication of national bureaucratic structures . . . led to an organized society in which both individuals and communities found themselves powerfully affected by forces outside their control and increasingly removed from the locus of economic and political power."³³ The state's PM campaign reflected its growing capacity and contributed to what Bruce Hasenyager calls its "relative authority" in society.³⁴ That is, the federal government became a more intrusive force in Americans' lives not simply by compartmentalizing, but also by actively dictating appropriate behavior during wartime. This was not an automatic or "natural" process. Leaders at various levels made choices, sometimes more or less aware their long-term implications. Still, the changes were the result of deliberate actions.

The Wilson administration, using the War Department, the CPI, the CND, the U.S Post Office, the censorship section of the War Trade Board, and other agencies, controlled the channels of news and information in an unprecedentedly assertive way. While many American

³² See, e.g., Dwight Dumond, *Roosevelt to Roosevelt: The United States in the Twentieth Century* (Henry Holt, 1937); Kennedy, *Over Here*; Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Marc Eisner, *From Warfare State to Welfare State: World War I, Compensatory State Building, and the Limits of the Modern Order* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000).

³³ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 4.

³⁴ Bruce Hasenyager, *Managing the Information Ecology: A Collaborative Approach to Information Technology Management* (Westport: Quorum Books, 1996), 56-57. To Hasenyager, "relative authority" is impacted by a myriad of factors including organizational hierarchy (regimented rank structure), personalities, cultural and political considerations, and experience and expertise as they relate to an authority's reputation.

publicists supported the state in its effort to rouse nationalism in order to appear loyal, some took strong stances in defense of their constitutional liberties and for Americans' right to all information relating to the government's conduct of the war. Those who chose not to support the government's PM campaign faced judicial, extra-judicial, and economic consequences.

Federal attempts to manage public opinion by managing the press flew in the face of many journalists' and publishers' beliefs. In the earliest stages of the war Americans had chastised the Allies for disregarding freedom of the press during war.³⁵ American journalists and publishers vowed that they would not stand by and allow their own government to do the same. In 1917, the American Newspaper Publishers Association pronounced: "The American people are entitled to a full and frank statement of all that occurs, whether it be good or bad," and there was "no justification for a restriction that abridges the liberty of the press, for the people must have confidence that they are getting the truth."³⁶ Progressive and muckraking publishers had been successful at influencing federal and states' policies over the previous two decades, and believed that they wielded substantial political power. Historians Arthur Link and Richard McCormick argue that muckrakers formed "the literary spearhead of early twentieth-century

³⁵ J.E. Longhofer, "An Analysis of the Psychological Necessity of Censorship in War Zones" (master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 1970), 74-75. In 1915, former President Theodore Roosevelt chastised British statesman Edward Grey for England's refusal to allow foreign correspondents to obtain information for readers across the world. Roosevelt wondered if "it is worth your while considering whether much of your censorship work and much of your refusal to allow correspondents at the front has been damaging to your cause from the standpoint of the effect on public opinion without any corresponding military gains." While acknowledging the American press' excesses during the Spanish-American War, Roosevelt cautioned Grey that prohibiting correspondents (the other extreme) would hinder public support for the British war effort. Roosevelt to Sir Edward Grey, January 22, 1915, http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Letter_from_Theodore_Roosevelt_to_Sir_Edward_Grey (accessed May 31, 2009).

³⁶ *New York Times*, April 26, 1917.

reform."³⁷ In *McClure's*, *Collier's*, *Cosmopolitan*, and other publications, muckrakers such as Josiah Flynt, Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, William Hard, William Allen White, and George Creel aimed to educate the public and correct social and political maladies.³⁸ In *Over Here*, David Kennedy notes, "Publicity could tame the trusts and extinguish corruption; it could settle strikes and pass legislation; it could clean up the slums and end 'white slavery' [The] manipulation of mass opinion for political purposes was becoming a highly refined art."³⁹ Press reformers "adopted the rhetoric of egalitarian democracy, claiming to be both educator[s] and informer[s] and to be empowering all classes through news and information."⁴⁰ The press, for one, saw the government's perception management strategy for what it was: regulating people's behavior, actions, and opinions not in defense of democracy, but at the expense of it. Journalists and publishers resented federal leaders' audacity to even suggest using their publications to influence Americans' opinions and behavior and to advance a political agenda. After the war, some publishers expressed similar concern at the conspicuously manipulative nature of corporate PM (while using advertising revenue to expand their own operations and readership).

President Wilson knew that he needed the media's support for governmental perception management campaign and used political bribery to win them over. As historian Gary Gerstle

³⁷ Link and McCormick, *Progressivism*, 19, 24-25.

³⁸ Samuel Kennedy, "Muckraking: Investigative Reporting Pushes Various Kinds of Reform," in Margaret Blanchard, ed., *History of the Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1998), 411-412.

³⁹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 47.

⁴⁰ Stephen Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 192-196; for more on news, see Donald Read, *The Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

argues, Wilson shored up support from the press "by portraying the war as a means of extending Progressive reform, both in the United States and abroad" and drawing "on the Progressives' desire to unite all citizens in a single community of shared values and aspirations."⁴¹ Lynn Dumenil similarly argues, "Seduced by the rhetoric of a war for democracy, [progressives] hoped that America's participation in the war effort would be a means of bringing American democracy to the world. On the domestic front, they expected that the wartime emergency would cause the federal government to expand its power in behalf of reform," not on behalf of its own power.⁴² Journalists, especially those of a progressive bent, would be disappointed very soon. Not only did the government restrict journalists from accessing first-hand information about the war, but it punished those publications unwilling to support its overarching PM strategy.

Perception management during and after World War I was predicated on leaders' assumption that they knew what was best for the American people. The military had developed several initial plans for limiting information to be relayed to the American people.⁴³ The *United States Infantry Guide* (1917) provided for "censorship over private communications" and "censorship over press publications and communications All private communications [of] officers, soldiers, foreign attachés, newspaper correspondents, and all other individuals, dispatched from the theater of operations are liable to censorship and to such delay in transmission as may be deemed necessary by the military authorities."⁴⁴ The War Department

⁴¹ Gerstle, "The Protean Character of American Liberalism," 1052.

⁴² Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 20.

⁴³ Daniels to Woodrow Wilson, April 11, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:39.

⁴⁴ *United States Infantry Guide* (1917), Article VII, Section 420, http://www.theworldwar.org/s/110/images/editor_documents/content/RESEARCH%20CENTER

identified the importance of scrutinizing what information should be made available for public consumption, a strategy that the federal government soon applied in the domestic sphere. Many, if not most, Americans did not yet know what to make of having to fight and sacrifice in a European war to supposedly defend worldwide democracy. Claiming to educate and inform its citizens, the state would soon describe which behaviors were loyal and patriotic in an assertive PM campaign orchestrated by numerous federal agencies.

In the early weeks of U.S. mobilization, Wilson ordered the Secretaries of Navy and War, Josephus Daniels and Newton Baker, to censor submarine cables and telephone and telegraph lines around the Mexican border, setting the stage for military censorship writ large.⁴⁵ In Europe, major responsibility for military censorship eventually fell under the Second Section of the General Staff, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF).⁴⁶ According to General John Pershing, the AEF established that Press and Censorship Division "to prevent indiscretions in the letters of officers and soldiers, as well as in articles for the press." The broad goals of this censorship program were: 1) "to prevent the enemy from obtaining important information of our forces"; 2) "to give to the people of the United States the maximum information consistent with the limitations imposed by the first object;" and 3) "to cause to be presented to the American

The%20new%20Research%20Center%20opened%20on%20December%202021,/AmericanLettersandDiaryEnt.doc (accessed June 4, 2009); General Pershing reported that within the A.E.F. there were "36 regularly accredited correspondents, while visiting correspondents reached a total of 411," though the actual numbers were slightly higher. U.S. Army, *Final Report of General John J. Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 17.

⁴⁵ *New York Times*, May 2, 1917.

⁴⁶ U.S. Army Center of Military History, *United States Army in the World War, 1917-1919: Reports of the Commander-in-Chief, Staff Sections and Services, Volume 13* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1991), 1, 4-5, 25, and for general policies set forth by the G-2-D, see the same, 82-140.

people the facts as they were known at the time."⁴⁷ Limitations on the types of information that Americans could receive were rationalized, sometimes legitimately, under the pretense of operational security (OPSEC). But the extent to which the federal government restricted information using a plethora of institutions revealed a deliberate strategy of PM beyond that which could be justified by OPSEC.

The decision to release to the American public only information that would benefit specific political or corporate agenda became a defining feature of PM between 1917 and 1929. During the war, the War Department's limitation on releasing military information signified a larger federal strategy of perception management. Even prior to the U.S. declaration of war, the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission had already established guidelines for domestic censorship, propaganda, and "Americanization" (in the context of a national emergency). In March 1917, the Commission resolved that its director, Walter Gifford of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, present a plan for federal censorship of the press at its next meeting. On April 2, 1917, the Commission—upon receiving "urgent requests" from many prominent newspaper and magazine editors and publishers that "it will be vitally necessary that there shall be set in motion a unified, workable, wise and . . . democratic Federal censorship of the press"—resolved to appoint a committee to institute such a plan "at the earliest possible moment."⁴⁸ Secretaries Robert Lansing, Newton Baker, and Josephus Daniels prodded Wilson to establish an agency for publicity and censorship with Creel in charge. This Committee on Public Information, created by executive order on April 13, 1917, had the dual functions of

⁴⁷ U.S. Army, *Final Report of General John J. Pershing*, 12, 16-17, 88.

⁴⁸ *Minutes of the Council of National Defense and Minutes of the Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense*.

publicity and censorship. Creel admired the military-style censorship, and in the spirit of "absolute co-operation," he suggested a censorship board within the bureau of publicity consisting of representatives from the Navy and Army.⁴⁹ Journalist Louis Sebold knew that federal efforts to control opinions had been "actuated by arbitrary considerations of a military character."⁵⁰ Creel believed that because the word "censorship" offended Americans, "it should be avoided." He also wrote, "The suppressive features of [our] work must be so overlaid by the publicity policy that they will go unregarded and unresented [E]very energy [must be] exerted to arouse ardor and enthusiasm."⁵¹ These words and subsequent actions reveal a deliberate attempt to manage channels of information to the American people and, by extension, a deliberate policy of perception management. Claiming to act in the nation's best interests, federal officials justified their PM strategy as an educational and informational campaign

⁴⁹ Memorandum by George Creel in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:40-41; Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 7.

⁵⁰ Sebold to Woodrow Wilson, July 3, 1917 in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 43: 95-96. Robert Herrick also captured this sentiment brilliantly in an opinion piece in *Dial*, February 14, 1918: "The most lamentable immediate effect of War upon human psychology is the tendency to cover up, conceal, distort the truth, for one or another of innumerable specious reasons. To the stupidity of military censorship . . . we add the misguided zeal of propagandists and self-appointed guardians of national morale, who serve out the Truth to the public in homeopathic doses, tardily, and agreeably disguised."

⁵¹ Memorandum by George Creel in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:39. Some people such as William Chenery and Donald Wilhelm came to Creel's defense. Chenery, Creel's friend and longtime colleague, remarked that no one "believed more sincerely in the necessity of an uncensored press to a free self-governing people than [him]." The *Independent's* Donald Wilhelm called Creel "Our Uncensorious Censor" and affirmed "[he] is an educator, this censor." Donald Wilhelm went through great pains in this article/interview to evidence of Creel's historic devotion to publicity, the point simply to whitewash current efforts to squash dissent in the nation's newspapers during the war. William Chenery, *So It Seemed* (New York: Harcourt, Bruce, and Company, 1952), 118, and *Independent*, January 5, 1918.

designed to enlighten the public, the same approach adopted by senior corporate leaders as they initiated unprecedentedly large marketing and advertising campaigns in the 1920s.

Realizing the instrumentality of the media to an effective PM campaign, Wilson and Creel hoped that the press would "realize the obligations of patriotism" through "voluntary censorship." In May 1917, Creel informed representatives of the press that it was "within [the CPI's] province to protect the people" and that, benevolently, it would not place "a drastic censorship on internal affairs."⁵² At a press banquet in New York the next month, Creel advocated "local boards of control" to monitor "self-censorship" and "to unite the newspapers of each community for the purpose of easy and responsible contact with the government." He concluded: "Group action is necessary to defending censorship."⁵³ According to Creel's definition, a "free press" now meant collective enforcement of censorship. (Creel later remarked that he had opposed a "formal law" to establish censorship, but he had contributed to a climate in which each newspaper, acting as "its own censor," feared the cost of overstepping the bounds of "patriotism and common sense.")⁵⁴ Based on building consensus, Wilsonian democracy was replacing the deliberative, adversarial dynamics that were theoretically inherent in the United States' socio-political system.

Governmental and corporate leaders believed that they were acting in the American public's best interest, and that exercising control or significant influence over instruments of free expression mattered little if it was done to protect the ideals of democracy or the free market.

⁵² Committee on Public Information's Preliminary Statement to the Press, read to members of the press on May 23, 1917, and printed in the *New York Times*, May 28, 1917; Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42: 306-308, 311.

⁵³ *New York Times*, June 29, 1917.

⁵⁴ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 18.

Accordingly, President Wilson had no legal or moral conflict backing Creel in his appeals to the press to support the government's PM campaign. He told Congressman Edwin Webb, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, that he needed to control information "for the protection of the nation." Although most newspapers would "observe a patriotic reticence about everything whose publication could be of injury, [in] every country there are persons in a position to do mischief in this field who can not be relied upon and whose interests and desires will lead to actions on their part highly dangerous to the nation in the midst of war."⁵⁵ Wilson wrote Frank Irving Cobb, editor of *New York World*, "there are some papers and some news agencies which we simply cannot trust and I felt it absolutely essential for the safety of the country that I should have some power in the premises." Wilson believed that some members of the press wanted to "[take] advantage of the situation and are doing the most dangerous and hurtful things," the suppression of which required more stringent executive measures. Realizing that his perception management strategy might be construed as despotic, Wilson hoped that "powers of this sort [would] be granted" by Congress.⁵⁶

Claiming to act in defense of democracy, Congress passed the Espionage Act (June 1917), the Trading with the Enemy Act (October 1917), and the Sedition Act (May 1918). These acts empowered bureaucrats within the executive branch to exercise highly subjective judgment when controlling the flow of information to the American people. The Trading with the Enemy Act required all foreign-language publications to provide the Post Office with translations of articles pertaining to the U.S. government or its prosecution of the war, and the Sedition Act set

⁵⁵ Wilson to Edwin Webb, May 22, 1917, <http://ww12.dataformat.com/tmp/4dxqqr4.1u3.html> (accessed June 3, 2009).

⁵⁶ Wilson to Frank Irving Cobb, May 23, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42: 376-377; Wilson to Louis Wiley, July 23, 1917, in *ibid.*

forth punishments for disloyalty, treason, or willfully impeding military operations. The Espionage Act declared that any publisher or journalist who "[interfered] with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or [promoted] the success of its enemies" would be punished with a \$10,000 fine, 20 years of imprisonment, or both. In addition, that publication "shall not be conveyed in the mails or delivered from any post office or by any letter carrier."⁵⁷ Secretary of State Robert Lansing had earlier proposed "that a plan of censorship of postal correspondence should be formulated at the earliest moment [in] the first instance by the Post Office Department which is familiar with our postal laws and regulations," and later with cooperation with the Departments of State and Justice.⁵⁸ Lansing's position on postal censorship echoed that of the War Department, as well as the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission.⁵⁹ Creel also favored censorship of the mail to ensure "that all criticism will be ended."⁶⁰ Empowered by congressional legislation, the executive branch's perception management campaign was a deliberate strategy to set the bounds for loyal "American" behavior, to isolate and choke the "foes of democracy," and to protect the viability of political institutions.

Between 1917 and 1929, most senior governmental officials and corporate executives viewed leftist political ideologies as un-American and often used PM to counter the perceived

⁵⁷ *New York Times*, June 15, 1917; Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, 13, 218-221.

⁵⁸ Lansing to Woodrow Wilson, April 30, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42: 163.

⁵⁹ *Minutes of the Council of National Defense and Advisory Commission of the Council of National Defense*.

⁶⁰ Creel to Woodrow Wilson, August 24, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 44: 49.

threat of such ideologies. During WWI, the U.S. Post Office and the Department of Justice cooperated with one another to prevent the flow of "disloyal" publications to the public while also inspiring them to seek out disloyalty and sedition to prove their patriotism. Postmaster General Albert Bursleson and his subordinates refused to deliver threatening publications. Historian Wilfrid Broderick argues, "A large portion of civilian postal censorship occurred in direct proportion to a rising fear of 'Bolshevism,'" foreigners, pacifists, and radicals.⁶¹ By July 1917, the Post Office had already refused to deliver leftist publications like the *Masses*, *International Socialist Review*, and *American Socialist*. The Department of Justice made short work of socialist sympathizers like Victor Berger, Eugene Debs, Max Eastman, and John Reed.⁶² The Postmaster General and the Justice Department kept watchful eyes on domestic publications printed in German and other languages. According to David Kennedy, publishers of newspapers printed in foreign languages, "conscious of their vulnerability," usually cooperated with censors' demands in order to "protect them[selves] from charges of disloyalty."⁶³ Censorship and blacklisting were methods of perception management used to affect the actions of publishers throughout the U.S. and to control the information to which Americans had access. In order to influence publishers' operations after the war, corporate executives relied on fiscal incentive rather than the congressionally sanctioned coercion which typified the state's efforts during World War I.

⁶¹ Wilfrid Broderick, "Postal Censorship," in Theo Van Dam, ed., *The Postal History of the AEF, 1917-1919* (State College: American Philatelic Society, 1980), 113.

⁶² Of Victor Berger, a founding member of the Socialist Party of America, Wilson once wrote that he had a "revolutionary temper" and "he is not to be trusted as in any sense a friend of the Government." Wilson to William Kent, July 17, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 43: 193; Shaffer. *America in the Great War*, 15-30.

⁶³ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 25-26.

Fearing ideologies that might undermine the nation's military and political objectives, the state closely scrutinized and, when it thought it necessary, penalized German publicists. One such case involved George Sylvester Viereck, a German-American poet and writer. Postal authorities and the Justice Department kept his publication, *Viereck's*, under close surveillance. Viereck reminded his detractors that he supported Wilson and the war effort, which kept them at a distance until February 1918 when he reprinted a fictional dialogue from *Metropolitan* that portrayed President Wilson "as a hypocrite for denying self-determination for American colonies and certain Latin American states." Before the Post Office denied him the mails, Viereck withdrew the issue from circulation and continued to voice his pro-Americanism.⁶⁴ After the war, Viereck wrote notoriously of his love for Germany, of his mourning Germany's lost cause in the Great War, and of hateful yet successful Allied propaganda. He later wrote in high praise of Hitler and the National Socialists, appearing in retrospect to have justified the government's suspicions during World War I. German-Americans were thus taken to represent a potentially subversive internal enemy, and the state effectively portrayed them as such.

Wilson and his subordinates believed that regulating the content and flow of information to the American people was necessary to the survival of the nation's political and economic systems, the same position held by national marketing and advertising firms acting on behalf of corporate interests later in the 1920s. Postmaster Burleson, for example, argued that he had been "fair and impartial" and that "no bureaucratic discretion has been exercised [in censoring certain

⁶⁴ Niel Johnson, *George Sylvester Viereck: German-American Propagandist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972), 63; *Viereck's*, February 27, 1918; *New York Times*, March 12, 1918; Viereck, *Spreading Germs of Hate*, 167.

materials]," but that he would not deliver any publication "containing or advocating or urging treason, insurrection to forcible resistance to any law of the United States."⁶⁵

Publishers, commentators, and even some politicians argued that federal leaders' efforts to control opinions and behavior were unconstitutional and anti-democratic. Max Eastman of the *Masses* wondered, "Is it not of the utmost importance in a democracy that the opposition to the government have a free voice?"⁶⁶ Progressives Lillian Wald, Herbert Croly, Jane Addams, Amos Pinchot, and Paul Kellogg worried that the government might "sacrifice certain safeguards fundamental to the life of her democracy." Collectively, they wrote that "the truth should not be withheld or concealed from the American people whose interests after all are the most vital consideration."⁶⁷ Walter Lippmann argued against the "brutally unreasonable" actions of the Post Office, and warned Colonel House that many liberals stood ready to politically oppose the President.⁶⁸ Herbert Croly of the *New Republic* similarly warned the President.⁶⁹ Allen Ricker of *Pearson's Magazine* regretted that the Post Office "has about blasted the last atom of patriotism out of us."⁷⁰

Echoing the concerns of those individuals, Upton Sinclair, muckraking author of *The Jungle* (1906), argued that "suppression convinces nobody" and that the readers of the *Masses*,

⁶⁵ Burluson to Woodrow Wilson, July 16, 1917 and October 16, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 43:187-188 and 44:389-390, respectively.

⁶⁶ Eastman to Woodrow Wilson in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 43:165.

⁶⁷ Wald et. al. to Woodrow Wilson, April 16, 1917, in *ibid.*, 42:118-119.

⁶⁸ Lippmann to Edward House, October 17, 1917, in *ibid.*, 44:393-394.

⁶⁹ Croly to Woodrow Wilson, October 19, 1917, in *ibid.*, 44:408-410.

⁷⁰ Ricker to Woodrow Wilson, August 9, 1917, in *ibid.*, 43:413.

the *American Socialist*, and the *Call* "have not been converted by the Postmaster General."⁷¹

Political activist and commentator John Spargo maintained that the Post Office was "entirely out of touch," and that censorship only incensed those pockets of ideological resistance.⁷²

Progressive Amos Pinchot intervened on behalf of his friends Max Eastman, Arthur Young, and John Reed of the *Masses* who had been charged with violating the Espionage Act. "Rather than compromise with their consciences and sell out the cause of democracy in which they have fought so loyally," Pinchot wrote, "it seems the more incredible that the government of the United States has taken this mistaken stand."⁷³ The People's Council of America also wished "to register its strongest protest against the assaults on a free press that have been committed by officials of the Post Office Department in defiant violation of the principles on which our republic was founded."⁷⁴ Many individuals and publications had paid the price for not supporting the government's perception management campaign, even though millions of Americans had acted according to its intent.

Many people correctly argued that the government was consciously and deliberately trying to influence Americans' behavior, actions, and opinions by controlling the information to

⁷¹ Sinclair to Woodrow Wilson, October 22, 1917, in *ibid.*, 44:470-472.

⁷² Spargo to Woodrow Wilson, November 1, 1917, in *ibid.*, 44:491-492.

⁷³ Pinchot to Woodrow Wilson, May 24, 1918, in *ibid.*, 48:146-147; the previous summer Wilson had already informed Pinchot that while he might review the case of the *Masses*, he would not rush to judgment or make any public condemnation of the Postmaster General's actions, July 13, 1917, in *ibid.*, 43:164; Pinchot had detested Burleson since at least the previous July when he argued that not only did the Postmaster General not "see the injustice of the course the Department was following in regard to these newspapers, but that he seemed to look at the problem with a degree of aloof externalism," in *ibid.*, 43:276-278.

⁷⁴ W.I. Irvine and Paul Hanna of the Philadelphia branch of the People's Council of America to Woodrow Wilson, August 4, 1917, in *ibid.*, 43:383.

which the public had access. In addition, others believed that governmental PM outlined the practice of criticizing federal leaders as un-American, thus stressing conformity and consensus over freedoms of speech and the press. Newspaper editor Arthur Brisbane argued that freedom of the press protected the public's right "to know what is happening, what public servants are doing, what editors and others think on public questions." Brisbane believed that the American people were entitled to diverse opinions, to include their right to criticize public officials. President Wilson assured Brisbane, "I can imagine no greater disservice to the country than to establish a system of censorship that would deny to the people of a free republic like our own their indisputable right to criticize their own public officials."⁷⁵ But Joseph Patrick Tumulty, Wilson's private secretary, admitted that the government contrived its perception management campaign to shield itself from public scrutiny.⁷⁶ Newspapers nationwide closed ranks against government-driven PM because it reeked of political opportunism. The *Los Angeles Times* pointed out the hypocrisy: "There is grave danger . . . that the Administration is establishing a Caesarism, a Kaiserism, at home in the very era in which it is seeking to dispossess a Caesarism abroad."⁷⁷ At its annual meeting, the American Newspaper Publishers Convention voted

⁷⁵ Wilson to Arthur Brisbane, April 25, 1917, in *ibid.*, 42: 129. Many individuals leveled attacks against the administration, charging it with using censorship for purely political purposes. Upon learning that a foreign edition of his periodical, *Outlook*, had been denied the mails by the Post Office because of an allegedly revealing editorial, Lawrence Fisher wrote the president, "If the editorial reveals any military secrets to our enemies we cheerfully accept the ban which has been laid upon us, for we wish to aid in every possible way in the winning of the war by a decisive victory. If the prohibition of censorship is merely based upon the criticism of Government officials, it seems to us both unjust and un-American, for we cannot rid ourselves of the conviction that constructive criticism is one of the means of winning the war." Abbott to Woodrow Wilson, September 12, 1918, in *ibid.*, 51:15-16.

⁷⁶ Brisbane to Woodrow Wilson, April 20, 1917 and Tumulty to Woodrow Wilson, April 20, 1917, in *ibid.*, 42:106-108.

⁷⁷ Cited in the *New York Times*, April 22, 1917.

unanimously against any legislation that established or protected censorship out of fear that the government sought to control sources that provided information to the American people.⁷⁸

Wilson even had some opponents within the legislature, such as Edwin Webb and Hiram Johnson. Congressman Webb proposed eliminating the censorship provisions outlined in the early versions of the Espionage Bill.⁷⁹ Webb's objections were milder than those of Senator Hiram Johnson, who blasted censorship as "more drastic, more vicious, more worthy of condemnation" than anything seen thus far.⁸⁰ Although many Americans dutifully contributed to the war effort, the aforementioned individuals and some others feared that federal PM had grave implications for the future of the republic. Likewise, while millions of people dove into postwar consumer culture, some contemporary observers raised similar concerns about the detrimental impact of corporate perception management on Americans' freedom of economic choice in the 1920s.

Occasionally branded as opponents of the American way, some journalists, socialists, and immigrants criticized Wilson's PM strategy throughout the war. Max Eastman, editor of *Masses*, asked the president "whether it is with your authority that an appointee of yours [Burlison] endeavors to destroy the life of one of the three growing Socialist magazines in the country, as a war measure in a war for democracy."⁸¹ Attorney General Thomas Watt Gregory, originally a supporter of the Espionage Bill and Burlison, questioned the legality of running a publishing

⁷⁸ *New York Times*, April 26, 1917.

⁷⁹ In fact, several influential House members had aligned against the censorship section of the Espionage Bill. For an overview of the congressional dispute on the matter, see *New York Times*, May 4, 1917.

⁸⁰ *New York Times*, May 26, 1917.

⁸¹ Eastman to Woodrow Wilson, September 8, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 44:171-172.

enterprise into the ground through censorship.⁸² David Lawrence, one of Wilson's staffers, believed that the press would never buy into a deliberate federal usurpation of power, namely control over sources of information throughout the nation. Lawrence urged Wilson to convene with members of the press members under a flag of truce. If he did that, "instead of an irritated press, ready to pounce on every slight thing and hammer men who are trying only to do their best with a machinery and a people unused to war, we will have a press that will be charitable in its criticisms and will inspire the people with a confidence in their government."⁸³ Many publishers, regardless of political orientation, would not acquiesce to a deliberate federal effort to control sources of information. Ironically, many publishers also resented the manipulative character of corporate PM after the war even while using the proceeds to expand their own enterprises.

Inspired by the supposedly democratic principles for which the U.S. was now fighting, many women, African Americans, progressives, and others saw an opportunity to advocate for their domestic agenda. According to historian Warren Susman, an "ever-growing number of Americans came to believe in a series of changes in the structure of their world," and the idealism of the war as explained in the government's PM campaigns offered them hope and prospects for the future.⁸⁴ In 1917 and 1918, many social advocacy groups (including pacifists, civil rights organizations, and suffragists) seized upon Wilson's democratic language, often quoting it word for word. The federal government responded by blacklisting, prosecuting, censoring, or otherwise punishing some of these groups for their protests. With additional

⁸² Gregory to Woodrow Wilson, May 14, 1918, in *ibid.*, 48:12-14.

⁸³ Lawrence to Woodrow Wilson, May 24, 1917, in *ibid.*, 42: 386-387.

⁸⁴ Susman, *Culture as History*, 106.

support from private and voluntary organizations, the state used PM to paint those groups as treasonous, un-American, or even anarchical. Historian Sarah Igo argues that during the world war proclamations "about `Americans' could not be made without suppressing the voices and experiences of some."⁸⁵ Federal perception management followed Susman's dictum that "before an ideology can be fully stated, another one must be attacked and, if possible, destroyed."⁸⁶

The domestic environment in the U.S. during WWI was not hospitable for voicing opposing viewpoints or advocating for alternate ideologies. An article in *Current Opinion* in June 1918, "Open Forums Stimulate and Strengthen Morale and Patriotism," argued against federal attempts to control Americans' speech and behavior. It protested the state's attempts to manufacture consensus with perception management: "No self-respecting audience wants to be regarded as a group of fledglings. The modern American audience demands consideration." The open forum "achieves the highest result in strengthening morale because it provides an intelligent basis for enthusiasm." Most importantly the "democracy of the Forum idea arouses a quickening interest upon the part of both audience and speaker . . . [and] if the American public wants to know facts and desires to direct its activities from the basis of intelligence rather than emotion, the sound pedagogic principle of the Open Forum is indispensable."⁸⁷ This article also argued that no one authority should dictate the terms of democracy, and that the American people, through free and open expression, would exhibit more patriotism and higher morale. It maintained that perception management was illegal, immoral, and unconstitutional, and ran

⁸⁵ Sarah Igo, *The Averaged American: Surveys, Citizens, and the Making of a Mass Public* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 18.

⁸⁶ Susman, *Culture as History*, xxii.

⁸⁷ "Open Forums Stimulate and Strengthen Morale and Patriotism," *Current Opinion* 64 (June, 1918).

counter to the supposed democratic ideals of American entry into the war. Millions of Americans complied with the government's directives as articulated in its PM campaigns. However, while many people tried using the open forum for democratic expression, most of them failed to convince federal authorities that their appeals were not treasonous or unpatriotic.

The democratic principles justifying continued American involvement in the world war provided additional impetus to the women's suffrage movement. Wilson withheld his support for women's enfranchisement for as long as possible but, after begrudgingly acceding to their right to vote, he later used their cause as proof of America's noble crusade for democracy. Many women involved in this movement had exposed the "credibility gap" between Wilson's democratic crusade and actual circumstances. After April 1917, they turned Wilson's idealistic rhetoric on its head. The Woman's Party, for one, seized upon the perceived hypocrisy. The Party picketed outside of the White House. One of its banners read: "We shall fight for the things we have always held nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments." In June, the Party embarrassed the Wilson administration (then hosting a delegation from the new Russian government) with signs reading, "America Is Not a Democracy. Twenty Million Women Are Denied the Right to Vote. President Wilson Is the Chief Opponent of Their National Enfranchisement." Belinda Stillion Southard argues that the Woman's Party met "institutions set in opposition to social change" with "militant" rhetoric.⁸⁸ Over the next year, the government clashed with "obnoxious" Woman's Party suffragettes. Wilson had already displayed reticence about suffrage, especially given the more immediate demands of total war. By 1918, however, the political current was against him and Wilson begrudgingly favored a constitutional amendment for women to vote.

⁸⁸ Brenda Stillion Southard, "Militancy, Power, and Identity: The Silent Sentinels as Woman Fighting for Political Voice," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (Fall, 2007): 399-417.

Wilson pronounced: "We have made partners of women in this war. Shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?"⁸⁹

In 1918, Wilson agreed to women's suffrage primarily because most organizations wisely chose not to criticize the president, the government, or the American war effort while pursuing their political ambitions. The National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) and the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage openly offered their support to the government. For example, the NAWSA protested for women's suffrage, but it also helped set up field hospitals in France. The NAWSA opposed the Woman's Peace Party of America and others which, in their pursuit of the vote, criticized the government and American militarism. In August 1917, Grace Parker, Commandant of the National League for Woman's Service, assailed the Woman's Peace Party for its pacifism. Parker blasted, "Is this a deliberate plan on the part of women calling themselves Americans to assist the Germans in placing the entire world under a system of Prussian military control? Is this pacifism—or is it treason?" She then jabbed, "It certainly is a disgrace to American womanhood."⁹⁰ Parker argued against an open, peacefully adversarial form of democracy in favor of one which stressed obedience to a standard of loyal behavior as determined by the state. With the majority of suffragettes supporting his objectives, Wilson in turn cited women's new right to vote (which he had managed to stave off until late in his second term) as proof of the purity of America's virtues, hence using it as part of his PM campaign. (After the war, corporate leaders cited women's participation in consumer culture as proof of a truly free market and evidence of the success of their own PM campaigns). Even

⁸⁹ Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, 93-94; Thomas Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 128.

⁹⁰ *New York Times*, August 14, 1917.

though they may have embraced Wilson's international ideals, groups such as the Woman's Peace Party of America that labored for both women's rights *and* pacifism were called unpatriotic or treasonous.⁹¹

African-American groups also noted the hollowness of the ideals as espoused in the government's perception management campaign. In 1917 and 1918, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Equal Rights League (NERL), and other African-American groups used Wilsonian rhetoric and echoed the war's supposed liberal principles to advance the cause of improving social conditions for blacks.⁹² They faced a choice of whether to support the government and the war effort while working toward their political aims, or whether to stand against the government which dictated that protest and efforts to

⁹¹ Historian Susan Zeiger argues that women "were told over and over that even the mildest antiwar protest opened the door to German treachery. The notion that [women] pacifists were the 'dupes' of the militaristic axis powers was a standard claim of the prewar preparedness movement" and one supported "by the mainstream media after April 1917." Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy to be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscription, and the Culture of the First World War," *Feminist Studies* 22 (Spring 1996): 19. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 30; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 30; *Independent*, February 19, 1917, March 2, 1918; *New York Times*, January 3, 1918, February 26, 1917; *Chicago Tribune*, January 31, 1918; *Herald of Gospel Liberty*, January 23, 1917; Linda Schott, "The Woman's Peace Party and the Moral Basis for Women's Pacifism," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 8 (1985): 18-24; Wendy Sharer, "The Persuasive Work of Organizational Names: The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Struggle for Collective Identification," *Rhetoric Review* 20 (August, 2001): 234-250; Erika Kuhlman, "'Women's Ways in War': The Feminist Pacifism of the New York City's Woman's Peace Party," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 18 (1997): 80-100; Brenda Stillion Southard, "Militancy, Power, and Identity: The Silent Sentinels as Woman Fighting for Political Voice," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (Fall, 2007): 399-417; for an explanation of the women's suffrage movement as the manifestation of radical gendered egalitarianism, see Christine Lunardini, *From Equal Suffrage to Equal Rights: Alice Paul and the National Woman's Party, 1910-1928* (New York: New York University Press, 1986).

⁹² U.S. Census Bureau, "Color or Race, Nativity, and Parentage," Thirteenth Census of the United States, <http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/36894832v1.zip> (accessed September 6, 2011): 126-246.

improve social conditions were illegal and disloyal.⁹³ Despite its democratic rhetoric used to justify the nation's entry into the war, the state effectively portrayed dissent as un-American, which presented a dilemma for African Americans laboring for better social conditions.

Realizing the delicacy of contemporary race relations, Secretary of War Newton Baker appointed African American Emmett Scott, a man committed to Wilson's version of loyal behavior during wartime, as his Special Assistant for Negro Affairs. Scott urged fellow blacks to put off their quest for social and political equality until the war for democracy was won. "This is not the time to discuss race problems," Scott said. "Our first duty is to fight . . . Then we can

⁹³ Many African-Americans believed that military service provided a pathway for social advancement, only to find pervasive racism throughout the armed forces. As Lynn Dumenil notes, blacks were "frustrated not only by the segregation of black troops but the lack of African American officers and by the military's unwillingness to use blacks in combat." Segregated units ruled the day, and blacks decried the government's conspicuously preferential treatment towards white service members. Although all males could be drafted for military service, only whites could become commissioned officers. Prominent African-Americans like Robert Moton and Joel Elias Spingarn publicly denounced this discrepancy. Because of protests from African-Americans, in 1917 the War Department began training and commissioned some six-hundred African-American officers at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. This seemed promising, but deeper inquiry revealed problems with sanitation, living conditions, and treatment of blacks at the camps. In addition, since blacks' service in combat had historically helped their status after the conflict, the government simply prevented many blacks from serving in combat units or black combat units from deploying to forward areas. For example, the administration refused to send the most seasoned black units, the 9th and 10th Cavalry Regiments and the 24th and 25th Infantry Regiments, to Europe. Instead it dispersed the 9th Cavalry and 25th Infantry Regiments throughout the Pacific, and assigned the 10th Cavalry and 24th Infantry to duty on the Mexican border. Most African-Americans who deployed to Europe were activated National Guard troops and conscripts, and of these most served in combat support or logistical roles. Military historian Krewasky Salter attributes this to the fallout from *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) which legitimized segregation. See John Piper, *The American Churches in World War I* (Ohio University Press, 1985), 164-165; Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 284; Hal Chase, "Struggle for Equality: Fort Des Moines Training Camp for Colored Officers, 1917," *Phylon* 39 (1978): 297-310; Krewasky Salter, *Combat Multipliers: African-American Soldiers in Four Wars* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2003), 51-78.

adjust the problems that remain in the life of the colored man."⁹⁴ Some members of the NAACP, while publicly supportive of the war effort, decried Scott's passive approach to racial injustice and the hypocrisy of the government's wartime perception management campaign. At a convention in Washington, D.C. in May 1917, W.E.B. DuBois said, "The real cause of this World War is the despising of the darker races by the dominant groups of men."⁹⁵ The NAACP pronounced that "absolute loyalty in arms and civil duties need not for a moment lead us to abate our just complaints and just demands."⁹⁶ In July 1917, the NAACP marched in New York City to protest the recent race riot in East St. Louis, Illinois, and racial vigilantism generally. One of its banners read, "Mr. President, Why Not Make America Safe for Democracy?" President Wilson dispatched the U.S. Justice Department to investigate the NAACP's loyalty because of its "subversive" language. The Justice Department planted blacks to spy at the NAACP's meetings, and the U.S. Post Office monitored its newsletters' content.⁹⁷ By calling the president on his own language, the NAACP had apparently stepped out of the bounds of "loyal" behavior.

⁹⁴ Scott's quotation originally found in Jane Lang Scheiber and Harry Scheiber, "The Wilson Administration and the Wartime Mobilization of Black Americans, 1917-1918," *Labor History* 10 (1969): 433-458, cited in Kennedy, *Over Here*, 279-280.

⁹⁵ DuBois' quotation in Fleming, *Illusion of Victory*, 108.

⁹⁶ Mark Ellis, "W.E.B. DuBois and the Formation of Black Opinion in World War I: A Commentary on 'The Damnable Dilemma,'" *The Journal of American History* 81 (March, 1995): 1587.

⁹⁷ In *Crisis*, DuBois used more tempered language: "Let us not hesitate. Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own fellow white citizens and allied nations that are fighting for democracy." Discussions of DuBois and *Crisis* in Lerone Bennett, *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1968), 293, and Kenneth Clark, "Morale of the Negro on the Home Front: World Wars I and II," *Journal of Negro Education* 12 (Summer, 1943): 423, both cited in Piper, *American Churches in World War I*, 165-166. See also Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, 79-80, and *New York Times*, July 23, 1917. (Incidentally, DuBois had sought a commission with the Military Intelligence Branch in order to lead by example, prove his loyalty, and effect change from the inside).

During the war, Wilson's brand of democracy was based on Americans adopting an established set of patriotic values and not questioning the state's methods or motives.

Most African Americans either actively supported or did nothing to impede the war effort. Regardless of their stance toward the war, some national black associations continued to pursue their domestic objectives for reform and, occasionally, openly criticized the Wilson's administration's lackadaisical approach toward improving conditions for blacks. One such group was the National Independent Political League, later called the National Equal Rights League (NERL). Under the inspiring leadership of William Trotter, NERL vocally opposed racial "accommodation." In November 1914, long before the U.S. joined the war, Trotter and others from the NERL had met with President Wilson. Trotter boldly told Wilson that "segregation is not due to any friction between the races, but is due to race prejudice on the part of the official who puts it into operation." Wilson recoiled at Trotter's audacity and replied, "If [your] organization wishes to approach me again, it must choose another spokesman Your tone, sir, offends me."⁹⁸ The National Equal Rights League continued its antagonism toward the Wilson administration during 1917 and 1918. It provided legal counsel to Uzziah Miner, a young Howard University graduate who had allegedly violated the Espionage Act in a letter to the *Richmond Planet*. Miner had written, "I fail to see how I can conscientiously volunteer to fight for a 'World Democracy' while I am denied the fruits and blessings of a Democracy at home." Miner and the NERL called the government's PM campaign nothing other than state-sponsored hypocrisy. Hay Thornton, the postmaster in Richmond, believed that Miner's letter emboldened "slackers," and so he denied delivery of the *Planet*. The NERL and the *Planet's*

⁹⁸ Exchange between Trotter and Wilson in William Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 11.

editor, John Mitchell, petitioned the White House, which in turn ordered it to be delivered.

Mitchell wrote in the next issue that "colored folks are loyal to the national government and will not do anything to embarrass it in its efforts to win a war," but he also sought redress for racial injustice. Mitchell likely feared for his publication and person, both under close scrutiny by the Justice Department for the fiasco over Miner's letter and his working relationship with the NERL.⁹⁹ As evidenced by the NERL, African-American organizations that noted the hypocrisy of the federal government's PM strategy were branded as disloyal or seditious.

The Liberty League of Negro Americans also argued against a definition of freedom and liberty that outlawed free speech and loyal opposition, thus running headstrong into the notion of consensus-based democracy as indicated by the state's perception management campaign.

Marcus Garvey, a racial separatist, was among the League's earliest members. Hubert Harrison, a socialist and the League's first President, had established the organization in June 1917 "to take steps to uproot the two evils of lynching and disfranchisement and to petition the government for a redress of grievances." In early July 1917, after the racial riots in East St. Louis, Harrison called on blacks, particularly southern blacks, to obtain rifles and weapons and prepare for an imminent race war. As did the NAACP and the NERL, the League turned Wilsonian rhetoric on its head. In front of a crowd of one thousand furious blacks, Harrison charged, "They are saying a great deal about democracy in Washington now, but while they are talking about fighting for freedom and the 'Stars and Stripes,' here at home the whites apply the torch to the black men's

⁹⁹ *Richmond Planet*, August 4, 1917 and August 11, 1917. See also W.E.B. DuBois, "My Impressions of Woodrow Wilson," *The Journal of Negro History* 58 (October 1973): 456-457; Hay Thornton to Solicitor, U.S. Post Office, August 3, 1917, and John Mitchell to Albert Burleson, August 6, 1917, in Theodore Kornweibel, ed., *Federal Surveillance of Afro-Americans, 1917-1925: The First World War, the Red Scare, and the Garvey Movement* (Frederick: University Publications of America, 1986), cited in Jordan, *Black Newspapers*, 107-109, 197.

homes, and bullets, clubs, and stones to their bodies. . . . We must demand justice," Harrison said, "and we must make our voices heard."¹⁰⁰ The NAACP, Liberty League of Negro Americans, and NERL represented a new trend whereby, as Lynn Dumenil suggests, blacks challenged the status quo by "demanding a pluralistic vision of American identity that would accord them both cultural influence and political power."¹⁰¹ However, most elected and appointed federal officials concerned with winning the war viewed those African-American associations' advocacy of a racially progressive society as unpatriotic or disruptive to the war effort.

While most Americans rooted for their nation's victory in the war, many publishers, progressives, socialists, suffragists, and African-American associations suffered as a result of governmental perception management. Roger Baldwin, a member of the American Union Against Militarism, conscientious objector, and director of the National Civil Liberties Bureau (later the American Civil Liberties Union), warned Colonel Edward House that radicals who might have been willing to "back the President's war aims" would not because "the policy of suppression of the radical press and the general terrorization of public opinion by over-zealous officials makes it exceedingly difficult for these forces to speak." He argued that the President and his subordinates had artificially constructed "acceptable" behavior and opinion.¹⁰² The

¹⁰⁰ Harrison's quotation in *New York Times*, July 5, 1917. See also Ernest Allen, "The New Negro: Explorations in Identity and Social Consciousness, 1910-1922," in Adele Heller and Lois Rudnick, eds., *1915: The Cultural Moment* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 48-68; Wilfred Samuels, "Hubert H. Harrison and 'The New Negro Manhood Movement,'" *Afro-Americans in New York Life and History* 5 (1981): 29-41.

¹⁰¹ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 11.

¹⁰² Baldwin to Edward House, January 24, 1918, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 46:383-383.

federal government ensured that constitutional arguments such as those were never loud enough to threaten its own perception management strategy.

This chapter has shown that during World War I the federal government, specifically the executive branch under President Wilson, identified what it thought to be (and set out to limit the influence of) disloyal, treasonous enemies within the United States. It directly and indirectly controlled media of communication, restricted the circulation of publications from reaching a wider audience, and publicly attacked those people and groups whose vision of democracy did not equal unquestioning support for the war effort. In anticipation of how marketers and advertisers would define typical American behavior in the postwar decade, the state deliberately used PM to convince people to accept its notions of loyal, patriotic behavior within the U.S. during WWI. Receiving support from volunteer and non-governmental organizations, the Committee on Public Information was the state's premier agency for publicity. It took the lead in conducting PM in order to reinforce "American" behavior and foster a collective sense of obligation to the nation.

CHAPTER 2 - Direct Action and Patriotic Citizenship in World War I

In 1917 and 1918 the state, primarily the Committee on Public Information (CPI), used perception management to promote President Wilson's version of loyal American behavior. It expressly related Americans' ideal actions and behaviors to a model of participatory, patriotic citizenship, just as the private sector later tied consumption with typical American behavior in the 1920s. It went beyond urging people to merely "support" the cause; it tied patriotism and love of country to specific choices and courses of action. Policymakers used PM to instill within Americans the idea that loyalty to the nation and its institutions exceeded feelings and emotions; it required them to take (or not take) certain actions and behaviors. Moreover, while the CPI and others directed *individuals* to take certain actions, ultimately they sought to instill a collective sense of purpose and commitment among all Americans. By relaying emotionally charged messages to the American public, using all available media, employing new technologies, and hiring scholars, artists, advertisers, and other professionals for PM, the state demonstrated to the private sector how effective similar national campaigns might be in a peacetime setting.

Within a week of the U.S. declaration of war, President Wilson established the Committee on Public Information on April 13, 1917, to conduct perception management. It filtered information about the war while spearheading the federal effort to control Americans' behavior, attitudes, and opinions.¹⁰³ The CPI, under the directorship of George Creel, did not release information for the purpose of public education, consumption, or discourse. Wilson established it and Creel organized it to shape Americans' behavior during wartime. The main

¹⁰³ Lansing, Baker, and Daniels to Woodrow Wilson, April 13, 1917, in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:55; *Outlook*, April 25, 1917.

challenge for Wilson, Creel and others handling perception management during and after WWI was, as James Winans, author of *Public Speaking* (1917), said of any such endeavor, "[making] others feel, [making] them care about the causes [they present] and desire the end [they seek]."¹⁰⁴ Planners and executors of PM during the war wanted to present the cause as one which impacted the freedom and liberties of all Americans. The expanded role of the federal government in Americans' lives during the war, supported by its assertive perception management strategy, reinforced what Lynn Dumenil calls "the shift from localism to a more national orientation" in the United States.¹⁰⁵ Leaders used perception management in attempts to unify Americans by nationalism in World War I and by consumerism in the 1920s.

Creel used Wilson's ideological worldview as the CPI's mission statement. Charles Roetter, a writer and broadcaster who participated in military psychological warfare during WWII, argues that Creel pledged to use the CPI to "[get] across the great universal humanitarian ideas of a Wilsonian peace, to make the world safe for democracy."¹⁰⁶ Historian George Bruntz notes that the CPI, like Wilson himself, espoused the abstract principles of liberty, freedom,

¹⁰⁴ James Winans, *Public Speaking* (Ithaca: Sewell Publishing, 1915), 99. Michael Schudson argues, "Some elements in culture are more likely to influence action than others because they are better situated at a point of action or because they are by nature directives for action." The government's PM campaign was, in large part, a cultural initiative as well as a political and military initiative, as it used American history, values, and ideals to influence Americans' behavior. Michael Schudson, "How Culture Works: Perspectives from Media Studies on the Efficacy of Symbols," *Theory and Society* 18 (March 1989): 160-171.

¹⁰⁵ Lynn Dumenil explains that the increase of lobbyists in this period indicated the attempt to harness similar or identical popular interests into solid political blocs, obviously with varying degrees of success. See *Modern Temper*, 54.

¹⁰⁶ Roetter, *The Art of Psychological Warfare, 1914-1945* (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), 42, 72. For more on the internationalist outlook of the American perception management effort, see Gregg Wolper, "The Origins of Public Diplomacy: Woodrow Wilson, George Creel, and the Origins of Public Diplomacy" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1991).

peace, justice, and democracy.¹⁰⁷ These are gentler ways of saying that the CPI was the federal government's institutional proponent used to impress a worldview upon—in order to manage the behavior of—its constituency.

Figure 2.1 George Creel



As the chief executor of the government's perception management campaign, Creel wrote that a democracy's will to win the war "depends upon the degree to which each one of *all* the people of that democracy can concentrate and consecrate body and soul and spirit in the supreme effort of service and sacrifice."¹⁰⁸ He knew that he needed the press' support to reach "*all* the people of that democracy." In late May 1917, the CPI released its preliminary statement to the press. Anticipating a similar argument used by corporate leaders after WWI, Creel argued that the "best defense is an enlightened and loyal citizenship." He stressed the supposed parity of

¹⁰⁷ George Bruntz, *Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of the German Empire in 1918* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1938), 39-40, 59-76.

¹⁰⁸ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 5.

interests between the government and the press: "The representatives of [the press are] at one with the Committee in regarding [their] great responsibilities in creating loyalty through enlightenment as being only heightened by existing conditions . . . and the creation and stimulation of a healthy, ardent national citizenship is the kind of fight that the press alone can do."¹⁰⁹ Creel appreciated the difficulty of conducting a credible, centrally directed PM campaign without support from the press. Many publishers and journalists obliged; many did not and, as seen above, some faced censure and censorship levied out by the federal government.

In addition to support from the press, conducting a nationwide perception management campaign required a sound organizational structure. Creel modeled the CPI loosely on the structure of a military general staff. He established divisions, each under a director and most with a senior staff, which allowed him to maintain centralized control over the content and downward flow of information while granting each a level of operational autonomy. Each division concentrated on a specific function such as public speaking, advertising, posters, motion pictures, and others. According to Dwight Dumond, "Every conceivable channel for the dissemination of propaganda in the country was utilized from motion pictures to stereopticon slides." Dumond argues that the CPI's use of numerous formats was "little short of sensational."¹¹⁰ Providing to postwar corporate leaders an example of how to conduct a massive national PM campaign, the CPI used all media in an attempt to make the nation's cause relevant to Americans everywhere and, hopefully, to create a collective sense of commitment to the success of that cause.

¹⁰⁹ Committee on Public Information's Preliminary Statement to the Press, read to members of the press on May 23, 1917, and printed in the *New York Times*, May 28, 1917; Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:305.

¹¹⁰ Dumond, *Roosevelt to Roosevelt*, 223.

One of the common features of perception management between 1917 and 1929 was the deliberate use of tactics which appealed to people's emotions rather than their sense of logic. While this approach did not originate during World War I—advertisers had been appealing to people's feelings for years—it was taken to new heights in 1917 and 1918 and mastered by corporate leaders in the 1920s. The numerous divisions within the CPI reflected the bureau's multi-pronged approach toward getting Americans to act in ways favorable to its objectives. Perhaps the most recognized of the CPI's divisions was the Four-Minutemen. This division, consisting of 75,000 volunteer speakers, was the voice of the federal government throughout the U.S. Shortly after the United States declared war in April 1917, Donald Ryerson, a businessman from Chicago, approached Creel about establishing a public speaking bureau within the CPI.¹¹¹ He proposed that that bureau dispatch thousands of volunteers into clubs, movie houses, and other venues to provide information about the war, to address urgent issues, and to urge Americans to take immediate, specific actions. Creel quickly assented and named Ryerson director of the new bureau, the Four-Minutemen. Ryerson soon left the directorship to serve in the Navy, and William McCormick Blair, another prominent Chicagoan, took over.¹¹² As national director, Blair appointed and provided guidance to state chairmen. For example, when the Treasury Department urged Blair to use the Four-Minutemen for the Third Liberty Loan

¹¹¹ Donald Ryerson was heavily involved in the social and cultural life of Chicago. For one, he first established a Four-Minuteman prototype in Chicago for use in assorted entertainment centers. Later he, along with his successor as Four-Minuteman director, William McCormick Blair, was a governing member of the Art Institute of Chicago. See Art Institute of Chicago, "Back Matter," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 22 (April 1928): 60.

¹¹² Blair, a "scion of one of the well-to-do McCormick clans of Chicago" had, like Ryerson, been heavily involved in the social, economic, and cultural life of Chicago. Blair eventually became president of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1935 he formed a securities firm called William Blair & Company and became highly successful entrepreneur. See Harlan Byrne, "Soldiering On," *Barron's* 83 (April 2003): 26.

campaign, he telegraphed "our various chairmen," who in turn directed some 35,000 speakers in their charge to promote it.¹¹³ State chairmen appointed local chairmen who had been nominated by their communities. Local chairmen appointed the actual speakers who were mostly middle-class professionals and respected members of their communities. Collectively, the speakers worked as a voice of for the federal government to the American people. Aside from getting audiences to take specific actions to support the war effort, one of the Four-Minutemen's main objectives was to create a common national experience for all Americans, a continuous theme of perception management from 1917 to 1929.

Creel named the division after the Minute Men of the Revolution, hoping that Americans would relate their nation's role in the Great War as the latest struggle between freedom and tyranny. Aside from the historical connotation, the Four-Minutemen's name described the length of their speeches. Four minutes fitted movie intermissions nicely. Also, speakers assumed that audience's attention span seldom exceeded four minutes. (A German source remarked that four minutes sufficed given America's negligible contribution to the war thus far). James Kirkpatrick, an English professor at Northwestern University, believed that limiting speeches to four minutes helped messengers "avoid stringy or carelessly prepared talks."¹¹⁴ Donald Ryerson insisted that their speeches "must last no longer than four minutes, which means there is no time for a single [wasted] word."¹¹⁵ The short duration of their speeches required emotionally

¹¹³ Hearings on the Sundry Civil Bill, Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, 65th Congress, 2nd session, June 1918, 62, cited in Elmer Cornwell, "Wilson, Creel, and the Presidency," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 23 (September 1959): 195-196.

¹¹⁴ James Kirkpatrick, "Methods for the Unified-Studies Course," *The English Journal* 27 (December 1938): 821.

¹¹⁵ Alfred Cornebise, *War as Advertised: The Four Minutemen and America's Crusade, 1917-1918* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1984), 1-2; Carol Oukrop, "The

forceful delivery, a tactic which, according to psychologists Elliot Aronson and Anthony Pratkanis, minimizes contemplative thought on the part of audiences.¹¹⁶ Like marketers and advertisers employing emotionally based tactics to ensure that Americans all consumed the same goods, Creel wanted audiences nationwide to take impulsive actions, not to think or deliberate. The Four-Minutemen implored listeners to support Liberty Loan drives, the Red Cross, and donation drives for deployed soldiers. The bureau even received requests from NGOs to support a myriad of non-official initiatives that were consistent with the federal PM plan. In September 1918, for example, a writer from *McClure's* asked the Four-Minutemen to promote the "Our Boys in France Tobacco Fund" in which Americans might send a "Trench Buddy" a "Smoke Cheer."¹¹⁷

Speaking in their own hometowns, the Four-Minutemen knew the "self-identity" and "distinctive social character" of their respective communities which, according to geographer David Cole, is a crucial to validation in the eyes of audiences. Theoretically, speakers' identification with their own communities added an air of local familiarity and intimacy, but

Four Minute Men Become National Network During World War I," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (Winter 1975): 633; James Mock and Cedric Larson, "The Four Minute Men," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 25 (February 1939): 99; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 115; *New York Times*, November 25, 1917.

¹¹⁶ Elliot Aronson and Anthony Pratkanis, *Age of Propaganda: The Everyday Use and Abuse of Persuasion* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001), 158-165.

¹¹⁷ *McClure's* 50 (September 1918): 52. See also Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 84-86; George Creel, "Public Opinion in War Time," *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science* 78 (July 1918): 185; Cornebise, *War as Advertised*, 1-3; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 114-115; James Mock and Cedric Larson, "The Lost Files of the Creel Committee," 14-15; Cornwell, "Wilson, Creel, and the Presidency, 1917-1919," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 3 (January 1939): 192; *Outlook*, October 24, 1917.

their mission was to advance the federal government's PM campaign.¹¹⁸ The Four-Minutemen's venues, usually movie houses, provided close-knit environments and were purposely chosen for a perceived homogenizing effect. The Four-Minutemen contributed to what cultural historian Stanley Aronowitz describes as the "synchronization of the senses" inherent in the movie-going process.¹¹⁹ In Los Angeles County alone, more than two hundred Four-Minutemen spoke in some seventy movie houses.¹²⁰ Occasionally the Four-Minutemen encountered difficulties. For example, Richard Melzer argues that some 250 Four-Minutemen covering New Mexico experienced problems due to the dispersed population and the large non-English speaking

¹¹⁸ David Cole, "Gentrification, Social Character, and Personal Identity," *Geographical Review* 75 (April 1975): 153. See also Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 89-90; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 117; Robert Wells, "Mobilizing Public Support for War: An Analysis of American Propaganda During World War I," <http://www.isanet.org/noarchive/robertwells.html> (accessed February 6, 2007); Oukrop, "The Four Minute Men," 633; Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratic Transitions, Institutional Strength, and War," *Institutional Organization* 56 (Spring 2002): 303. This article summarized power relationships in a democracy during wartime and transition. Describing the dynamic between leaders and their communities, Mansfield and Snyder argue that "[to] survive in an era of democratization, [leaders'] interests must attract a degree of popular support, often through the use of nationalist rhetoric." In the case of WWI, the government determined the attitudes and behaviors that people were supposed to support.

¹¹⁹ Stanley Aronowitz described the inherently anti-individualist nature of motion pictures. Filmmakers "involve the spectator in the process of creating the film The filmmaker makes the viewer experience the emergence and assemblage of the image." Historically, filmmakers "strove to achieve a 'synchronization of the senses' through the film such that all the elements of perception are woven into whole cloth." In this sense, film fosters collectivism rather than individualism. See Aronowitz, "Film—The Art Form of Late Capitalism," 110-129. Contrasting views stress the participatory aspects of leisure, lending credence to the more democratic aspect of film-going. For more on this view, see John Robinson, "'Massification' and the Democratization of the Leisure Class," *Annals of the American Academy* 435 (January, 1978): 206-225, and Claude Fischer, "Changes in Leisure Activities, 1890-1940," *Journal of Social History* 27 (Spring, 1994): 453-475.

¹²⁰ For more, see Guy Bishop, "'Strong Voices and 100 Per Cent Patriotism': The Four Minutemen of Los Angeles County," *Southern California Quarterly* 77 (1995): 199-214.

contingents throughout the state.¹²¹ Yet for the division's occasional practical issues, Americans from coast to coast heard the same messages at essentially the same time from their locally appointed Four-Minutemen. Perception management during and after the war required such a blanket strategy so that Americans would hopefully feel and act similarly.¹²²

For the sake of credibility, Ryerson, Blair, and the state chairman programmed some amateurism into the way Four-Minutemen addressed the American people.¹²³ Speakers were to possess satisfactory oratory skills without being "local spellbinders."¹²⁴ Random audits by local chairmen ensured that speakers kept to four minutes. Those who exceeded their allotment of time became sources "great embarrassment" for local chairmen, who in turn removed them from the roster of the Four-Minutemen.¹²⁵ Many contemporaries, especially scholars in the field of public speaking, decried the forceful, unconventional practices of the Four-Minutemen.

¹²¹ Richard Melzer, "Stage Soldiers of the Southwest: New Mexico's Four-Minutemen of World War I," *Military History of the West* 37 (2007): 71-91.

¹²² Eva Rosenfeld, "Social Stratification in a 'Classless' Society," *American Sociological Review* 16 (December 1951): 772. For more on the Four-Minutemen, see Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 113-114, Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, 6, 12, Kennedy, *Over Here*, 61, George Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront: American Propagandists for the Great War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 57-58, and Cornwell, "Wilson, Creel, and the Presidency," 192; *Independent*, January 5, 1918, 21. In July 1918 (Vol.50), *McClure's* stated, "If You Are a Man . . . See that the Four Minute Men are speaking regularly in your nearest motion picture theater."

¹²³ In the 1929 Macon Fry argued that amateur speakers developed "craft slang" over the previous decade, which had a profound influence on the way in which messages were delivered via radio broadcasting. Fry noted, "Parts of speech have been dropped wholesale, grammar has been simplified, and spelling phoneticized and abbreviated beyond all recognition." Interestingly, Fry believed that "craft slang is speaking in code." See Macon Fry, "Ham Lingo," *American Speech* 5 (October 1929): 45.

¹²⁴ Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 117; Oukrop, "The Four Minute Men," 633.

¹²⁵ Earl Pardoe, "The President's Letter," *Western Speech* 6 (May 1942): 17.

Professor B.C. Van Wye believed that the Four-Minutemen "were comparatively ineffective for lack of speech training."¹²⁶ Bertram Nelson, professor of public speaking at the University of Chicago, cringed at the speakers' amateurism and offered to train them.¹²⁷ Van Wye and Nelson may have been justified in their criticisms but, the government having sold billions in war loans courtesy of the Four-Minutemen, they could not argue with results. By providing a local, personal touch, the Four-Minutemen proved indispensable to the government's national perception management campaign. While perception management was aimed at the entire American public from 1917 to 1929, it generally carried a more personal, emotional, and (somehow) individualistic tone than ever before.

Although millions of Americans willingly contributed to the war effort, some people rightly identified the Four-Minutemen as pawns in Wilson's and Creel's perception management campaign. Creel continually fought charges that Four-Minutemen advanced a partisan agenda. Creel had in fact supported the Democrat Party—he earned his chairmanship largely for campaigning for the Wilson ticket in 1916—but he refused to concede that the Four-Minutemen lifted up the party.¹²⁸ He promised to eliminate any Four-Minuteman who injected partisanship.¹²⁹ Some observers agreed with Creel and praised the Four-Minutemen's non-partisan approach to addressing the American people. For example, historian Guy Bishop points

¹²⁶ B.C. Van Wye, "Speech Training for Patriotic Service," *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education* 4 (January-October 1918): 368-369.

¹²⁷ Cornwell, "Wilson, Creel, and the Presidency," 193-196; Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 88-89.

¹²⁸ Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 17.

¹²⁹ George Creel, "Propaganda and Morale," *The American Journal of Sociology* 47 (February 1941): 348; Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 89-90; Mock and Larson, "The Four-Minutemen," 102.

to the majority Republican demographics comprising the Four-Minutemen in Los Angeles as evidence of the bureau's bi-partisanship.¹³⁰ Yet despite Creel's assurances that the organization was not a vehicle for partisanship, Senator Lawrence Sherman (R-Ill.) called it politically slanted and, in his opinion, useless.¹³¹ Elmer Cornwell, a political scientist at Brown University, argues that a minimum of 46 percent of adults aged twenty-one and over heard at least one Four-Minuteman speech commending President Wilson and his handling of the war. Cornwell believes that the speakers engaged in "'selling' the President himself."¹³²

The Four-Minutemen linked Wilson with the war "to make the world safe for democracy" and the Democratic Party with patriotism. In addition, historian David Kennedy notes that by mid-1918 the speakers' messages focused less on American righteousness and values and more on demonizing the enemy with atrocity stories.¹³³ British nobleman Arthur Ponsonby later indicted American propagandists for their sensational atrocity stories, of which the "Belgian baby without hands was a special favourite." Ponsonby further maintained that the CPI flooded the country with extravagant stories describing "the iniquities of the Hun."¹³⁴ Some

¹³⁰ Bishop, "'Strong Voices and 100 Per Cent Patriotism,'" 199-214.

¹³¹ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 85; Mock and Larson, "The Four-Minutemen," 103-104; for more on the partisan attacks on Creel and the CPI generally, see Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, 38-39, 194.

¹³² Cornwell, "Wilson, Creel, and the Presidency," 194.

¹³³ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 62; see also James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), an older but useful study on the relative effectiveness of Allied and American propaganda, specifically the use of atrocity stories centering on the German invasion of Belgium.

¹³⁴ Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-time, Containing an Assortment of Lies Circulated Throughout the Nations in the Great War* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1928), 180-185.

contemporaries astutely recognized that the Four-Minutemen advanced a centrally derived agenda and that they used emotion-based tactics to achieve the aims of the state. Indeed, governmental and corporate perception management appealed more to people's emotions than their sense of logic, supposedly a sounder way of insuring that people would behave in certain ways.

Claiming to educate and inform the American public while actively trying to sway its opinions and behavior, the CPI released pre-screened, pre-approved messages through the Division of News. The division, essentially a department of publicity, served as the outlet of information and news about the war. According to Creel, during its tenure the Division of News released over 6,000 pieces of news that had been screened by the War Department. It mailed copies of *War News Digest* to some 12,000 "country editors," many of whom it claimed had requested news about the war and had argued that national publications unfairly received advanced access to government releases. In May 1917, the CPI acquired the talents of Edward Sudler Rochester and John Neel, both editors at the *Washington Post*. They created the *Official Bulletin*, the "authoritative medium for publication of government news."¹³⁵ The *Bulletin* provided favorable news and information about the war to the press and, by extension, the American people. As part of its comprehensive strategy, the CPI distributed the *Bulletin* to every military camp and post office.

Despite Creel's public assurances that the CPI would provide good *and* bad news (with emphasis on educating the American people, a defining feature of PM), some people argued that

¹³⁵ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 70-75.

the *Bulletin*'s supposed bias proved the existence of an orchestrated PM strategy.¹³⁶ For example, the *New York Times* accused the CPI of an "unwarranted usurpation of power" because it had insisted that the War Department censor all messages from abroad before the Division of News released them.¹³⁷ On May 24, 1917, an editorial in the *Washington Herald* accused the CPI of misinforming readers about the enemy's munitions and coercing its editorial staff not to question official news releases.¹³⁸ Creel replied, "The *Washington Herald*'s charge that I have attempted to control its opinion is without base in truth From the outset the policy of this committee has been one of cooperation, not supervision. I have assumed the patriotism of the press and its eagerness for truth and service, and my one effort has been to open up the business of government to public inspection."¹³⁹ Creel later stated that the *Bulletin*, having been labeled "dull" and a "useless expense" by Congress and other critics, suffered for providing the press with supposedly neutral, objective information.¹⁴⁰ From its inception, controversy surrounded the CPI as many self-proclaimed defenders of free speech attacked it for concealing an agenda under bias-free pretexts.

Evidencing the perceived need to employ all media for PM, the CPI's Film Division capitalized upon the novelty of motion pictures. The Film Division stamped its name on bundles

¹³⁶ *Ibid*; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 77-92. Creel thought of the division as "a government news bureau, not a press agency." Rochester set the cost of annual subscriptions at five dollars so as not to "interfere with the legitimate functions of the press in any manner."

¹³⁷ *New York Times*, May 19, 1918.

¹³⁸ *Washington Herald*, May 24, 1917.

¹³⁹ Creel's response to the *Washington Herald* reprinted in the *New York Times*, May 25, 1917.

¹⁴⁰ Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 92-94.

of U.S. Army Signal Corps footage to create "short subject films." The division expanded its enterprise in early 1918 to include feature-length, multi-reeled films including *Pershing's Crusaders*, *America's Answer*, *Under Four Flags*, *Our Colored Fighters*, and the *U.S.A. Series*. Heavily reliant upon theaters' cooperation and patronage, the Division of Films spent nearly \$1.1 million producing and distributing its films, but consequent sales of war bonds earned the government over \$850,000. To Creel, those returns proved that "propaganda pictures had never been properly made, and that if skill and care were employed in the preparation of the scenarios the resultant pictures could secure a place in regular motion-picture programs." Creel thought that film was "the easiest way of presenting propaganda in the form of entertainment and one of the important items in a broad program of civilian morale."¹⁴¹ In addition, the Division of Films cooperated with the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (a partnership called the War Cooperating Committee) to raise money for Liberty Loans and other initiatives. The Film Division promoted its motion pictures with colorful posters, providing enough flare to whet the appetites of movie-going audiences.¹⁴² The Film Division's movies reinforced certain patriotic themes and, just as importantly, the division's work evidenced recognition of the need to utilize all media to conduct an effective perception management campaign.

The state's employment and consulting of commercial marketers and advertisers demonstrated how superficial the line was between governmental and corporate PM. Historian

¹⁴¹ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 117-132.

¹⁴² See, e.g., Louis Fancher, "U.S. Official War Pictures" (1917); H. Devitt Welsh, "Official United States War Films" (ca. 1918); Martiny "Under Four Flags" (ca. 1918); and Elbert Jackson, "If Your Soldier's Hit" (ca. 1918), in George Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters: Creation of an American Icon," *Quarterly Journal of the Poster Society* (Winter 1985-1986); Stoner, "Official United States War Films" (ca. 1918) in Walton Rawls, *Wake Up, America! World War I and the American Poster* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1988), 132, 139, 142-143.

Steven Vaughn describes how, in the early stage of mobilization, members of the American Association of National Advertisers (ANA), the Agricultural Publishers Association, and the Six Point League (an organization of advertisers devoted to "the betterment of newspaper advertising")¹⁴³ offered to advise the government on advertising. They believed that they could provide the CPI with clues about how to psychologically manipulate the American people. John Sullivan, secretary-treasurer of the ANA, invited Creel and Carl Byoir, the associate chairman of the CPI, to the organization's upcoming annual dinner to facilitate "inspirational mobilization of the forces of advertising for practical co-operation with the government." Byoir went to New York, met with the ANA's advisory committee, and soon after named a board of directors (which included Herbert Houston, O.C. Harn, William D'Arcy, and Lewis B. Jones [president of the ANA]) for the Division of Advertising, which Wilson established by executive order on January 20, 1918. Headed by William Johns, president of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Division of Advertising represented Wilson's desire to capitalize upon "the generous offer of advertising forces of the nation" in order to "inform public opinion properly and adequately." The notion of informing public opinion was a dead giveaway for a deliberate policy of PM between 1917 and 1929. The CPI's Division of Advertising served as the institutional point of contact for many advertising organizations including the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, the ANA, the 4 A's, the National Advertising Advisory Board, the Agricultural Publishers Association, the Bureau of Advertising of the American Newspaper Publishers Association, and others, to advise and support state-sponsored perception management. Vaughn argues that advertisers during the war possessed "little awareness of the complexities confronting democratic society," and were simply "worried about results, about

¹⁴³ *Advertising & Selling*, February 14, 1920.

what result would increase public support."¹⁴⁴ Whether they were not aware of or did not care about the complexities confronting democratic society, advertisers conducting governmental and corporate PM between 1917 and 1929 were entirely result-oriented, using psychological means to influence Americans' behavior during wartime and peacetime.

Artists from the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity promoted the government's objectives with visual printed media. Charles Dana Gibson, an artistic contributor to *Life* and leader of a committee of patriotic artists called the Vigilantes, had convinced Creel that "the poster must play a great part in the fight for public opinion."¹⁴⁵ In a candid sentiment that underlay both governmental and corporate PM between 1917 and 1929, Gibson said, "One cannot create enthusiasm for war on the basis of practical appeal. The spirit that will lead a man to put away the things of his accustomed life and go forth to all the hardships of war is not kindled by showing him the facts."¹⁴⁶ Creel chose Gibson to head the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity, established on April 22, 1917. The Division of Pictorial Publicity included portrait artists, illustrators, cartoonists, architects, and others. Gibson wanted his division's art to "represent ideas, not words." Producing some "700 poster designs, 122 car-cards, 310 advertising illustrations, and 287 cartoons," the Division directed Americans to support Liberty Loan drives, the Salvation Army's War Work Committee, the American Red Cross, the U.S. Food Administration, and War Savings Stamps.¹⁴⁷ It cooperated closely with the Division of

¹⁴⁴ Sullivan to Creel, November 22, 1917, Sullivan to Carl Byers [*sic*], November 28, 1917, and Wilson's quotation cited in Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 144-149.

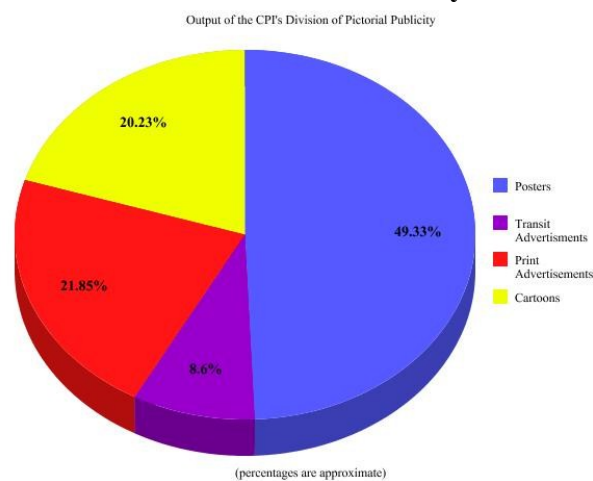
¹⁴⁵ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 133; Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 149.

¹⁴⁶ *Record*, January 27, 1918; Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 150.

¹⁴⁷ Philip Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art as a Medium of Communication During World War I* (master's thesis, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth,

Advertising, the Bureau of Cartoons, and the Division of Syndicate Features.¹⁴⁸ The Division of Pictorial Publicity's posters used a number of emotion-laden themes to inspire Americans to take specific actions. Stephen Vaughn argues that "the work of the CPI's artists and advertisers seems even more clearly aimed at manipulating opinion. The work of these two divisions [Advertising and Pictorial Publicity] anticipated more sinister uses of propaganda in the postwar years."¹⁴⁹

Figure 2.2 Output of the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity



Almost all posters drawn up by, for, or in support of the CPI contained some simple, clear directive, much like those postwar advertisements that used visually stimulating, emotional appeals to get Americans to buy a specific product. In *An Analysis of American Poster Art as a*

1977), 39, 41; Maurice Rickards, *Posters of the First World War* (New York: Walker and Company, 1968), 8-9; Bevis Hillier, *Posters* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), 237.

¹⁴⁸ Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 101-106; Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 20-31. In 1918, William Johns served as President of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, as well as Chairman of the Division of Advertising, U.S. Committee on Public Information. See Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, October 8, 1918, Folder "Minutes (1921-1924)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

¹⁴⁹ Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 150.

Medium of Communication During World War I, U.S. Army Major Philip Hickok argues that the government's posters appealed to audiences' "emotional energies."¹⁵⁰ Joseph Pennell, creator of the popular Liberty Loan poster "That Liberty Shall Not Perish" once wrote, "When the United States wished to make public its wants, whether of men or money, it found that art—as the European countries had found—was the best medium." He continued that "by the poster the governments of the world have appealed to the people, who need not know how to read in order to understand, if the design is effective and explanatory."¹⁵¹ Many people, not just artists, believed that posters were an effective way to explain an idea and call Americans into action, one of the ideas which also underlay corporate PM in the 1920s.

Figure 2.3 "That Liberty Shall not Perish" by Joseph Pennell.



Wartime posters, like commercial advertisements, appealed to people's fears and anxieties in order to get viewers to react a certain way and take a specific action, such as joining the armed forces. Getting sufficient manpower in the military during wartime always concerned

¹⁵⁰ Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 2-8, 10-19.

¹⁵¹ Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 12, 14.

leaders, but in 1917, Wilson had to work against his own three year policy of neutrality to which he had wanted Americans to adhere. Moreover, the president appreciated Americans' aversion to having their soldiers fight under the French flag, and he believed that a high number of voluntary enlistments would lessen the sting of conscription under the Selective Service Act of 1917. Three main factors—the military's drastic shortage of manpower, politicians' desire to populate the armed forces with more volunteers than conscripts, and the repugnance of the idea of Americans serving under foreign flags—influenced the government's decision to make recruitment a major goal of its PM campaign. Artists both on and off the government's pay roll used a variety of psychological approaches to inspire men to enlist.¹⁵² So while recruitment, as a general theme, was one born out of near necessity, the government forwarded the notion that men could offer no greater service or display of patriotism than volunteering to take up arms in the nation's defense.

In both wartime and postwar PM, artists used gender, family, and even sexual themes to inspire Americans to, for example, volunteer for the armed forces or purchase a war bond. In the process of highlighting men's duty to the nation in WWI, many posters taunted men by showing patriotic, republican women (sometimes in uniform) in order to play on their fears of being considered cowards. Howard Chandler Christy's "Gee, I Wish I Were a Man" shows a woman

¹⁵² The Allies, especially the French, pressed Wilson to send the few troops he had without delay to fight under French commanders and French flags. Historian Robert Bruce recounts how a French delegation headed by Field Marshal Joseph Joffre embarked on a public relations tour of the United States for that reason. Throughout May 1917 Joffre and other delegates received "frenzied outburst[s] of affection" throughout the Midwest and Northeast, even in Chicago which contained a large German-American population. Robert Bruce, "America Embraces France: Marshal Joseph Joffre and the French Mission to the United States, April-May 1917," *The Journal of Military History* 66 (April, 2002): 407-441. See also Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 36.

dressed in an oversized Navy uniform, looking over the horizon with a selfless desire to serve her country.¹⁵³ Another poster, "Victory Is With Us," depicts a group of Soldiers marching, led

Figure 2.4 "Gee, I Wish I Were a Man" by Howard Chandler Christy.



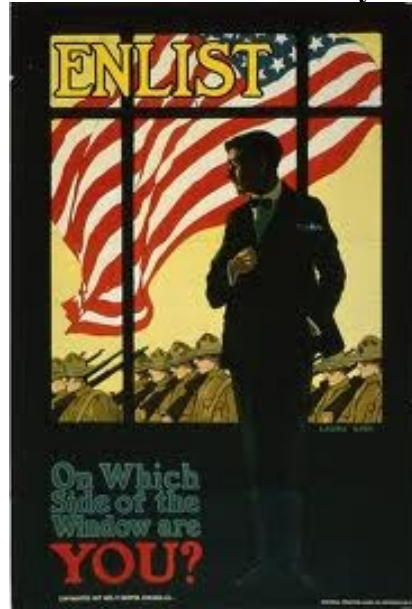
by a straight-backed rifle bearer, facing the enemy as a female guardian angel hovers above ordering "Charge!" The caption reads: "If You Are a Coward, Perish, But If You Are a Man, Fight!" In another poster two young girls are in conversation. One girl carries an American flag while wearing her father's uniform with chevrons sewn on, while the other girl sits bowlegged, looking upon her friend sullenly. The second girl laments: "I Wish My Daddy Had Been a Soldier Back in 1917." It directs the audience simply: "Enlist."¹⁵⁴ Another recruiting poster

¹⁵³ Howard Chandler Christy, "Gee, I Wish I Were a Man," in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 80. See also *New York Times*, February 25, 1918.

¹⁵⁴ "Victory is With Us" and "Enlist" in Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 37; *Chicago Tribune*, May 19, 1918.

shows a soldier marching away with his back facing the viewer. He justifies the grief he felt for leaving his family by saying "[I Am] Needed to Protect [My] Home & Country."¹⁵⁵ One poster

Figure 2.5 "On Which Side of the Window Are You?" by Laura Brey.



by Laura Brey shows a young, curious man dressed formally, standing alone in a darkened room with his back to the window. He peaks over his right shoulder to see a marvelous formation of American soldiers marching by. The caption asks, "On Which Side of the Window Are You?"¹⁵⁶ Posters such as those highlighted manhood and men's obligations to family, often featuring women to juxtapose bravery against cowardice, masculinity against femininity. The CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity and artists outside of government service produced often manipulative and taunting posters which placed the psychological burden of patriotic military service on American males. After the war, marketers and advertisers similarly increased their

¹⁵⁵ Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 34.

¹⁵⁶ Laura Brey, "On Which Side of the Window Are You?" (1917), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 82.

use of gender, family, and sexuality as themes to induce both men and women to buy specific goods.

A common feature of perception management between 1917 and 1929 was inspiring Americans to want the same things and to strive for the same goals. During the war, the CPI sought to unify Americans by implanting within them a sense of collective responsibility for the health, welfare, and morale of U.S. soldiers. Posters urged readers to donate items such as chocolate, cigarettes, and books for soldiers overseas. The Depository-Equitable Trust Company, for one, sponsored a chocolate drive for U.S. soldiers abroad.¹⁵⁷ Another initiative, the "Our Boys in France Tobacco Fund," urged citizens to "Come on with the Tobacco" in order to "Smoke the Kaiser Out." Donors could expect personalized letters back from the "Men in the Trenches" who received them. The American Library Association solicited book donations, especially fictional works, for soldiers "Over There." The poster "Hey Fellows!" pictures an excited doughboy holding books in both hands while a studious sailor sits nearby and reads contently. Another poster shows a U.S. Marine walking, smiling, and balancing books stacked higher than his head.¹⁵⁸ The Navy requested that citizens donate spare binoculars and spy-glasses to sailors. One poster depicted a blindfolded ship captain adrift in a stormy sea. He holds his arms out to help guide him for his lack of vision, while his subordinates look to him desperately for orders.¹⁵⁹ Posters and advertisements continued to advocate for material support

¹⁵⁷ Dotking, "Give to the American Chocolate Fund" (ca. 1918), in Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters" and in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 255.

¹⁵⁸ Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 39-40; John Sheridan, "Hey Fellows!" (1918) and Charles Buckles Falls, "Books Wanted for Our Men" (ca. 1918), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 158-159.

¹⁵⁹ Gordon Grant, "Will You Supply Eyes for the Navy?" (ca. 1917), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 190.

for soldiers even after 1918. Frederick Lewis Allen recounted an instance when *Life*, addressing the significant unemployment of redeployed veterans, ran a cartoon in which Uncle Sam says to a soldier, "Nothing is too good for you, my boy! What would you like?" The soldier replies, "A job."¹⁶⁰ The CPI and others reminded Americans of their moral responsibility to take care of service members at home and abroad and paired their levels of support with their patriotism.

The CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity and other agencies called women to serve in a variety of ways. Posters showed women as dirtied farmers going back to agrarian roots, roughing it for the Woman's Land Army of America, and making "Every Garden a Munitions Plant" through the National War Garden Commission. They showed women in uniforms or with flags draped over them, leading charges in the National League for Woman's Service or the Salvation Army. They presented women as angels in the American Red Cross or the Stage Women's War Relief.¹⁶¹ Women should farm, sweat in munitions factories, raise money or goods and foodstuffs to ship overseas, ration food and ensure that their children "wasted nothing," or volunteer for humanitarian missions. Governmental PM crafted the notion that women had a stake in the victory of American culture and institutions, but first they must be obedient and do it the government's way.

Governmental and corporate PM between 1917 and 1929 included an obvious economic aspect. The CPI, other federal agencies, PVOs, and NGOs encouraged Americans to purchase bonds in five Liberty Loan drives from 1917 to 1919, thus linking economic choices to

¹⁶⁰ Frederick Lewis Allen, *Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1931), 7.

¹⁶¹ Herbert Andrew Paus, "The Woman's Land Army of America" (1918); James Montgomery Flagg, "Stage Women's War Relief" and "Will You Have a Part in Victory?" (ca. 1917 and 1918, respectively), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 60-63.

patriotism. One Liberty Loan poster depicts a smooth-faced farmer facing the audience with determined eyes and a smile, reaching into the pocket of his overalls. He lacks the money for a large donation, but he offers what little he has. The poster reads "Sure! We'll Finish the Job!"¹⁶² Another poster shows an American soldier stepping over a defeated Hun, browbeating the viewer, uttering the words "Come On, Buy More Liberty Bonds!"¹⁶³ Another poster by Joseph Pennell shows a dismembered Statue of Liberty, New York City afire behind her and under aerial attack. "Buy Liberty Bonds," the poster says, "[So] That Liberty Shall Not Perish from the Earth."¹⁶⁴ Liberty Loan drives resulted in some \$21.5 billion from private bond subscriptions. The government used Liberty Loan proceeds to loan money to the Allies, "to equip and maintain the armed forces," and for shipbuilding. Phillip Hickok attributes these drives' spectacular successes to "the effectiveness of the pictorial poster in communicating [patriotic] ideals."¹⁶⁵ Using visual media with emotion-laden imagery proved to be an effective way of communicating ideals and getting Americans make certain decisions during times of both war and peace.

Using posters, the federal government told Americans what constituted acceptable levels of consumption during war; after the war, the private sector placed no such limitations on consumption as it was, naturally, the point of that sector's PM strategy. In 1917 and 1918, the

¹⁶² Gerrit Beneker, "Sure! We'll Finish the Job!" (1918), in Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 47, and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 229.

¹⁶³ Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 64.

¹⁶⁴ Joseph Pennell, "That Liberty Shall Not Perish" (1918), in Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 51, and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 227.

¹⁶⁵ Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 42-43.

Figure 2.6 "Fight or Buy Bonds" by Howard Chandler Christy.



Figure 2.7 "Beat Back the Hun" by Fred Strothman.



U.S. Food Administration, for one, urged Americans to conserve food and "waste nothing" because the government needed foodstuffs like wheat and meat at the front. One of its posters, "Food Will Win the War," depicts a group of Eastern European immigrants sailing past the

Statue of Liberty into New York. "You Came Here Seeking Freedom," the poster says. "You Must Now Help to Preserve It." The poster orders readers, "Waste Nothing."¹⁶⁶ Another poster

Figure 2.8 "Food Will Win the War" by Sidney Reisenberg.



by the Food Administration argues, "Food is Ammunition—Don't Waste It."¹⁶⁷ Yet another poster directs parents to "Eat No Wheat Cereals" and ordered kids to "Leave Nothing on Your Plate."¹⁶⁸ While many Americans made no changes to their routines, many others did conserve and ration food. In 1928, executives from the J. Walter Thompson Company recalled the

¹⁶⁶ Charles Chambers, "Food Will Win the War" (1917), in Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters" and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 113.

¹⁶⁷ John E. Sheridan, "Food is Ammunition" (ca. 1918), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 115.

¹⁶⁸ Cushman Parker, "Little Americans Do Your Bit" (1918), in Dembo, "The State of Liberty in Posters," and in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 115. Additional U.S. Food Administration posters included Howard Chandler Christy, "In Her Wheatless Kitchen" (1918), A. Hendee, "This is What God Gives Us" (ca. 1918), and by L.N. Britton, "Eat More Corn, Oats, and Rye" (ca. 1918), in Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters," and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 113-123.

effectiveness of the government's rationing campaign, citing a July 1917 advertisement called "We Are on the Job, Mr. President!" in *Ladies Home Journal* in which women boasted about conserving food "in their homes of wealth and fashion."¹⁶⁹ JWTC's executives believed that the government's campaign for rationing had inspired new level of national civic participation, one which might translate well into the realm of consumerism. Gary Cross argues that marketers and advertisers "repeatedly and dynamically reinforced democratic principles of participation and equality" in their own perception management strategies to get Americans to think of themselves first as consumers.¹⁷⁰

Perception management between 1917 and 1929 focused on promoting Americans' sense collective identity by encouraging millions of individuals to act the same way, which occasionally prompted leaders to contrast those ideas and behaviors which were supposedly American with those which were not. During the war, posters produced by the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity and other agencies juxtaposed American benevolence and selflessness with Prussian barbarism, using images which fomented fear, anger, and hatred. These posters inspired, at once, hate of Germany and Americans' pride in themselves, highlighted Germany's inhumanity and atrocities, particularly those committed during its conquest through Belgium, to foment hatred of the enemy, and displayed the German *Pickelhaube* to symbolize Germany despicability and, more generally, things un-American in spirit and values. Few other symbols inspired the same derision as the spike-topped helmet. The poster "Destroy This Mad Brute" displays a giant psychotic gorilla wearing the *Pickelhaube*, carrying a bare-breasted maiden and

¹⁶⁹ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Box 1/4, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 39; Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 9;

¹⁷⁰ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 3.

wielding a bloodied club that reads "Kultur." The poster reads, "If This War is Not Fought to a Finish in Europe, It Will Be on the Soil of the United States."¹⁷¹ Another poster by William Allen Rogers shows a fattened Kaiser crossing the Atlantic and raising a bloodied sword. Beneath the surface of the storm-ravaged waters one faintly sees his drowned victims, most of them children. The poster is blandly colored, save for the red blood on the Kaiser's sword and the red words "Only the Navy Can Stop This."¹⁷² Another poster by William Young shows in silhouette a German in *Pickelhaube* dragging a young child away as fires rage in the background. The poster commands viewers to "Remember Belgium" by supporting the Fourth Liberty Loan drive.¹⁷³ The price of inaction—i.e., for failing to "Beat Back the Hun"—was that United States would suffer the same fate as Belgium.¹⁷⁴ That brand of poster pitted German despotism against the sanctity of America's political institutions and the purity of its values and motives. But hatred of Germany was not enough; those posters ordered viewers to take some form of action to defeat the threat at hand.

Perception management commonly played off of paranoia, fear, and anxiety during and after the war. Wartime posters warned Americans of German infiltrators, told them to be wary of giving out too much information, and directed them to remain vigilant in seeking out enemy operators. One poster places the head of a handlebar-mustached German high commander on a

¹⁷¹ H.R. Hopps, "Destroy This Mad Brute" (ca. 1916), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 66. This poster is particularly curious because it was released prior to U.S. declaration of war.

¹⁷² William Allen Rogers, "Only the Navy Can Stop This" (ca. 1917), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 109, and Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 122.

¹⁷³ Ellsworth Young, "Remember Belgium" (1918), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 28-29 and Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 123.

¹⁷⁴ Fred Strothman, "Beat Back the Hun" (1918), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 194-195 and Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 123.

spider's body, perched on a web. The "Spider-Kraut" eavesdrops on a distant conversation. The poster's headline reads simply "Don't Talk."¹⁷⁵ In 1917, the American Defense Society sponsored a poster urging communities to organize local Vigilance Corps. The "constructive patriots" of the Vigilance Corps should "be organized and at work"; must "discover and report every disloyal person and action in your community"; and must "help the authorities suppress the activities of these destructive forces."¹⁷⁶ Emotion-laden posters represented a form of ideological salesmanship, and were designed to have Americans buy into the notion that their culture, values, and nation stood imperiled. Most importantly, they promoted an assertive civic activism not only to meet the demands of total war, but as a manifestation of patriotism.

Perception management from 1917 to 1929 defined what it meant to be a true American. The Committee on Public Information, supported by a number of private, volunteer, and not-for-profit NGOs, used perception management as a way to Americanize ethnic minorities. They also used loyal ethnic groups in PM ploys to demonstrate the virtuousness of Wilson's international ideals. The CPI's Division of the Foreign Born dispatched many immigrants to Americanize their respective communities in their own languages.¹⁷⁷ Carl Byoir and Edward Bernays, both pioneers in the field of corporate perception management after the war, worked in the CPI and NGOs to Americanize ethnic minorities. In June 1917, Byoir left the Hearst press to work for

¹⁷⁵ Artist unknown, "Don't Talk, Spies Are Listening" (ca. 1917). The full text of the poster read: "The Web is Spun for You with Invisible Threads. Keep Out of It. Help to Destroy It. Stop=Think. Ask Yourself if What You Were About to Say Might Help the Enemy. SPIES Are LISTENING." Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 133.

¹⁷⁶ Artist unknown, "Vigilance Corps" (ca. 1917), in Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters" and in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 135.

¹⁷⁷ Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 184-199; Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 215, 228-231; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 63-66.

the CPI. Demonstrating his ability to get things done, Byoir helped solve the CPI's pamphlet printing woes by outsourcing the operation to New York catalog printers. After resolving this dilemma, Byoir called foreigners into patriotic action on behalf of the CPI. He founded the League of Oppressed Nations, a conglomeration of Europeans advocating self-determination. Staging the event, Byoir arranged for Wilson to speak before the League at Mount Vernon on July 4, 1918, the same day Byoir arranged to have the "proclamation of [the] Czech Declaration of Independence" read at Independence Hall, Philadelphia. Byoir organized 800 "loyalty demonstrations" throughout the United States to occur simultaneously with these two events. Byoir also organized the Lithuanian National Council of the United States. (The Lithuanian National Council later hired Byoir to secure Americans' support for and recognition of Lithuania, which had gained independence on February 16, 1918. Byoir hired Edward Bernays, later considered the "Father of Public Relations," to assist him.)¹⁷⁸ Byoir's staged events involving organizations of foreigners were part of a PM scheme to shore support from immigrants for Wilson's international ideals and his notions of Americanism.

Edward Bernays also worked with foreign-born elements inside and outside of U.S. borders. Rejected for military service due to poor eyesight, Bernays joined the CPI's Foreign Press Bureau in 1918. He worked in the New York office and helped orchestrate the CPI's strategy of public diplomacy in Latin America. He also helped Carl Byoir in the campaign to have the U.S. recognize Lithuania. In an interview in 1959, Bernays said:

The work I did for the CPI, based upon my publicity experience, aroused some interest at the time. It gave me the first real understanding of the power of ideas as weapons and words as bullets. When I came back from the war, I recognized consciously what we had done to make

¹⁷⁸ Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 537-540. Formal U.S. recognition of Lithuania came in 1922.

"the world safe for democracy" in intensifying the attitude of our own people in support of our war aims and ideals, in winning over the neutrals and in deflating enemy morale.¹⁷⁹

Bernays suggested that perception management resembled a military strategy. After the war, Bernays wrote that the state's PM campaign had revealed the weak psychology of the American public, namely that people could easily be made to take impulsive actions with the proper application of emotional appeals.

In November 1918, George Creel appointed Bernays to the CPI's delegation to accompany President Wilson to Versailles. Creel instructed Bernays to do nothing to undermine or contradict the PM campaign that the CPI had carefully crafted since April 1917. Bernays infuriated Creel when, prior to the delegation's departure, he publicly announced, "The announced object of the expedition is to interpret the work of the Peace Conference by keeping up a worldwide propaganda to disseminate American accomplishments and ideals." The *New York World* ran the headline, "TO INTERPRET AMERICAN IDEALS." Creel disavowed the story, but the damage was done.¹⁸⁰ Bernays had revealed the deliberate federal strategy of perception management and threatened the proceedings at Versailles.

Because a primary goal of PM from 1917 to 1929 was reducing or eliminating the impact of efforts coming from other sources, the CPI took measures to counteract enemy propaganda aimed at the American public. Between 1914 and 1917, Germany had tried to keep the United States neutral or even to turn its favor and support away from the Allies; after 1917 it hired sympathizers to spread rumors, fuel animosity between whites and blacks, and take other measures to undermine the American war effort. At the outset, the Imperial German government

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 164-166. See also Miller, *New World Coming*, 151; Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 85.

ordered Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, its ambassador to the U.S., to sway American public opinion. Bernstorff enlisted the help of Heinrich Albert, a German official in the Interior Ministry, and Hugo Schweitzer, lead chemist in the U.S. branch of Farbenfabriken.¹⁸¹ Schweitzer delivered "anti-British broadsides to meetings at Madison Square Garden," negotiated "to buy U.S. newspapers," defended the attack on the *Lusitania*, and arranged to have a multi-volume collection of German literary works delivered to public schools throughout the United States.¹⁸² Germany's public relations campaign had failed because, after the period of neutrality, the U.S. had joined the side of the Allies. Moreover, the CPI and Justice Department later cited earlier German efforts as proof that German operators lurked everywhere, thus playing on people's fears and paranoia, a common trait of PM during WWI and afterward.

The Wilson administration claimed that German operators also were promoting racial discord and aligning themselves with extremist African American groups. Emmett Scott, Secretary of War Newton Baker's Special Assistant for Negro Affairs, thought that German operators had exposed every case of lynching against blacks. Scott argued that German operators spread rumors that Europe was free from institutional racism and that if Germany won, the rights of blacks would equal those of whites worldwide. In March 1918, an alarmed Trumbull White warned George Creel that German-born rumors had infected Harlem like

¹⁸¹ Charles Mann and Mark Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars: Money, Medicine, and 100 Years of Rampant Competition* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1991), 39. Bernstorff also had the more material goal of preventing U.S. chemical companies from supplying Germany's foes with munitions. Schweitzer led this effort. According to Charles Mann and Mark Plummer, Schweitzer and a colleague smuggled oil from the U.S. to Germany by "changing its appearance enough to fool U.S. customs into thinking it was fertilizer." Schweitzer also contracted with Thomas Edison to buy the inventor's excess phenol (amounting to three tons per day) in what later became known as "The Great Phenol Plot."

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 39-41.

viruses. Some rumors described the wretched treatment of black soldiers by white officers in the military. One fear-inspiring rumor claimed that "the Germans have vowed that they will torture all Negroes who may be captured, in order to prove that this is a white man's war and that no Africans are wanted in Europe."¹⁸³ The state claimed that German operators designed those rumors to destroy black troops' morale and subvert African-Americans' loyalty to their own nation. These perceived threats to the government's effort to build consensus could not be permitted to endure.

Emmett Scott found alleged German rumors sufficiently "annoying" that he wanted to redress them. In May 1918, acting upon Scott's recommendation, George Creel and Newton Baker helped bring to life the Committee of One Hundred, an African-American organization designed to spread the government's PM strategy. Operationally, the Committee of One Hundred was modeled on other PVOs such as the Committee on Patriotism Through Education and the National Board for Historical Service. Blacks from the Committee of One Hundred, "representing practically every organization of Negroes in the United States" and "having undisputed influence with all classes and conditions of the Negro race throughout the land," set out "to visit and evangelize" among African Americans.¹⁸⁴ They promoted Liberty Loans and draft registration drives and, while claiming to educate and inform people (a common thread in PM from 1917 to 1929), argued that Germany had forced war on the United States. The

¹⁸³ White to George Creel, March 15, 1918, reprinted in Scott, *Scott's Official History of the Negro in the World War* (New York: Arno Press, 1969), 352-353. For more on German propaganda within the United States, see Johann von Bernstorff, *My Three Years in America* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), 35-39, Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, 34-35, and Robert Wells, "Mobilizing Public Support for War."

¹⁸⁴ Scott, *The Negro in the World War*, 355-364; Emmett Scott, "The Participation of Negroes in World War I: An Introductory Statement," *The Journal of Negro Education* 12 (Summer 1943): 293-294.

Committee of One Hundred combated German propaganda by promising blacks a better future in the United States as long as they supported the government's definition of loyal behavior.

Despite its sound organizational structure, solid leadership, and capitalization on all forms of media, the CPI did not handle the sole burden of perception management. Support from local private volunteer organizations (PVOs) and NGOs greatly aided the government's PM campaign. As historian Robert Wells argues, the CPI depended heavily upon voluntary grassroots activism—the Four-Minutemen's speakers, for one, all volunteered—and support from NGOs to further its objectives.¹⁸⁵ Such NGOs whose goals directly or indirectly supported the government's PM campaign included the National League for Woman's Service (NLWS), the American Red Cross, the Committee on Patriotism Through Education, and the National Board for Historical Service. The efforts of these organizations and others complemented the government's PM strategy to promote loyal American behavior.

As previously discussed, artists had volunteered to assist the government in droves. Howard Chandler Christy and James Montgomery Flagg were among the most notable of those artists. Christy, a formally educated artist, had worked as a combat artist during the Spanish-American War, illustrating for *Harper's* and other publications. He adapted the formal style of portraits to posters, creating the illusion that real people were the subject of the posters when

¹⁸⁵ Robert Wells, "Mobilizing Public Support for War." The list of NGOs who volunteered their time and services to support the war effort is far too long to list here. Descriptions of some can be found in C.C. Certain, "Organizing for Patriotic Work in English Classes," *The English Journal* 7 (March 1918): 181; Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 91-92; Mock and Larson, "The Four-Minutemen," 102-103, 107; Edward Bernays, "The Marketing of National Policies: A Study of War Propaganda," *The Journal of Marketing* 6 (January 1942): 236-244; Mary Yost, "Training Four-Minutemen at Vassar," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 5 (May 1919): 246-253; Glenn Merry, "National Defense and Public Speaking," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 4 (January 1918): 53-60; Giles Wilkeson Gray, "Shop Talk," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* (October 1964): 9-12; *New York Times*, September 30, 1917; Anna Stevick, "The Forum," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 3 (October 1917): 362-366.

really they were generic political targets. Christy's talent and dedication later landed him a position in the CPI's Division of Pictorial Publicity.¹⁸⁶ Like Christy, James Montgomery Flagg was formally trained, having studied art in the United States and Europe.¹⁸⁷ In the earliest weeks of U.S. involvement, James Montgomery Flagg introduced his poster "Armless Columbia," an emotionally powerful scene, to convince Americans of the calamitous threat at hand and the need for them to take action for survival. Flagg was best known for his poster for recruitment, "I Want You for U.S. Army." Among the organizations of artists that supported the government was the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. It produced some 10,000 posters for the Army and National Guard by the end of June 1917. The Society of Illustrators and the Art Institute of Chicago designed and printed numerous posters calling Americans to action.¹⁸⁸ These PVOs and NGOs greatly aided the government's PM campaign.

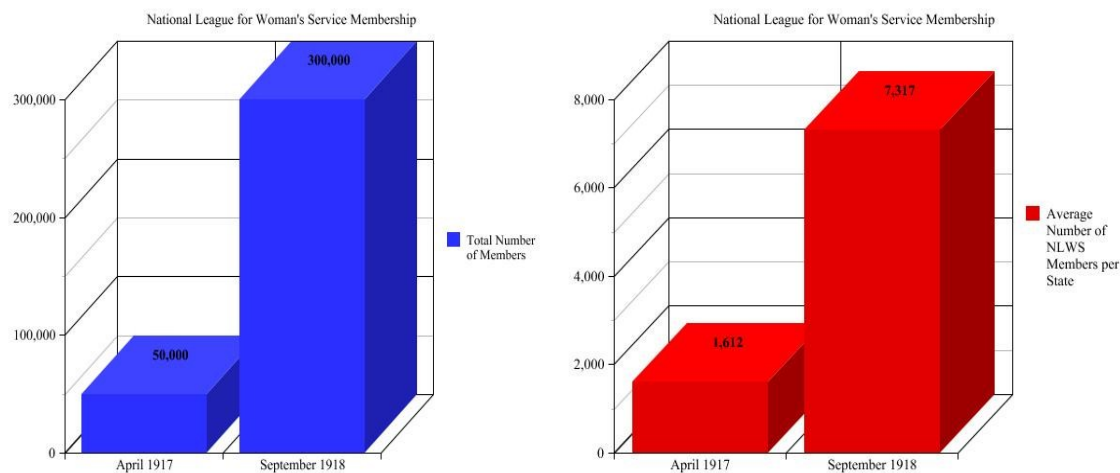
Women were not merely targets for governmental PM; in a myriad of organizations, many women actively supported it. Thousands of women served in the National League for Woman's Service to help mobilize other women in the interest of national objectives. In spring 1917, NLWS chairperson Maude Wetmore organized a conference in Washington to address the ways in which her organization might rally women on the home front. Although Wetmore had not yet drawn particulars, she expressed confidence that women could handle the nation's

¹⁸⁶ Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 20, 21, 23, 149, 153, 165.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 21, 23, 153, 165.

¹⁸⁸ "Posters to Aid National Defense," *The Poster* (May 1917), "Artists Mobilize for World War," *The Poster* (June 1917), "Where U.S. War Posters Come From," *The Poster* (September 1917), and "American War Posters Exhibited," *The Poster* (August 1917), all cited in Hickok, *An Analysis of American Poster Art*, 31-32.

Figure 2.9 National League for Woman's Service Membership



industries in the absence of men. In February 1917, the National Security League approved "the action taken by the [NLWS] for developing and co-ordinating the woman power of the United States for constructive patriotic work."¹⁸⁹ In April 1917, the National League for Woman's Service had 50,000 members in thirty-one states. By September 1918, that number nearly reached 300,000 members in forty-one states and more than 700 cities. Its "constructive patriotic work" included speaking tours. For example, in June 1917, Maude Wetmore, Grace Parker (Commandant of the NLWS), and twenty-three other women set out on a speaking tour of New York City. Squads from the NLWS directed women to work in production centers, they cooperated with local and state elected officials and with Councils of National Defense to support draft registration and voluntary enlistments, and they urged women to ration and conserve food, plant liberty gardens, seek work in all sectors, and provide no safe haven for slackers.¹⁹⁰ Like the CPI, the NLWS associated direct action with loyalty and patriotism. By

¹⁸⁹ *Outlook*, February 7, 1917.

¹⁹⁰ The acronym NLWS is used for both "National League for Woman's Service" and "National League for Women's Service" since the organization is the same. See *Outlook*, February 7, 1917; *The Independent*, February 19, 1917, and May 5, 1917; *New York Times*, April

urging women not to protest against the war or the government and to actively participate in the state's patriotic initiatives, the NLWS promoted the ideals of wartime perception management.

To demonstrate their support for the cause, women joined other groups such as the Women's War Service and the American Committee for Devastated France (ACDF). In October 1917, the Women's War Service held an enormous pro-America rally at Carnegie Hall. Frances Preston, widow of President Grover Cleveland and currently the wife of Princeton archaeology professor Thomas Preston, presided over the event. Preston argued that women had a direct, participatory role in the present conflict:

The bravest battle that was ever fought was fought by mothers of men. Today we, mothers and wives of the soldiers of Freedom, face again the old, grim fact of war; but this is a war to end war; and therefore our eyes must be dry and our hearts unswerving for sacrifice. More than that, we all must serve. Not grief but labor, not tears but steadfast purpose, are worthy of the men who bear our colors against the enemy of the war's peace. Above all we must let our soldiers know that the women of America are behind them, steadfast, resolute, and demanding the victory which along can bring disarmament, and a lasting peace.¹⁹¹

The American Committee for Devastated France (ACDF) presented a more humanitarian platform, one which reinforced the universal ideals of Woodrow Wilson. Comprised mostly of women, the ACDF derived from the American Fund for French Wounded, established in 1916. Its leader, Anne Morgan, sister of J.P. Morgan, later headed the American Friends of France, Inc. (a reincarnation of the ACDF) in World War II.¹⁹² Organizations containing exclusively or a majority of women such as the NLWS, the Women's War Service, and the ACDF supported

2, 1917 and June 4, 1917; Coffin van Rensselaer, "The National League for Woman's Service," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 79 (September 1918): 275-282.

¹⁹¹ *New York Times*, October 18, 1917. For additional coverage of the event, see also *Outlook*, October 31, 1917.

¹⁹² *Outlook*, April 24, 1918 and October 23, 1918. For Anne Morgan's explanation of the ACDF's work and challenges, see *Forum* (May 1918): 556; *American Architect*, September 11, 1918; *McClure's* 50 (October, 1918): 24; *Time*, March 11, 1940.

governmental PM because they too told women that their actions directly reflected their patriotism.

The American Red Cross, an internationally recognized humanitarian organization, also promoted patriotism. Henry Davidson, an executive of J.P. Morgan and chief of the Red Cross War Council, had recruited Ivy Lee, a corporate PM strategist, because of his role in advising John D. Rockefeller, Jr. during a well-known labor crisis in Ludlow, Colorado in April 1914. According to Scott Cutlip, on July 11, 1917, Lee accepted a full-time "appointment without salary" at the American Red Cross to handle "matters relating to publicity, publications, and the *Red Cross Magazine*." Lee soon came to handle all internal and external aspects of the Red Cross' advertising and public relations program, "present[ing] the Red Cross story through newspaper and magazine advertising, poster, and other forms of advertising that may be found possible." He believed that the Red Cross' goals were best served by an aggressive perception management strategy:

We shall give to the newspapers some kind of story practically every morning and every afternoon; that these stories will be conceived with reference to relating our story as a whole over a given period; that we shall have speakers going all over the country giving our story by word of mouth, by lantern slides and pamphlets which will be placed in the seats of the people who attend the speeches; that we shall have our story told by the motion picture house all over the country; that we shall have our story carried by preachers, labor leaders; Chautauqua speakers and others in their own particular constituencies.¹⁹³

But it was not just providing information for its sake. Lee, who had a profitable career in corporate PM ahead of him after the war, wanted Americans to understand and support the Red Cross. Because of the Red Cross' active role in supporting the U.S. military, Ivy Lee and his public relations staff equated Americans' level of support to the Red Cross to their level of patriotism.

¹⁹³ Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 65-71. See also Miller, *New World Coming*, 153.

The American Red Cross advertised heavily with posters, often depicting women in motherly roles, as angels, or as the Virgin Mary watching over the Saviors of western civilization. One poster, "The Greatest Mother in the World," shows a woman kneeling on one knee with a look of serenity. The baby she cradles is a wounded AEF soldier swaddled in Army field blankets.¹⁹⁴ Another poster shows two women clothed in pure white facing each other. One of them tends to a dying soldier and says, "If I Fail He Dies."¹⁹⁵ Posters called for tangible donations, whether financial or material in nature; for example, some urged women to sew clothing items and donate them to the Red Cross. "Knit Your Bit," one poster requests. "Our Boys Need Sox."¹⁹⁶ Using sentimental and iconic imagery loaded with emotional appeal, these posters encouraged Americans to live up to their own cultural superiority.

Leaders' public statements that they sought to educate and inform Americans characterized PM during and after WWI. Lee believed that complete transparency for the purpose of "informing" the public would inspire greater support from the American people. As Scott Cutlip recounts, in a press release on August 4, 1917 that was conceptualized—if not written—by Lee, Davidson declared, "It is the earnest desire of the Red Cross that the American

¹⁹⁴ Alonzo Foringer, "The Greatest Mother in the World" (ca. 1918), in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 124. A similar mother-of-the-world image is Albert Sterner's "We Need You," in Rickards, *Posters of the First World War*, 83.

¹⁹⁵ S.A. Iciek and A.G. McCoy, "If I Fail He Dies" (ca. 1918), in Dembo, "The Statue of Liberty in Posters" and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 125.

¹⁹⁶ "Our Boys Need Sox" (ca. 1918) in Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 129; Wladyslaw Theodore Benda, "You Can Help" (ca. 1918), in Dembo, "The State of Liberty in Posters" and Rawls, *Wake Up, America!*, 128. In September 1918, Dayton Company ran an advertisement in the *Minneapolis Journal*, "Plenty of 'Army Yarns' for Patriotic Knitters," arguing "there is great need, especially of socks, for the men in the trenches this winter." *Minneapolis Journal*, September 16, 1918, in Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 53, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

people, to whom the Red Cross belongs, should know all about its acts and its affairs . . . it is the purpose of the War Council to take the people, day by day, as fully as possible into its confidence. Information as to Red Cross matters will accordingly be made public in great detail." Assisted by chief of staff Joseph Johnson, Lee established the Publicity Department that consisted of "a headquarters group, three main bureaus, and two coordinating divisions." The Red Cross' Annual Report dated June 1918 described its Publicity Department as "the main channel of communication and understanding between those headquarters . . . and the great body of Red Cross workers and the public."¹⁹⁷ Believing that Americans looked heavily upon the reputation and credibility of sources, Lee regarded transparency as a superior form of PM. Beginning in the early 1930s, however, Americans (to include the United States Congress) began to question Lee's holistic approach to PM in light of his work for the Nazi Party.

In the name of education, scholars and academic groups volunteered to lend legitimacy to governmental perception management. In early 1918 one group of eight scholars representing Stanford University and Hobart College, among others, gave hundreds of speeches across Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Maryland, and Kentucky. According to *Outlook*, during one month members of the group gave eighty-seven speeches "covering almost every county in Indiana."¹⁹⁸ In *Historians on the Homefront* (1970), George Blakey argues that historian-

¹⁹⁷ Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 65-71. See also Miller, *New World Coming*, 153. In June 1918, Lee, suffering for his lack of income, informed Dr. Stockton Axson, Secretary of the Red Cross, that he must resign his current duties. Davidson, Lee's close friend, pleaded with him to stay the duration, and he did. Thinking that the Armistice spelled the end of the Red Cross, he left the Publicity Department in December 1918, but left a longstanding legacy of organizational transparency.

¹⁹⁸ *Outlook*, April 10, 1918.

speakers validated the claims of the Four-Minutemen's firebrands.¹⁹⁹ One of the best known of those was Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University, who later headed the Committee on Patriotism Through Education, a subdivision of the National Security League consisting of academic scholars. Hart argued that Germany had forced the United States into war against its will. He emphasized Germany's guilt for the mechanized slaughter in Europe and the United States' justification for settling it.²⁰⁰ In May 1917, the *New York Times* reported that Hart had recently presided over a convention of a "Flying Squad of Educators" who had come together to determine how best to shore public support for the war. Pomeroy Burton, a speaker and attendee at the convention, argued: "[We] have got to show the people why we are fighting, how best to fight, and the kind of enemy we are fighting. No program promulgated from Washington can be effective until the people understand these things."²⁰¹ Burton had advocated such a program since at least January 1917 when he told Great Britain's Lord Northcliffe that it was time "to tell the people of America the truth, the whole truth, about the war."²⁰² The "Flying Squad of

¹⁹⁹ Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*.

²⁰⁰ As the U.S. considered going to war, Hart reportedly said, "The United States from ocean to ocean is grieved and shocked at the prospect of war with Germany, and would have accepted any honorable settlement." An editorial in *Life*, April 12, 1917, jabbed, "How could [Hart] say so? He lives in Cambridge. All we hear from the Boston district gives the impression that at least four-fifths of the neighbors there are delighted at the prospect of war with Germany, and only grieved and shocked that we have been so long getting into it." Therefore, "We have no idea" that Hart, "the hero-sage of San Juan and Oyster Bay," is "grieved or shocked about the prospect of getting into the war."

²⁰¹ *New York Times*, May 13, 1917.

²⁰² Burton to Northcliffe, January 30, 1917, cited in J. Lee Thompson, "'To Tell the People of America the Truth': Lord Northcliffe in the USA, Unofficial British Propaganda, June-November 1917," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34 (April, 1999): 256. For a discussion on the impact of the Committee on Patriotism Through Education and the National Security League on domestic politics, see John Carver Edwards, "The Price of Political Innocence: The Role of the National Security League in the 1918 Congressional Election," *Military Affairs* 42

Educators" soon worked under the Committee on Patriotism Through Education. By resolving to educate and inform the American people, a common feature of PM between 1917 and 1929, those scholars agreed to lend credibility to government's efforts to control the opinions and behavior of the public.

In July 1917, Hart organized a Speakers Training Camp at Chautauqua, New York. He selected the city because of its reputation as "a center of genuinely patriotic education, an experiment station for new ideas, [and] a great national influence making for intelligence, religious tolerance, and democracy." Hart told attendees that Americas should know "authentic information of the situation of the world and our own position as a belligerent power." Like the CPI, the NLWS, and the Red Cross, the historian-speakers tied their efforts to tangible outcomes. They wanted Americans to realize "the absolute necessity of organizing our men, materials and government in such a way to meet the terrifically concentrated force of our great enemy, Germany."²⁰³

Stanwood Menken, President of the National Security League, said that the purpose of the camp had been "to explain to the speakers with the aid of experts not only these issues, but how modern war is fought, and also the industrial and economic forces which are its mainspring." According to Menken, the camp had provided a "fitting preliminary to the

(December, 1978): 190-196. Mark Smith described, in detail, Charles Beard's and other historians' active participation in the war effort and, in some cases, their subsequent regret for doing so. Beard believed historians' "function was to inform the public, yet they themselves had taken an active part in misinforming it." Obviously disappointed with his own role, Beard vowed "he would not be 'had' again." See Mark Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible: The American Debate Over Objectivity and Purpose, 1918-1941* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 209.

²⁰³ Hart, *Reasons for and Objects of Speakers Training Camp for Education in Patriotic Service and Conference of Organizations Engaged in Patriotic Education* (New York: published for the National Security League, 1917), 6; Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 28-30;

campaign to awaken and inform the people of the issues of the war."²⁰⁴ He announced that the camp had produced 300 able speakers and an organizational framework to carry out speaking tours around the country. Professor Hart headed the newly established Committee on Patriotism Through Education, the body which would carry out the objectives set at the Speakers Training Camp. Hart laid the groundwork needed "to bring the American people to an intelligent understanding of the real meaning of the war; to steady their minds for victory, and for a reconstruction after victory, based upon a preconcerted plan of education."²⁰⁵ Offering their reputations as intellectuals, Hart and others pledged to advance the patriotic ideals as espoused in the government's overarching PM strategy. Historian-speakers placed the war in historical context and urged Americans to take up arms and to counter the threat that Germany posed to their culture, traditions, values, and institutions.

Claiming to operate on an educational platform, Hart wanted his speakers to explain the war's causes, to blame it on Germany, and to accent Americans' cultural superiority by contrasting it with Prussian barbarism. To provide the National Security League's army of academic orators with guidelines, Hart wrote two editions of the *Handbook of the War for Public Speakers* (1917 and 1918), as well as *America at War* (1918). He also wrote "The Battle Cry of Freedom," the official publication of the Committee on Patriotism Through Education printed in the *Independent*. Hart filled the pages with anti-German anecdotes. His detractors questioned Hart's departure from the objective scholarship expected of an eminent historian, especially given his devotion to using empirical methods in the study of history. However, as he had in the

²⁰⁴ *New York Times*, July 9, 1917.

²⁰⁵ *Independent*, February 16, 1918. See also *Independent*, June 30, 1917 and July 7, 1917; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 53-54; John Edwards, "Princeton's Passionate Patriot: McElroy's Committee on Patriotism Through Education," *New Jersey History* 95 (1977): 207-226.

1898 the war against Spain, Hart believed in educating the public on matters of domestic and foreign policy. After the war, called to a Senate Sub-committee on the Judiciary hearing on wartime perception management, Hart defended his work as necessary for "protecting the United States and civilization against the Germans."²⁰⁶ Hart argued that, even though he and his speakers may have skewed history, they did it in the interest of American values, culture, and institutions, and hence that they had been justified in doing so. It was not the last time that PM would be shrouded by the words education and information.

During the war, the Committee on Patriotism Through Education swelled to over 500 speakers. Like the Four-Minutemen, scholars educated crowds at churches, schools, private and civic organizations throughout the country with the intent of stimulating patriotism. For example, historians promoted the National Security League's Loyalty Week in New York in mid-September 1917. The NSL sent nine four-scholar teams throughout the state to make historical, patriotic speeches.²⁰⁷ Encouraged by the success of Loyalty Week in New York, the NSL announced Loyalty Weeks in Massachusetts, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin the following month, and later for New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland, and Ohio. In November 1917, Robert McElroy, Hart's successor as head of the Committee on Patriotism Through Education, divided the nation into regions and dispatched an "elite corps" of historian-speakers into each one. The promotion preceding each lecture drew crowds eager to learn about the war

²⁰⁶ Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 61-62. See also Walter LaFeber, "The World and the United States," *American Historical Review* 100 (October 1995): 1017; Albert Bushnell Hart, *Handbook of the War for Public Speakers* and *America at War: A Handbook for Patriotic Speakers* (New York: published for the National Security League, 1917 and 1918); Charles Angoff, "The Higher Learning Goes to War," *American Mercury* 11 (June 1927).

²⁰⁷ Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 62-63; *New York Times*, September 17, 1917.

from a proven scholar.²⁰⁸ Speakers from the National Security League worked apart from the Four-Minutemen, yet they worked toward the same national objectives.²⁰⁹ The Four-Minutemen highlighted Americans' sense of duty and obligation in short firebrand speeches while the Committee on Patriotism Through Education used American and European history for the stated purpose of educating and informing the public.

Forming and joining PVOs and NGOS, scholars lent legitimacy to the ideals and objectives of the government's perception management campaign. In 1917, the *New York Times* reported that a group of scholars had come together "to aid in supplying the public with trustworthy information of historical or similar nature" and formed the National Board for Historical Service (NBHS).²¹⁰ Prominent historians Guy Stanton Ford, Frederick Jackson Turner, J. Franklin Jameson, William Dodd, and others joined the NBHS, each presenting his own worldview and brand of history but all supporting the nation's political and military objectives. For example, Jameson preferred that Americans adopt a universal humanitarian worldview instead of an aggressive nationalism. According to historian Morey Rothberg, Jameson viewed the NBHS "as a vehicle to engage each American in the war effort as a 'citizen of the world' rather than as a rabid nationalist."²¹¹ Yet even Jameson did not dismiss the value of a tempered patriotism. Initially the NBHS focused on producing and distributing printed

²⁰⁸ *New York Times*, October 8, 1917, October 15, 1917, and November 4, 1917; Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 63-64.

²⁰⁹ In many ways the NSL had become impatient with the CPI's perceived lack of initiative, and based their campaigns on the impression that the CPI was too slow and inert to whip up war fever. According to James Mock and Cedric Larson, the National Security League "frequently charged the CPI with malingering." Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 13.

²¹⁰ *New York Times*, July 17, 1917.

²¹¹ Morey Rothberg, "John Franklin Jameson and the International Historical Community," *The History Teacher* 26 (August 1993): 453.

materials. The NBHS involved educators throughout the nation by producing suggestions for history courses in such publications as *Teachers' Leaflet* and *History Teacher's Magazine*. Beginning in late July 1917, the NBHS sponsored essay competitions for high school teachers on "Why the United States is at War." The NBHS awarded the author of the best essay in each state a cash prize of \$150 (approximately \$2,500 in 2010 dollars).²¹² Soon the National Board for Historical Service set out on speaking tours with "a cadre of historian-speakers." From the National Board for Historical Service communities chose a topic and the NBHS assigned a scholar based on his interests and expertise (as opposed to how communities selected a speaker by name from the Committee on Patriotism Through Education).²¹³ Between 1917 and 1918 the Committee on Patriotism Through Education and the National Board for Historical Service, two academically based PVOs, directly and indirectly supported the government's perception management campaign with an educational platform.

The federal government, primarily the Committee on Public Information and its assorted divisions, used a variety of media to induce Americans to take specific, direct actions and exhibit certain patterns of behavior. Using PM the CPI directed Americans to take actions in order to fit into a prescribed model of participatory, patriotic citizenship. In addition, volunteers and NGOs supported the federal government's objectives and, in so doing, fit that very model of patriotic citizenship. In later years, many Americans resented wartime PM. Mentor Williams of the

²¹² Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, 183; Schaffer, *America in the Great War*, 140-141; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 54-57; *Dial*, May 17, 1917.

²¹³ Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 64-65. In April 1918, the NBHS sent out questionnaires to hundreds of scholars to get data about their experience and areas of specialization. See also William Hutchinson, "The American Historian in Wartime," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 29 (September 1942): 163-186; William Binkley, "Two World Wars and American Historical Scholarship," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 33 (June 1946): 3-26.

University of Michigan cynically recalled his experience as a high school student during the war.

Williams remembered that the government, "through its war-aims courses and war-motivated pedagogy, assumed supervision of education in 1916-17." According to Williams:

Courses were loaded with selected "materials" emphasizing the American heritage. We were not reproved when we tore the pickets from the fence of the leading "pro-German" residents; we learned to march in formation with broomsticks; we listened to "four minute" men in our assemblies and military men "on leave" at meetings for boys only. Words, emotions, hatred. The letter but not the spirit of democracy was emphasized and democracy was not served at home, let alone for the world. Those bitter, disillusioning years of 1920-29 taught us how hollow the words, how empty of true democracy were the hearts of our elders and teachers.²¹⁴

Though the Armistice on November 11, 1918 ended military operations in World War I and the national crisis abated, perception management in the form of corporate public relations, marketing, and advertising subverted any potential return to "normalcy." The government's PM experiment during the war informed corporate leaders both of the limitations and possibilities of nationwide PM strategies.

²¹⁴ Mentor Williams et. al., "English in Wartime: A Resolution from the College Section," *College English* 3 (March, 1942), 579 (578-584).

CHAPTER 3 - Charting a Course for Postwar America: Corporate Perception Management and the New Normal

After World War I, President Wilson's successor, Warren Harding, urged the nation to return to "normalcy," but no such thing occurred. Corporate leaders used their skills to do more than simply sell goods; using perception management, they established a new normal in which Americans associated health, welfare, status, and success almost entirely with what they bought. The government's wartime perception management campaign had ended, but it left a more enduring legacy in that after the war marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors adopted a similarly mechanistic view of controlling Americans' opinions and behaviors. As Creel, the CPI, and numerous PVOs and NGOs had done in 1917 and 1918, corporate leaders appealed to the public's emotions rather than to its reasoning in order to manufacture demand and create a nation devoted to consumption. The lack of choice followed naturally from the centralization of corporate power and the offering of a limited number of national brands.²¹⁵ While Americans supposedly enjoyed greater prosperity and more choices in the consumer market, they remained targets of perception management after World War I.

An older historical narrative holds that Americans in the 1920s turned to consumption because they abandoned their commitment to social and political causes after WWI. That line of argument downplayed the role of corporate leaders in charting the course of postwar America. In *Only Yesterday*, Frederick Lewis Allen argues, "People were tired of girding up their loins to serve noble causes." "Sick of Wilson and his talk of America's duty to humanity, callous to political idealism," Allen writes, Americans "hoped for a chance to pursue their private affairs without governmental interference and to forget about public affairs." A nation "tired of

²¹⁵ Silvulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 93.

'important issues'" turned to commercialism, leisure, and entertainment.²¹⁶ Allen argues that Americans turned away from socio-political causes toward the more comfortable aspects of modern consumer society. *If* that had been the case, it was largely because corporate executives, especially marketers and advertisers, had deliberately set out to convince Americans to think of themselves as consumers. Through the careful application of psychological principles, creative designs, and manipulative language, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors used PM to impose upon Americans the idea that goods determined one's status in contemporary American society. Like the state's orchestrators of PM, corporate leaders thought that they knew what was best for Americans and actively sought to shape people's behavior and perceptions after 1918.

During the war, strategists who planned and conducted PM made use of various media and sales approaches to persuade audiences to take quick, impulsive actions to prove their patriotism. Their way of "selling the war" provided volunteer, non-profit, and corporate organizations with a workable model which some tried to adapt to the peacetime society and economy. Allen argues that into the early 1920s many PVOs, NGOs, secondary and post-secondary schools, journalists, and others capitalized on their "domination of war-time emotions." In one publication, next to an editorial called "The Right to Hate the Huns," an advertisement urged Americans to "GIVE-GIVE-GIVE!" to the United War Work Fund. Another advertisement, "Preparing America to Rebuild the World," explained, "Now that liberty has triumphed, now that the forces of Right have begun their reconstruction of humanity's morals, the world faces a material task of equal magnitude." Allen believes that Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer exploited nationalism (and nativism) in his witch hunt for

²¹⁶ Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 27, 108, 161-162, 207, 216-217.

Bolsheviks, radicals, and immigrants, spewing "boiler-plate propaganda" and warning Americans that their way of life stood imperiled.²¹⁷

Yet no group of professionals adapted PM as masterfully to postwar America as did marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors. As the war moved further into the past, those corporate professionals chose less overtly nationalistic themes in favor of more personal and social themes (though often comparing choices in purchasing products with political choices). While the state's massive PM campaign during WWI provided an example for corporate leaders, the latter refined the strategies of PM in the postwar decade in order to have Americans place more value on what they bought and owned. With a vision for postwar America, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors used PM to promote a new normal in the U.S. predicated upon buying and owning specific goods. In the name of safeguarding democracy, governmental PM during WWI had rigidly defined patriotic citizenship. Claiming to promote the free market and economic choice, senior executives within national companies used PM in the 1920s to define social acceptability based on owning specific goods. During the postwar period, historically viewed as one in which Americans enjoyed greater economic choices than ever, perception management endured.

Corporate leaders saw in the social and economic conditions of the postwar U.S. an opportunity to be more assertive in shaping Americans' attitudes towards goods and consumerism generally. Executives had the opportunity to shape society because, in the 1920s, Americans did not agree what constituted "normalcy" and did not share a consensus of opinion in regard to many domestic issues. For example, Americans looked back on the war with emotions ranging from bitterness through pride to apathy. While some were antagonistic toward

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 16, 50.

the war, its purported ideals, or the government, many were still intensely nationalist, anti-radical, and anti-leftist. As historian Lynn Dumenil argues, in order to understand postwar attitudes "we need to go beyond standard explanations that emphasize disillusionment with war and reform." Dumenil believes that if there was any disillusionment with the war it was due to "the erosion of individual autonomy in a mass, corporate culture" as a result of the efforts of corporate elites, not a popular rejection of political or social ideals.²¹⁸

Refuting the view that public opinion diverged on generational lines, historian Paula Fass denies that America's youth reacted bitterly against the war, calling it a "distortion." Fass argues that, instead, the youth of the 1920s were the "most emphatically patriotic and nationalistic" among Americans. If anything, Americans' interest in national and international causes was "tempered, not by cynicism, but by apathy."²¹⁹ Whether after WWI enthusiasm for social and political causes on the national scale waned, and whether there was any widespread disillusionment with the war, corporate leaders believed that domestic environment allowed the private sector to play an increased role in Americans' lives. The very ambiguity of what "normal" life was in the U.S. provided them with an opportunity to define it along consumerist lines. Lynn Dumenil writes that the "reform era (1900-14) that had preceded World War I gave way in the 1920s to a period of conservatism in which politicians and pundits alike celebrated Big Business as the savior of American democracy and enterprise." In the 1920s, "the dilemma of the relative influence of the private sector versus the public sector was resolved largely in

²¹⁸ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 57.

²¹⁹ Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977). The standard narrative of national disillusionment with World War I, and war in general, stemmed from polls like George Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion Poll of 1936, which revealed a 95 percent opposition to involvement in a European war for any reason, and later, a poll which revealed 70 percent of Americans called their nation's entry into World War I a tragic mistake. See Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 210.

favor of the former."²²⁰ It was not a natural evolution, but partly a result of corporate leaders' efforts to influence people's economic behavior and views toward consumerism. Most importantly for this study, after the war Americans remained targets for perception management.

Contemporaries recalled how President Wilson had ordered a massive state-run perception management campaign in 1917 and 1918. While the postwar Republican presidents did not order a federal initiative on the same scale in the 1920s, they seldom exhibited antagonism towards corporate interests or enterprises. If historian Kathleen Donohue was correct that voters chose Republicans because Americans had supposedly unanimously "decided to 'return to normalcy,'" then the electorate was repeatedly confounded and disappointed because the postwar presidents each advocated for the idea of a greater role for the private sector in Americans' lives.²²¹ This greater role included the use of perception management to get Americans to think of themselves first as consumers. Indeed, corporate leaders seized the opportunity to build ever more robust PM campaigns after the war with what they took as direct or complicit federal support.

President Harding threw his support behind the private sector. He said, "American business is not a monster, but an expression of God-given impulse to create, and the savior and guardian of our happiness." He called for "less of Government in business and more business in Government."²²² Calvin "Silent Cal" Coolidge, Harding's successor and an ideologue passionately committed to the dominance of the private sector in the U.S, said that "the chief

²²⁰ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 7, 16.

²²¹ Donohue, *Freedom from Want*, 151.

²²² Kenneth Millen-Penn, *So Help Me God: American Presidents, Christianity, and the American Nation*, http://www.fairmontstate.edu/publications/o_papers/16_millen-penn.pdf (accessed March 29, 2011), 24.

business of the American people is business." Based on his amiable ties with popular corporate figures like Bruce Barton and national advertising organizations such as the American Association of Advertising Agencies, he apparently did not oppose the private sector's role in defining normal life in the U.S. He said that advertising "is the life of trade" and boasted that "[mass] demand has been created almost entirely through the development of advertising," which proved that business did not respond to self-generating demand from consumers. With these comments, Coolidge seemingly shared the sentiments of contemporary businessman Carl Crow, who argued that advertisers must receive equal credit for building a nation of consumers as manufacturers and merchants, if not more.²²³ Thus, while marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors may not have received unconditional support from the chief executives (particularly for their more deceitful methods), they did not meet much resistance either as they worked to shape postwar America using PM.

Though the private sector became the main perpetrator of PM in the 1920s, the state continued to regulate Americans' behavior and morals, though more indirectly and at a level far lower than what it had done in 1917 and 1918. The early 1920s witnessed a flourishing of artistic expression and, as Warren Susman argues, "Virtually every popular cultural form inspired instantly an opposition that urged its banning or at least its censorship."²²⁴ For example, Frederick Lewis Allen describes the way in which several religious organizations complained to local, state, and federal governments about indecency in films and art. Will H. Hays, Bursleson's successor as United States Postmaster-General and later the author of Hays Code when he was

²²³ Carl Crow, *The Great American Consumer* (Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1943), xi.

²²⁴ Susman, *Culture as History*, xxvii.

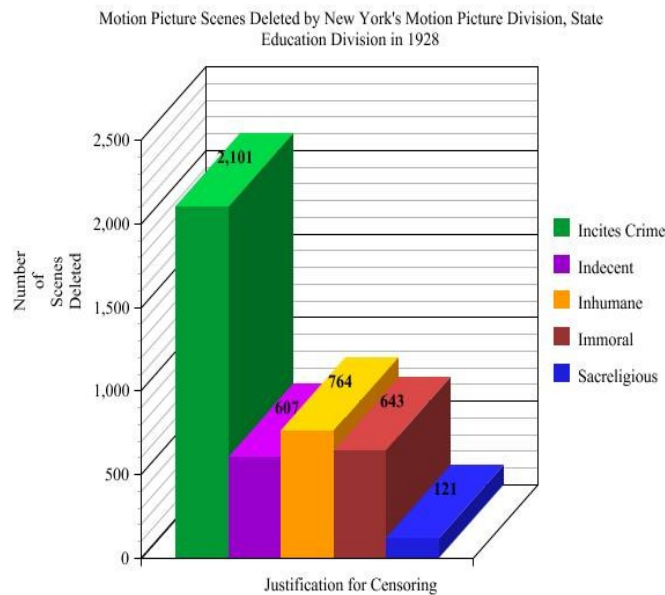
the president of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, became the "arbiter of morals and of taste." According to Allen, "Whenever the threats of censorship began to become ominous [Hays] would promulgate a new series of moral commandments for the producers to follow."²²⁵ Thus, when politically expedient, the state continued to set acceptable moral and behavioral boundaries for Americans after the world war. Other echelons of government did the same. In 1931 President Herbert Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends reported that the Motion Picture Division of New York's State Education Division had also enforced social decency through censoring motion pictures. In 1928, that board examined nearly 9,000 reels and eliminated over 3,000 scenes and 965 titles. Those that were eliminated fell into the following categories: 2,101 were likely to incite crime; 607 were "indecent"; 764 were "inhuman"; 643 were immoral; 121 were sacrilegious; and "six pictures were eliminated *in toto*."²²⁶ Films with scenes cut included *The City Without Jews* and banned films included *The Naked Truth* (for being "indecent" and "obscene").²²⁷ After the war, leaders in government already comfortable with setting patterns of acceptable behavior occasionally controlled films and other media when the leaders believed that they had exceeded the bounds of morality.

²²⁵ Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 88.

²²⁶ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 98, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

²²⁷ *New York Times*, June 23, 1928, and July 7, 1928.

Figure 3.1 Motion Picture Scenes Deleted by New York’s Motion Picture Division, State Education Division in 1928



Americans did not have a clear-cut understanding of whether the wartime experience had permanently reshaped the dynamic between themselves and their leaders. After World War I, Americans were not exactly sure of (or concerned with) what the limitations on their behavior were. Taking advantage of the domestic atmosphere, corporate leaders, especially marketers and advertisers, promoted the idea that purchasing and owning consumer goods allowed for universal freedom of expression as well as social acceptance. Continuing the use of perception management after World War I, they wanted to lead society and define postwar America permanently along consumerist lines. According to historian Gary Cross, they succeeded: "Consumerism was the 'ism' that won [in the twentieth century]—despite repeated attacks on it as a threat to folk and high culture, to 'true' community and individuality, and to the environment."²²⁸

Senior corporate executives' decision to actively determine Americans' buying choices and to indoctrinate them with a more consumerist worldview followed from their condescending

²²⁸ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 1.

assumptions about the intelligence, rationality, and decision-making ability of American public. The public's apparent susceptibility to governmental PM in WWI strengthened those views and convinced corporate leaders that promoting their agenda would go unnoticed. Negative views of the "public" were common among elected and appointed officials, intellectuals, social commentators, and even reformists in the early twentieth century. George Creel, Chairman of the CPI and head of wartime PM, had long been open about his disgust over Americans' intellectual ineptitude. That view came out in 1915 (two years before receiving his chairmanship) when he wrote a series of articles for *Harper's Weekly* expressing disappointment with the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. That act mandated accurate labeling for habit-forming pharmaceuticals and patented drugs. Many muckrakers, seeking to curb corporate excesses which threatened public health and safety, hailed the law as an achievement. In *The Aspirin Wars*, Charles Mann and Mark Plummer argue that supporters of the law believed it would provide the public with the information it needed to make informed buying choices. But Creel disagreed, arguing that the law placed too much faith in the intelligence and decision-making ability of the American public:

The ultimate goal will not be reached until the public is afforded a protection that does not rest upon the initiative of the individual. Disclosure of ingredients will kill the sale of injurious compounds to persons of intelligence, perhaps, but it will not do to forget the large percentage of ignorant, careless, or reckless purchasers, who will still persist in the use of health-destroying preparations. This is the problem.²²⁹

Acting in kind on the public's behalf, Creel wanted companies to be clearer in labeling and truthful in advertising because the "large percentage of ignorant, careless, [and] reckless" people could not make decisions without protection from others. Creel maintained that view of

²²⁹ Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 27, 34-35, 138-139. Between 1899 and 1906 Sterling Bayer only advertised to the medical community since it believed the masses cared little or not at all for the contents of a particular drug.

Americans while he headed the CPI and after 1918. After WWI, marketers and advertisers shared a similar view of Americans but did not feel pressed to give the public complete information. They believed that they were justified in using PM to get Americans to think of themselves as consumers.

Philosopher John Dewey, a critic of the government's efforts to control people's opinions and behavior during WWI, actually agreed with Creel and others about the characteristics of the American public. Dewey believed that most Americans acted out of habit and emotional impulses, not as the end result of any rational decision-making process. He believed that marketers and advertisers could easily influence the opinions and behaviors of the masses using perception management. According to historian Mark Smith, Dewey believed, "Even if consumers possessed adequate information to make rational decisions (which they did not), skilled advertising could prevent them from doing so."²³⁰ Dale Carnegie, a corporate advisor and author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, argued, "When dealing with people, let us remember we are not dealing with creatures of logic. We are dealing with creatures of emotion, creatures bristling with prejudices and motivated by pride and vanity."²³¹ George Creel, John Dewey, and Dale Carnegie had each described how the American public was either incapable of or not prone to rational thought. After WWI corporate executives similarly believed in the emotional, impulsive nature of the American public, but they did not concern themselves with giving it what information it needed even had it been capable of rational thought. Instead, in their postwar efforts to sway Americans' decisions to buy certain products and to manufacture

²³⁰ Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 145.

²³¹ Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Pocket Books, 1981), 14.

demand under the guise of promoting the free market, they approached the blatant exploitation of consumers' emotions in a deliberate, systematic way. As a strategy, perception management did not exist only during wartime conditions.

Holding contemptuous views of the American public, corporate figures Ivy Ledbetter Lee, John Watson, Edward Bernays, and others (many of whom had assisted the government's PM campaign during WWI), held no moral inhibitions about purposely attempting to influence the perceptions and behavior of American consumers. Their views of the public convinced them that they needed to chart the course of postwar America in a way that revolved around consumption. Ivy Lee, the man who had turned around the public relations nightmare for John D. Rockefeller during the strikes and massacre at a coal mine in Ludlow, Colorado in 1914, believed that corporate transparency enhanced the reputation of owners. He also believed that Americans did not know (or care to know) how to make sense of information presented to them. Behaviorist Dr. John Watson, a psychologist for the War Department during the war, an ostracized professor, and later an advisor on public psychology for the J. Walter Thompson Company, believed that Americans did not need, deserve, or even want open, truthful information. Watson believed that human behavior was more affected by environment and upbringing than by some unseen psychological phenomena. He believed that people were easily swayed by others and that carefully selected information, truthful or not, could be used to mold the psyche of the public. He believed that "man is born a squirming mass without instincts" and "you can build almost any behavior patterns into [him]."²³² That belief characterized

²³² "The Adventure of the Behaviorist" and "Scientific Orphans," both in Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also *Daily Mirror*, March 7, 1928, Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and

behaviorism which, as Lynn Dumenil puts simply, "minimized men's and women's ability to control consciously their behavior and ideas."²³³ His dedication to behaviorist principles carried with it a negative view of the intellect, rationality, and decision-making abilities of Americans to the point that he believed that they were completely unable to resist marketers' and advertisers' professional, systematic ways of persuasion. Watson applied behaviorist principles at JWTC with great success for both himself and the company. Given their views of the American public, Lee, Watson, and others did more than simply advance corporate interests; they used scientific tactics to influence people's buying choices and perceptions of value based on owning consumer goods. Due to corporate leaders' unprecedentedly intense efforts to indoctrinate a nation in the ways of consumerism, they helped prevent any possible return to the older "normalcy." Their efforts demonstrated the persistence of PM as a means of determining the choices that Americans made, even during an era of relative peace.

Marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors believed that they could easily convince Americans to think of themselves first and foremost as consumers with the creative application of psychological principles as part of a systematic policy of PM. Edward Bernays, one of Creel's lieutenants in the CPI who was later considered a founding father of corporate public relations, believed that wartime PM had demonstrated Americans' common psychological attributes. Like John Watson, Bernays believed that executives could influence Americans'

Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. Watson believed people possessed three innate instincts: fear of noise or loss, rage at external inhibitions, and physical love. In one of his most controversial claims, Watson argued that mothers drilled bad habits into children, thereby committing "psychological murder." Watson even advocated "rotation of mothers" and "orphan asylums."

²³³ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 146-147.

economic choices through the rational application of psychological principles. In the mid-1910s, he began incorporating the theories of Gustave LeBon, Wilfred Trotter, and Sigmund Freud (Bernays' uncle) into his ever-maturing philosophy of public relations. Bernays believed that "crowd psychology and herd reaction" displaced the "calm exercise of judgment" in Americans' collective decisions.²³⁴ After working for the CPI during WWI he believed he had acquired a working knowledge of psychology. In 1919, he became a self-employed public relations counselor and, believing in his ability to manipulate people, he published *Crystallizing Public Opinion* in 1923 and *Propaganda* in 1928. Throughout his career he advised corporate clients such as the American Tobacco Company, the United Fruit Company, Dodge Motors, Columbia Broadcasting Station; such non-profit organizations as the NAACP, the Jewish Mental Health Society, and the Committee for Consumer Legislation; and such public personages as Calvin Coolidge and agencies as the President's Emergency Committee on Unemployment. Bernays and others advocated a psychological, scientific approach to influencing Americans' perceptions

²³⁴ Edward Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* (New York: Boni and Liverlight, 1923), 214. The views of Bernays and others were consistent with contemporary theories of collective psychology. In 1917, social psychologist Robert Gault argued that humans "have a sense of belonging together." Examining three entities, the crowd, the audience, and the mob, he concluded they were "simple forms of group manifestation in which individuals are in physical proximity and in a state of blind expectancy of something not yet well defined, but that is assumed to be on the point of coming to pass; or in a state of attention directed systematically to the successive phases of a problem as they are presented by a speaker and reacted to by a speaker and reacted to by his hearers with enthusiasm or otherwise; or in which the members of a group are in a state of intensive unthinking activity as in the mob." The group enjoys a psychological quality "more than the sum of its parts, or at least different from the sum of its parts." University of Michigan psychologist W.B. Pillsbury argued that "a man in a crowd becomes as a man hypnotized. He loses his capacity for decision, his intelligence is reduced, he becomes more emotional, he feels rather than thinks." Robert Gault, "Psychology in Social Relations," *The American Journal of Sociology* 22 (May 1917): 734-748; W.B. Pillsbury, "Propaganda and the Democratic State," *The Scientific Monthly* 56 (June 1953): 550. See also Stephen Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics: The Path to Objectivity and Beyond* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill Queen's University Press, 2004), 228-229; Don Bates, "'Mini-Me' History: Public Relations from the Dawn of Civilization," *Institute of Public Relations* (2006), 12-13.

and behaviors to advance corporate interests and consumerist ideals after the war. Despite ongoing, popular antipathy toward the idea of anyone trying to control American life and society, people either unknowingly or willingly endured it from the private sector even after sacrificing in a war for democracy and during a period of alleged peace and prosperity.

The condescending views held by marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants about the intellectual and psychological qualities of the public led them to think of themselves as leaders of the social and economic order. They believed that Americans were irrational, lazy, stupid, undiscerning, feminine, and given to a herd mentality and an urge to follow the crowd. The masses needed leaders. Many senior corporate executives shared a belief in the need for "natural aristocracies" with social commentators Randolph Bourne, H.L. Mencken, and Walter Lippmann (each of whom incidentally held a generally disdainful view of modern advertising). By the early 1920s, Bourne and Mencken described consumer advertising as amoral, hollow, and even dehumanizing. They argued that advertising reflected the emotional, anti-intellectual state of American society. They blasted advertising for its exploitative qualities and lamented that society had let it emerge.²³⁵ Even so, they appreciated the difference between leaders and followers, elites and plebeians, even in a free republic. Bourne believed that the "sluggish masses" were "too lacking in intellect."²³⁶ Historian Kathleen Donohue argues that Lippmann's view of the masses' intellect worsened as he had witnessed firsthand "the ease with which

²³⁵ See, e.g., Randolph Bourne, "Trans-National America," in Carl Resek, ed., *War and the Intellectuals: Essays, 1915-1919* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 107-123; H.L. Mencken, *Prejudices: A Selection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Charles McGovern, *Sold American: Consumption and Citizenship, 1890-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 64.

²³⁶ Randolph Bourne, "The War and the Intellectuals," *Seven Arts* 2 (1917).

wartime propagandists had manipulated public opinion."²³⁷ In *Liberty and the News* (1920) Walter Lippmann complained that there was nothing to prevent governmental or corporate PM, and in *Public Opinion* (1922) he argued that Americans did not care about open, truthful information because of their inflexible ignorance. Lacking rationality, the public could boast only of "violent prejudice, apathy, preference for the curious trivial against the dull important, and the hunger for sideshows and three-legged calves."²³⁸ Americans needed leadership, and Lippmann wanted government and corporate leaders to lead them right. Marketers and advertisers were ready to provide that leadership and did so through the continuation of perception management into the postwar decade. Indeed, a defining feature of both wartime and postwar PM was leaders' sense that they knew what was best for the majority of Americans.

The idea of providing leadership to guide the course of postwar America was not limited to those most directly engaged in PM; rather, it was the sentiment of most of the corporate sector. Corporate elitism was not peculiar to the 1920s, but their belief in the inferiority of the masses was confirmed by the alleged success of the state's PM campaign in World War I. The President of the National Association of Manufacturers, John Edgerton, believed in the need for corporate leadership in the United States. According to Edgerton:

[In] all congregations and assemblies of men; in all organizations of common purpose; and in all groups of whatever size constituted of cohesive human elements, there is an aristocracy of

²³⁷ Donohue, *Freedom from Want*, 154.

²³⁸ Lippmann, *Liberty and the News* and *Public Opinion* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), 195-197, 230. See also Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 231-232. W.H. Beatty made a similar point: "We must of course always remember that our masses of population live on feelings and senses, and that they have little or no capacity for reasoning." See W.H. Beatty, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October, 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

loyalty and dependability without which successful and sustained operation would be impossible. It is composed of the relatively few.²³⁹

Other executives agreed with Edgerton: "Without these great minds the multitudes would eat their heads off, and, as history proves, would lapse into barbarism and die of pestilence and famine. The masses are the beneficiaries; the few, the benefactors."²⁴⁰ The private sector's decision to provide leadership and steer the course of postwar America was predicated upon what historian James Prothro calls a "doctrine of the elite," a doctrine of contemporary corporate culture. According to it, "the masses and the elite are characterized more by their dissimilarities than by their common humanity." Corporate leaders believed that they possessed "the competence . . . to sustain and advance civilization." They believed that the lazy, inept, unmotivated, and exploitable people comprising "the masses" bore responsibility for all social problems; indeed, problems such as poverty and hunger proved that society needed leaders.²⁴¹ Corporate leaders' continuation of perception management into the postwar decade stemmed directly from their belief that they should lead U.S. society.

Corporate executives' division of society into leaders and followers followed from their negative, sometimes paradoxical, characterizations of the American people. They characterized Americans as highly selfish, but also as sheepish crowd-followers. They believed that Americans might further social progress, or plunge the nation into anarchy as a revolutionary mob. They regarded them as principled and industrious, yet lazy and materialistic. In all cases

²³⁹ John Edgerton's quotation found in *American Industries* 30 (October 1929), 9; James Prothro, *The Dollar Decade: Business Ideas in the 1920s* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1950), 15.

²⁴⁰ Eugene Lombard, "Where the Surplus Value Comes From," *American Industries* 20 (January 1920): 18; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 20.

²⁴¹ Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 209-218.

they believed that Americans were emotional and irrational, not logical or discerning. They resolved to be the leaders in the uncertain age of postwar America. In "The Compleat Angler, Or, How to be an Advertising Man and Catch the Poor Fish," James Webb Young of the J. Walter Thompson Company credited "[The] Economists who revealed the piscine nature of the Public, classified them as suckers *oeconomicus*, and threw them into the fish pond, where they couldn't disturb the Economic Order."²⁴² Marketers and advertisers spread the idea that consumption offered the cure for society's problems. As self-proclaimed defenders of the free market, they committed themselves to working on behalf of the American people. They believed that Americans should think of themselves as consumers and should share a favorable attitude toward business. They would do their part to insure that this happened. Believing in their own superiority to the masses, they refused to sit idly by and watch Americans disrupt the economic order of the country. They used PM to promote the idea that Americans were now freer to exercise their economic liberties, while, in actuality, they set out to limit choice in the consumer market as a form of governing the nation's behavior.

As it had been during the war, exploiting or controlling media and technology in the 1920s was essential to conducting perception management. Marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors believed that technology (particularly in regard to transportation and communication) not only enabled them greater access to the American people, but it reinforced the idea that America was both technologically and culturally modern. Technology helped feed their impression of a nationwide audience, a single American public. According to advertising giant Bruce Barton, technological goodies sold in nationwide chain stores helped "break down

²⁴² "The Compleat Angler, Or, How to be an Advertising Man and Catch the Poor Fish," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

barriers. They wipe out sectional lines. They bind a hundred and twenty million people together."²⁴³ In 1931, the President's Research Committee on Social Trends noted, "The motion picture, radio broadcasting, national advertising, increasing travel, the growth and utilization of long distance wire and wireless facilities—these are factors which appear to undermine localism."²⁴⁴ Describing the increase of transportation as a justification for the increase in the amount of outdoor advertising, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4 A's) exclaimed "America is an Outdoor Nation! Townspeople go to the country more. Country people come into town more. Life surges along the streets and highways." According to its estimates, in 1928 some 23,000,000 automobiles and 250,000 buses carried an aggregate of 2.5 billion people and covered 2 billion miles on U.S. roads. Improved transportation carried "vast millions of consumers of all classes up and down the streets and roads of the country," which also added "greatly to the power of the outdoor medium." Advertisers capitalized upon mobile America by increasing spending on outside advertising from \$2 million in 1917 to \$85 million in 1927.²⁴⁵ Corporate leaders believed that improvements and increased ownership of modern goods evidenced the effectiveness of advertising (and required more of it). Moreover, they believed that *they* had set in motion the trend of national prosperity, partly because of their

²⁴³ Bruce Barton, "The Man Behind the Counter," September 21, 1927, Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

²⁴⁴ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 114, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

²⁴⁵ Annual Report to the American Association of Advertising Agencies by the Committee on Outdoor Advertising (undated), Folder "Annual and Various Reports," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

systematic strategy of perception management. Controlling (or at least capitalizing upon) transportation and communications technologies enabled them to forward their agenda in the postwar decade.

The improvements in and greater availability of communications media gave corporate leaders the technology with which to conduct perception management after the war. Prior to 1918, broadcast advertising was non-existent since radio itself was not readily available to the general public.²⁴⁶ When the state loosened its restrictions on radios after World War I, broadcasters, programmers, marketers, and advertisers moved in to capitalize upon the possibilities of wireless technology. Because of radio's ability to reach thousands (later millions) of people simultaneously, corporate executives were encouraged in their desire to homogenize the nation along materialistic lines.²⁴⁷ The fact that so many American families owned radios in the 1920s strengthened executives' view of the public as a monolith, uniform in its psychological qualities

²⁴⁶ In actuality, radios had been available on a very limited scale and had been improving since the late-nineteenth century (although the first publicly announced radio broadcast did not occur until 1906). From then until 1917, independent hams and broadcasting entrepreneurs tapped into the wide world of radio voice transmissions. When the U.S. declared war in 1917, however, the central government judged that there were potentially adverse effects from unrestricted transmissions over the airwaves. The state disallowed private radio stations and banned amateur broadcasting as part of a general strategy of wartime perception management. The Navy controlled high-power radio broadcasting stations and trained thousands of men to master wireless technology; thus, during the war the radio remained entirely within the military's domain. After the war, Congress debated whether the government would continue to control wireless technology. It voted that it would not and the private sector was again permitted to access the airwaves in 1919 and 1920, albeit with controls. For an excellent historical account of the development of radio technology and its correlation to corporatization, see Susan Douglas, *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) and Robert Hudson, *Mass Media: A Chronological Encyclopedia of Television, Radio, Motion Pictures, Magazines, Newspapers, and Books in the United States* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 147, 162.

²⁴⁷ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 88-116; Hadley Cantril and Gordon Allport, *The Psychology of Radio* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), 20; McGovern, *Sold American*, 59.

and buying tastes.²⁴⁸ Psychologist Leonard Doob argues that after World War I radio became "the most widespread method of reaching great masses of people" (though for marketers and advertisers it was only one of many methods to use).²⁴⁹ Some historians had, in the past, attributed to radio a deterministic effect on American society. For example, in *Babbitts and Bohemians* Elizabeth Stevenson argues, "Radio not only reported the events but shaped them." She also claims it "strengthened a tendency already working to make the people feel united and whole; for the first time, it seemed as if they could have thoughts and feelings simultaneously It had the effect of making people wish to have simultaneous sensations."²⁵⁰ In *Listening In*, Susan Douglas argues that the radio had a definite impact but she rejects that, in contrast to advertisers' claims and beliefs, it homogenizing effect on society. Still, by the late 1920s, radio had "reactivated, extended, and intensified particular cognitive modes that encouraged, simultaneously, a sense of belonging to a community, an audience, and a confidence that your imaginings, your radio visions, were the best and truest ones of all."²⁵¹ If historians have differing interpretations of the radio's actual impact on shaping listeners' perceptions due to the inherent challenges in analyzing audiences' opinions and reactions, they generally agree that

²⁴⁸ By 1932, an estimated 55 percent of American homes had radios. Douglas, *Listening In*, 39, 82; Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 143; Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 27.

²⁴⁹ Leonard Doob, *Propaganda: Its Psychology and Technique* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1935), 360.

²⁵⁰ Elizabeth Stevenson, *Babbitts and Bohemians: The American 1920s* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), 114.

²⁵¹ Susan Douglas, *Listening In: Radio and the American Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 39.

radio contributed to what Benedict Anderson calls "imagined communities."²⁵² What is certain is that corporate executives used radio in their efforts to ensure that the U.S. would forever remain a nation obsessed with consumption and wholly amenable to the notion of the supremacy of business. Controlling sources (and hence the flow) of information proved just as important to conducting perception management in the 1920s as it had been in during WWI.

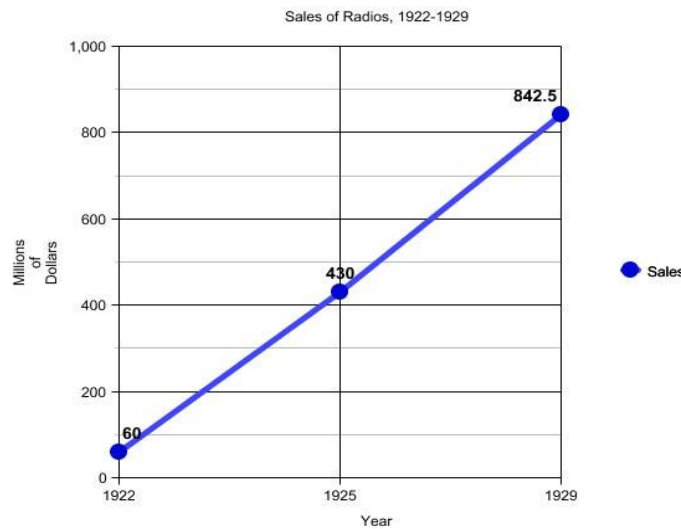
After the Armistice, the federal government allowed the general public to again purchase and use radios, which opened the door for corporate exploitation. Marketers' and advertisers' ability to keep the U.S. on the path of consumerism was aided greatly by wireless media and the rise of major broadcast networks (which were dependent upon advertising revenue). For example, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) aspired "to have 12 [radio] stations all over the country and all linked up so that the same program may be heard simultaneously all over the country" by 1925.²⁵³ The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), established in 1926 and 1927 respectively, had, between the two of them, 64 network station affiliates in 1928 and 150 only three years later. Those broadcasting chains served two functions: they provided the parent companies "with a national outlet for programs paid for by advertisers (sponsored programs)," and they enabled "individual stations to obtain at less cost more varied and superior programs which often would be otherwise unobtainable."²⁵⁴ Americans' increased ownership of radios was an uncontestable fact, as was

²⁵² Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

²⁵³ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, February 5, 1925, Folder "Broadcast Advertising," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also McGovern, *Sold American*, 32-33; Douglas, *Listening In*, 131-147.

the rise of the level of broadcast advertising. In 1922, annual radio sales amounted to \$60,000,000; in 1925, \$430,000,000; and in 1929, \$842,548,000, an increase of 1,400 percent since 1922. Given the aggregate of sales of radios in the 1920s—let alone the medium’s impact on society—marketers and advertisers justifiably invested much time and energy trying to make them work for them.

Figure 3.2 Sales of Radios, 1922-1929



By the late 1920s nearly all national advertising agencies had established departments to study the use of radio and had begun spending substantial revenue on advertising on the airwaves. As with other forms of technology, corporate executives were convinced that the proliferation of wireless communications proved that Americans were uniform in their tastes and habits. They claimed that the increased ownership of radios and other technological items reflected the general state of affluence in the postwar U.S. But corporate leaders viewed the rapid proliferation of the radio as more than simply an indicator that millions of Americans were

²⁵⁴ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 104-105, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch; Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 62.

buying the same products. They saw it as an avenue to control information sent to the American people, the same strategy adopted by the state during WWI.

In 1922, two years after the federal government allowed private use of airwaves, advertisers began using radio to advance their postwar PM strategy. In that year, the Shur-On Optical Company began advertising on KDKA, Pittsburgh. In 1924, the J. Walter Thompson Company first used radio to promote Lux soap; five years later it signed Rudy Vallee and His Connecticut Yankees to promote Fleischmann's Yeast on radio stations coast-to-coast. A later report of JWTC claimed that in the 1920s "not a lot of thought went into the strategic use of the medium," which belied the company's systematic efforts to use the medium.²⁵⁵ For example, J. Walter Thompson Company used data from the New York station WEAF to understand how radio might best be used to promote a sense of social uniformity based on owning goods.

WEAF, a station owned by American Telephone & Telegraph set up to broadcast "public affairs and educational talks," relied upon advertising revenue for its existence even at that early stage. (In the early twenties it already had around one million listeners.) J. Walter Thompson studied many of WEAF's broadcasts, including Sarah Field Splint's ten-minute talks on salads for Richard Hellman Company "in connection with a campaign for Blue Ribbon Mayonnaise," Goodrich Rubber Company's use of the Silvertown Orchestra, Nathaniel Kellogg Fairbank Soap Manufacturing Company's selling soap using the comedic Gold Dust Twins, Alvin Silver Company's "talks on etiquette," Bank of America's financial talks, Proctor and Gamble

²⁵⁵ "Radio Beginnings," Folder "Broadcast Advertising-Radio," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Company's pushing Crisco, and the Borden Company's stories for children.²⁵⁶ Approaching broadcast advertising methodically, marketers and advertisers researched and experimented so as to optimize their use of radio in order to push consumption-based conformity. The radio was an important tool for marketers and advertisers intent on selling specific goods and minimizing competition while claiming to promote the free market. Simply, controlling messages on the radio enabled them to dominate channels of communication between the private sector and the American people.

Unlike the state with its own wartime PM campaign, marketers and advertisers had the luxury of time to refine how they used media of communication to influence Americans' behavior. For instance, with regard to broadcasting on radio, executives from the JWTC learned that "the announcer gives a very brief introductory and closing talk, stating the name of the manufacturer under whose auspices the talk for entertainment is given." Advertisers believed that there were some drawbacks to the medium which would, hopefully, be overcome after research and making appropriate changes. One such drawback was that they could not determine an advertisement's effectiveness because "there is not guaranteed circulation and no way of checking the type of circulation." Accordingly, executives from the J. Walter Thompson Company believed that radio advertising currently existed "in an unsettled state" and some even believed it was "a questionable medium for us to use at present," though the company was not deterred from using it. Some advertisers believed that "the spoken word lacks the authority of the printed word. It lacks the various color and diagrammatic possibilities of the printed page . . .

²⁵⁶ "Radio Beginnings," Folder "Broadcast Advertising-Radio," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; *Sidebar*, Radio Department, August 11, 1980, Folder "Sidebars," Box 15, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

the spoken message is more likely to be misinterpreted than the printed one."²⁵⁷ As a calculated measure, advertisers exploited the radio's aural qualities by injecting "personality" into on-air messages and employing what historian Charles McGovern calls the "personal element of salesmanship."²⁵⁸ Improving upon the ways that they used the radio, they wanted listeners to feel a connection with each other by tuning in to the same programs, taking in the same commercials, and purchasing the same consumer goods. It represented the latest example of controlling information being relayed to the American people and evidenced a deliberate strategy of perception management.

In the 1920s, a key issue for those seeking to control Americans' behavior in buying and in other roles was whether the new technology of radio would play a major role. Radio contributed to what Daniel Boorstin calls "consumption communities" comprised of "people who have a feeling of shared well-being, shared risks, common interests and common concerns that come from consuming the same kinds of objects."²⁵⁹ However, some executives believed that their peers had placed too much stock in the medium. According to a J. Walter Thompson

²⁵⁷ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, February 5, 1925, Folder "Broadcast Advertising," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. In a July 1928 J. Walter Thompson executives' meeting, the confusion surrounding broadcast advertising was evident. The attendees could not quite understand why in recent months skeptical companies like Certo, Maxwell House, and Goodrich had cut their radio advertising expenditures, some entirely. One attendee said, "personally I don't think cancellation was due to any lack of merit in radio." Still, given the fact they had at least some evidence of the medium's effectiveness which, in their opinion, "exonerates radio from any blame," they could not explain the recent shift away from broadcast advertising. See Staff Meeting (July 11, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁵⁸ McGovern, *Sold American*, 51.

²⁵⁹ Boorstin's quotation in Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 21, footnote 14.

Company newsletter from 1926, many businessmen were pleased that "misguided efforts to let radio advertising do the entire advertising job of informing, entertaining, interesting, holding attention and selling, are lessening." Paul Stacy, overseer of programs for National Carbon Company's "Ever Ready Hour," regarded radio advertising as, at best, "supplementary" to regular advertising. The advertising manager of the Goodyear Company similarly called it "auxiliary to newspaper and other advertising." Nonetheless, those and others viewed radio advertising as indispensable since it had already "accomplished beneficial results, both tangible and intangible." Among those benefits, radio advertising fostered "word-of-mouth" discussions of companies and products, "enhanced the value of display advertising," and reinforced other forms of advertising.²⁶⁰ While disagreeing about how much they should rely upon radio, corporate leaders did agree that they needed to manage all forms of communication between themselves and the public in order to limit the products from which Americans could choose in order to fulfill some desire or manufactured need.

Corporate executives received great cooperation from broadcasters and networks for their PM campaigns, largely because the latter needed revenue to offset the heavy expenses of broadcasting. Support from professionals in the media was as necessary for the advancement of the consumerist agenda in the 1920s as it had been for the government's patriotic crusade during WWI (and would be for the success of any PM strategy). According to a report of the American Association of Advertising Agencies in March 1927, some 400 stations had already "[accepted] commercial broadcasting in 1926" and regarded radio advertising as "satisfactory." At the same time, some "thirty odd national advertisers" used commercial radio on more than one station or

²⁶⁰ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, January 28, 1926, Folder "Broadcast Advertising," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

network of stations. Expenditures of these "thirty odd national advertisers" totaled approximately \$3,000,000 in 1927. Aunt Jemima, Cream of Wheat, J.C. Penney, Royal Baking Powder, and other national companies took advantage of broadcasters' and networks' positive disposition toward radio advertising by proactively using wireless media to sway the public's buying choices. Some advertisers were unsure about the future of radio advertising, but most were beginning to agree with Thomas Logan, Chairman of the Committee on Radio Broadcasting, who pulled it "out of the field of experimentation and uncertainty, and placed it, almost overnight, among the great potential industries of the country."²⁶¹ For a price, marketers and advertisers used the radio to push conformity based on purchasing and owning specific products.²⁶²

During WWI, many observers had feared the attempted usurpation of the media by the government for the purpose of advancing its wartime agenda. Similarly, some public officials and even a few cautious advertisers expressed worry over the perceived domination of the wireless medium by advertisers. They worried that advertisers were using radio and other media to determine the choices that Americans made. In a report by the American Association of Advertising Agencies' Committee on Radio Broadcasting, Herbert Hoover purportedly said, "The quickest way to kill broadcasting would be to use it for direct advertising." The National

²⁶¹ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, March 31, 1927, Folder "Broadcast Advertising," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Staff Meeting (July 11, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁶² Gary Cross points out the irony that "Americans experienc[ed] common goods, entertainment, and fantasies in private." Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 57.

Radio Conference opposed "the sending of direct advertising matter over the radio."²⁶³ A report from February 1928 by the JWTC mocked objections of that sort. It sarcastically described how the advertising industry had become infected with "Acute Inflammatory Radioitis." It found "in the healthy tissue of radio the first evidence of a tumorous growth." An advertiser afflicted with "publicity itch" could be cured with a "raw diet of radio advertising." Studying the disease "objectively," the report identified three groups at increased risk of contracting the disease. First, the "Philanthropist," who "simply sponsors programs," was "quite content to hear his name in the opening and closing announcements only," bringing the public "a program of varying merit." Second was the "Big-Boy," who "bores with frantic, clownish efforts to impress his wares, his kindness of heart, his breadth of vision; that is, he bores a stray listener or two who is reading a book and neglects to turn the dials." The report commented, "No need to comment on the harm Big-Boy does himself, the station, the medium." Last was the "Fortunate Fellow" who had "hit early upon a program or feature which has caught on," who could claim he had done "no selling" and made "no competitive claims" of "product superiority." JWTC was not actively seeking a "cure for radio inflammation" because it had already "accepted radio as a new medium of advertising."²⁶⁴ Despite objections to on-air advertising from both inside and outside of the profession (especially from the outside), advertisers did not discontinue it, especially when radio

²⁶³ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, November 19, 1925, Folder "Radio Department," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁶⁴ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, February 15, 1928, Folder "Radio Department," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also *Sidebar*, Radio Department, August 11, 1928, Folder "Sidebars," Box 15, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

sets were now in the homes of millions of prospective buyers. As part of their systematic strategy of PM, they realized the need to control—or at least exercise considerable influence over—wireless communications in order to sway Americans' decisions on what to purchase (though claiming to promote freedom of economic choice).

Believing that different media affected the public in different ways, the J. Walter Thompson Company determined important methodological differences between advertising in print and on the air. Executives from the company believed that the latter was "editorial" and, given stations' and networks' diverse constituencies of listeners, that they must exercise more discretion when selecting the content of their messages. The report said, "For your clients' good, for that of the station, [advertisers] must not overstep the bounds of editorial propriety." It argued that the downfall to staying within the "bounds of editorial propriety" was that "straight 'name-mention' . . . is non-competitive," an obvious problem since advertisers' purpose had "always been to sell competitively." Because of the non-discriminatory nature of the radio, the report stated, "We can't talk shop as we would in trade copy; we can't talk 'home' as we would in a woman's magazine; we can't talk golf as we would in a golfer's periodical." In typical sardonic fashion, executives argued, "We must be cosmopolitan, entertaining, to man, woman, child, black, white, spotted, rich, poor, reckless, genius, plodder, moron." William Ensign, JWTC's purchaser of broadcasting space, told the New York Production Group that "the most important thing he had learned about radio was the great place it is occupying in the daily lives of millions of people."²⁶⁵ Their articulating the need for "editorial propriety" further evidenced

²⁶⁵ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, February 15, 1928, Folder "Radio Department," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; *Sidebar*, Radio Department, August 11, 1980, Folder "Sidebars," Box 15, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter

executives' deliberate policy of exploiting various media to limit the choices of products which Americans bought and, by definition, the continuation of perception management after the war.

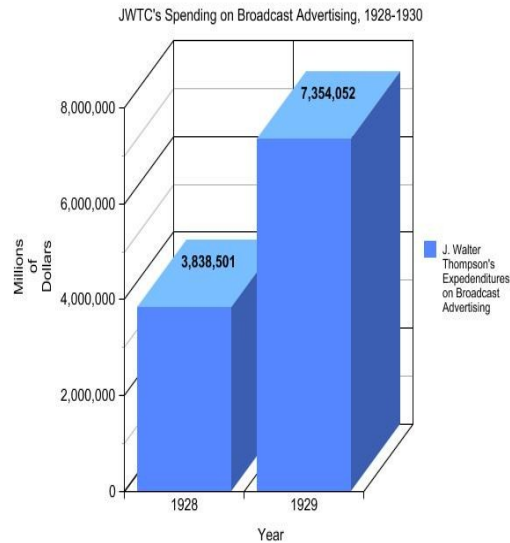
Because of the relative novelty of the medium and its importance to their PM campaigns, most national advertising agencies had established departments to research and design programs for radio by 1928. Advertising agencies with such departments included N. W. Ayer; Lord, Thomas, & Logan; Barton, Durstine, & Osborn; and the Batten Company. Ironically, despite its pioneering role in shaping the style and methods of broadcast advertising, JWTC did not establish a department for radio until 1929, placing John Reber at the helm. His peers called him an "advertising professional" with a "keen sense of the dramatic." One report written by the JWTC stated that Reber wore many hats, that of "the conquering hero, the dying martyr, the mystic seer, the old farmer, the big and busy executive, and a little boy caught in a jam pot." Among his many innovative ideas, the forward-thinking Reber believed that "the star system . . . would revolutionize radio," much in the way it had motion pictures. One of the JWTC's later reports credited Reber as "the single most important influence on radio programming during its earlier days."²⁶⁶ Marketers and advertisers intense research of on-air advertising and the

Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁶⁶ *Sidebar*, Radio Department, August 11, 1980, Folder "Sidebars," Box 15, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, February 15, 1928, Folder "Radio Department," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. J. Walter Thompson had many false starts in the field of radio advertising, and was late in making the investment needed to pursue such potentially lucrative returns. One man within the company, William Ensign, had "worked so intimately with [the radio] that its value as an advertising medium has seemed to me so obvious that I probably have not been as aggressive as I should have been in trying to sell you gentlemen on the medium." In a July 1928 meeting, Ensign argued, "J. Walter Thompson clients should be represented on the air to a greater extent than they are now." This could only be practically achieved through the

applications they developed indicated a calculated approach to using radio to effectively limit people's exposure to others products. Moreover, just as marketers and advertisers were doing with other media, executives employed psychological methods of salesmanship using radio, playing on people's hopes and fears and inventing needs for them.

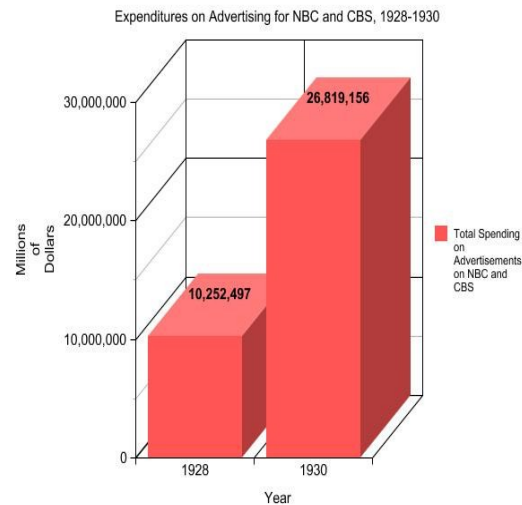
Figure 3.3 Spending on Broadcast Advertising, 1928-1929



Conducting nationwide perception management campaigns were significant investments both during and after the war. For instance, in the late 1920s the use of wireless media still entailed great expense, though so far it had proven to be lucrative. In the first five months of 1929, J. Walter Thompson Company spent \$7,354,052 on radio advertising, compared to \$3,838,501 by that time in 1928. In 1931, advertisements for the National Broadcasting Company and Columbia Broadcasting System constituted 29.2 percent and 34.7 percent

company's establishment of a radio department. See Staff Meeting (July 11, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Figure 3.4 Total Spending on Advertising on NBC and CBS, 1928-1930



(respectively) of those companies' total revenue. Combined advertising spending on these chains totaled \$10,252,497 in 1928 up to \$26,819,156 two years later, a substantial amount for new companies though still far less than what advertisers' spent on advertising in print media (\$180,000,000 annually among all agencies).²⁶⁷ By the end of the 1920s, national marketers and advertisers were spending millions of dollars annually buying airtime on radio and space in newspapers and magazines pushing specific name brands of products. Americans' choice of

²⁶⁷ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter, August 1, 1929, Folder "Radio Department," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. According to the Research Committee on Social Trends, "Aggregate expenditures for national magazine advertising . . . indicate a steady growth from \$154,450,000 in 1925 to a maximum of \$203,776,000 in 1929." Even with a depressed economy in 1930, advertisers spent \$201,855,000. In 1919, 63.9 percent of newspaper income and 64.5 percent of magazine income derived from advertising; by 1927, newspaper income derived from advertising had jumped from 74.1 percent, whereas magazine income from advertising remained stable at 63.4 percent. "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 108-110, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch. The Research Committee also noted a 12.5 percent decrease in newspaper advertising expenditures between 1929 and 1930, while radio advertising revenue increased 63 percent in this same period.

products was limited due to constant repetition of similar messages and themes and the use of carefully applied psychological methods by professional marketers and advertisers.

Marketers and advertisers were confronted with the fact that the public was not the blank slate that they took it for. Indeed, the dramatic increase of on-air advertising incited negative reactions from listeners across the country. Americans decried the manipulative and obnoxious qualities of broadcast advertising. In 1925, one listener commented, "If it's the last act of my life, I'm going to invent something to turn off my radio during those advertising talks, and turn it on again when the music starts!"²⁶⁸ Letters complaining about the extent of radio advertising streamed into the Federal Radio Commission. After reading many of these letters, one contemporary observer, James True, noted:

There is a strong public sentiment against those stations which go in for advertising too strongly and the direct advertising now being broadcast is rapidly building up a strong prejudice against all forms of advertising over the radio In the minds of intelligent radio fans, broadcast advertising of all kinds is considered a destructive influence closely allied with trickery and deceit An army of fans, perhaps a majority, looks upon broadcasting as an advertising medium with antagonistic disfavor, and bitterly resents the increasing attempts of stations to make broadcasting profitable by means of paid publicity.²⁶⁹

Broadcast advertising invited scorn from those who resented its intrusion into their daily lives, mostly because of its all-too-conspicuous presence on a medium that had only recently become a part of the American social fabric. Yet, due to major returns from increased sales which marketers and advertisers attributed to higher expenditures on advertising, the exploitation of all available technologies and media continued unabated as part of an overarching strategy of PM which was designed to control Americans' choices in purchasing. Despite the end of hostilities

²⁶⁸ Quotation in James True, "What the Public Thinks About Advertising over the Radio," *Printers' Ink* 131 (April 1925): 120; McGovern, *Sold American*, 50.

²⁶⁹ True, "What the Public Thinks," 114-115, 120; McGovern, *Sold American*, 49-50. See also "Radio Fans Vote on Broadcast Advertising," *Printers' Ink* 134 (January 1926), "Radio Listeners Still Protest against Broadcast Advertising," *Printers' Ink* 135 (May 1926), and "Freedom for Radio Listeners," *Printers' Ink* 133 (December 1925).

and domestic mobilization, not to mention some vocal objections from the public, Americans remained targets for perception management into the 1920s and beyond.

Attempts to control Americans' behavior using perception management continued beyond the war, only now marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors acting on behalf of corporate interests were the chief executors of it. The U.S. did not return to "normalcy." Sensing complicit support from postwar Republican presidents, corporate leaders exploited all available media for the purposes of convincing Americans to think of themselves primarily as consumers and to believe that specific name brand products could solve all of their problems. In general, national marketers and advertisers held a negative view of the intelligence and decision-making abilities of the general public. They believed that the public had universally low tastes, emotional, impulsive tendencies, and a weak collective psychological disposition which allowed for easy manipulation. They believed that Americans, despite superficial differences, were all enamored of technological novelties and owning superfluous goods, theoretically making them easy targets for corporate PM. Marketers and advertisers financed and exploited the proliferation of wireless technology (and heavily invested in researching the medium) in the 1920s, indicating a clear and deliberate effort to control the channels of communication to millions of Americans. Their dogged determination to use manipulative psychological tactics to influence Americans' buying choices proved the persistence of PM beyond the crisis of war. Their negative views of the American public inspired them to be more aggressive in shaping its choices in purchasing products.

CHAPTER 4 - The Private Sector Targets the American Public

With improved technologies and methodologies, corporate leaders targeted the American public, a single entity, with perception management in the 1920s, just as the state had done during World War I. While promoting products as means of progress and social mobility, they believed that, at its most basic level, the public was uniform in habits, tastes, and psychological qualities. They researched target markets in local areas and, after analyzing the data, expanded local markets into regional and national ones in order to increase the reach and effectiveness of corporate PM. During the war, the federal government had used PM as it claimed to act in defense of democracy and political liberties. After the war, the private sector used PM as it claimed to promote competition, choice, and the free market. In both cases, the objective was the conscious limitation of choice in order to control the behavior of the whole American public.

After the Armistice, corporate executives, notably marketers and advertisers, used all media and psychological tactics to control the American public's choices. Indeed, "the public" remained a key consideration for governmental and corporate leaders in modern U.S. society. As historian Sarah Igo argues, "Concerns about large-scale bureaucracy, the complexity of modern affairs, and the new suasion of advertisers and propagandists mingled in the first decades of the new century to make 'the public' one of the core problems of modern democratic politics."²⁷⁰ Between 1917 and 1929, the public remained the target for PM, despite the supposed democratic ideals of the war and corporate leaders' characterization of the 1920s as a time of unfettered personal and economic freedoms, relatively free of centralized influence over Americans' lives.

²⁷⁰ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 108.

While the federal government had viewed the vast number of inhabitants as a challenge, marketers and advertisers thought that it represented an enormous potential market, one which might be brought into conformity by buying the products that they promoted. Between 1920 and 1930 the U.S. population jumped from 105.7 million to 122.7 million people, an increase of 16.1 percent. Yet despite the vast number of citizens, reaching them was easier than ever before due to technological enablers and the fact that, more than ever before, Americans lived closer to one another as part of the ongoing trend of urbanization. In 1920, urban dwellers outnumbered rural inhabitants 51.4 percent to 48.6 percent (the last time the spread would be so narrow). In 1930 urban dwellers outnumbered rural inhabitants 56.2 percent to 43.8 percent.²⁷¹ That made reaching ever-larger segments of the buying public easier. For instance, as part of their systematic policy of researching demographic trends and markets, in 1926 advertisers happily discovered that while only 18 percent of dealers operated in cities "the average [city] dealer sold over ten times as many units as the dealer in the country and small town district." Thus, 18 percent of dealers accounted for 66 percent of total sales. Because of the proximity of so many of the nation's inhabitants, marketers and advertisers could reach and, they hoped, influence large segments of the American public by campaigning in several densely populated areas simultaneously. Although not using the term monolithic, advertiser Milton Towne recognized essentially this same quality in the public when he said in 1926 that "considering the *total market* of the United States," the "composite consumer lived everywhere"; "the actual prospective consumer or dealer lived everywhere, and . . . distribution by dealer and by products penetrated

²⁷¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "United States Summary," Fifteenth Census of the United States, <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1930.html> (accessed September 6, 2011): 3-88; According to the census, 1920 was the first time urban dwellers outnumbered rural inhabitants in the U.S., although this fact is somewhat misleading since towns needed only to exceed 2,500 residents to be considered "urban."

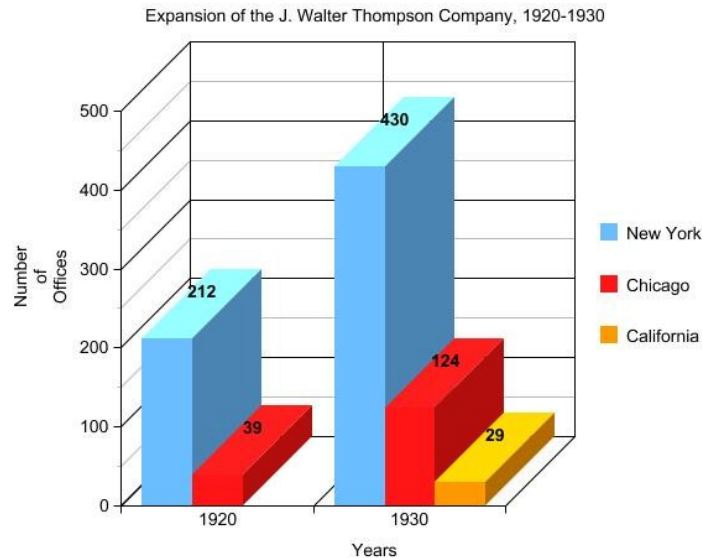
everywhere."²⁷² By the 1920s, the "composite consumer" had broken free of the confines of localities and even regions to comprise a single buying public. Marketers' and advertisers' goal of defining the U.S. permanently along consumerist lines was greatly facilitated by the fact that reaching the entire public was easier than ever before. They resolved to actively guide the public, not let it revert to some set of older routines or return to "normalcy."

The state's nationwide PM campaign during WWI followed from and supported the growth of centralized federal power. Likewise, many national companies (including marketing and advertising agencies) expanded in the 1920s which not only implied their financial health but, more importantly, improved their ability to reach larger target markets in an effort to get

²⁷² Milton Towne, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. One of the "problems" facing corporate executives was convincing locally based companies (e.g., electrical power stations) to take a more pro-active approach to advertising. According to one JWTC executive, for example, "It had never occurred to [Boston Edison, electric power provider] that advertising through national magazines might be for them an even more efficient medium than the local newspaper—obviously, not for a localized problem but where a national plan was in operation and with the intensification applied in a locality like Boston." See Staff Meeting (January 30, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; in 1924, Louis Pedlar of the Marshall Field and Company told the company's advertising manager, G.R. Schaeffer, "If Marshall Field and Company are to be known as a national institution we must talk to our audience through national media as well as local publications." The company had not yet achieved "national status" by 1927, as G.R. Schaeffer told Robert Titus of Barton, Durstine, and Osborn advertising agency "I have not forgotten my conversation with Bruce [Barton] about national advertising." He worried that the "pot is boiling." See Pedlar to G.R. Schaeffer, November 5, 1924, and Schaeffer to Robert Titus, December 5, 1927, both in Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; it is worthwhile to note that for the 1926 Bok Awards, nothing was awarded for local campaigns in cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants "due to the lack of any outstanding merit in the material brought before the Jury." Blackman Company and Proctor and Gamble won the award for best national campaign for Ivory Soap, and Campbell-Ewald Company of Detroit won for best campaign in a city (or cities) of over 100,000. See *The Fourth Estate*, February 19, 1927, Folder "Ad Awards," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

people to buy what they wanted them to buy using PM. For example, in 1916 the J. Walter Thompson Company had 177 offices within the U.S. and in 1929 it had 637 (though the number fell to 580 in 1930 due to a downturn in the economy). In 1920, JWTC had 212 offices in New York, but in 1930 it had nearly doubled to 409. In 1920, it had 39 offices in Chicago and ten

Figure 4.1 Expansion of the J. Walter Thompson Company, 1920-1930



years later the number of offices had soared to 124. It had no offices in California in 1920, but in 1930 it had 3 offices in Hollywood and Los Angeles and 26 in San Francisco.²⁷³ Many corporations and retail chains also expanded throughout the 1920s, which allowed for even greater availability of the goods that advertisers pushed in their campaigns. For example, as

²⁷³ Increasing with the number of offices were the mean salaries of employees. Looking at New York offices' personnel alone, mean yearly salaries rose from \$2,900 in 1920 to \$3,820 in 1929. These figures do not reveal disparities of income between "professional" and "clerical" staff, but on a superficial level at least they indicated JWTC's ongoing success, even as it expanded nationwide and continued investing in expensive research studies. "Domestic Offices," Box 76, Edward G. Wilson papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folders "General Numbers and Salaries (1906-1970)" and "General Numbers and Salaries (General, 1906-1963)," Box 91, Personnel Files, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Lynn Dumenil mentions, "chain stores, such as the A & P for groceries, Woolworth's for variety goods, and United Cigar Stores for smoking products, expanded dramatically in the 1920s, so that by 1930 there were over 7,000 chains with close to 160,000 stores. At the beginning of the decade, they had accounted for 4 percent of the total retail trade; at its end, 20 percent."²⁷⁴ Thus, many industries, including marketing and advertising, expanded after WWI to "serve" the American public. Corporate leaders added to the number of offices and retail locations in order to tap into the national market, to make the same consumer wares available nationwide, and to help them convince Americans that regional, demographic delineations of society had washed away, leaving one public supposedly motivated by consumption. Not coincidentally, perception management aimed at the American public accompanied corporate expansion as it had accompanied the expansion of the federal government in 1917 and 1918.

During World War I, marketers and advertisers, hoping to expose Americans' preferences, predispositions, and vulnerabilities, began systematically researching the public and target markets. In April 1918, the American Association of Advertising Agencies established standards for identifying target markets, thus demonstrating to corporate leaders how to approach PM methodically. Moreover, it reflected the professionalization and practical application of social sciences. In order to analyze the "present and potential market for which the product or service is adapted," the 4 A's provided the following parameters: location, "extent of possible sale," season, "trade and economic conditions," and "nature and amount of competition."²⁷⁵ By

²⁷⁴ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 72.

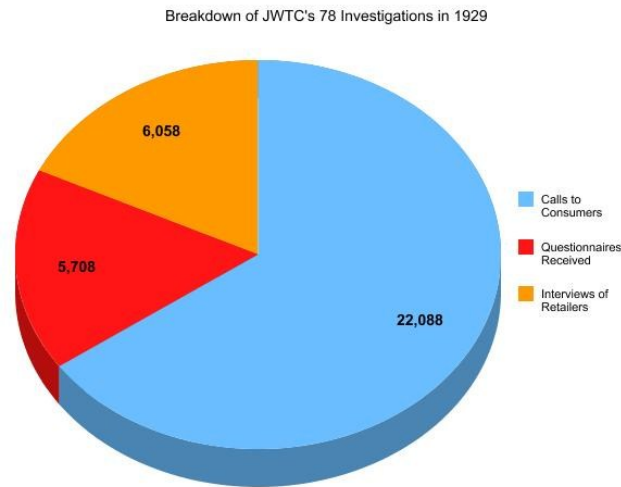
²⁷⁵ American Association of Advertising Agencies, "Report of National Committee on Agency Service," April 9, 1918, Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

the late 1920s, marketers and advertisers believed that they needed to invest heavily in researching the public and specific target markets in order to develop their PM campaigns. In 1929 alone, JWTC's New York office conducted 78 research investigations for 40 clients. Those investigations entailed 22,088 calls to consumers, 5,708 mail questionnaires received, and 6,058 interviews of retailers, in addition to "media, sales and distribution analyses." Paul Cherington, JWTC's Director of Research, concluded, "Research in advertising [is the] only way to know what's happening in [the] market."²⁷⁶ In 1926, speaking to an Associated Advertising Clubs of the World convention, Cherington detailed how research helped establish the "Ultimate Market." Since a short-term goal of corporate PM was "to stimulate both willingness and readiness" to buy specific goods "at the advertisers' own chosen time," Cherington believed that marketers and advertisers must have detailed knowledge of target markets. To Cherington, "It is plain that the cultivation of willingness and readiness to buy on the part of the ultimate market involves intricate knowledge and skillful interpretation of that knowledge."²⁷⁷ They sifted through data to uncover commonalities, however weak they were, in one group or another. They purposely diluted the nation's social complexities in order to simplify target markets and promote consumerist values. At the simplest level, the goal of wartime perception management was a unified, patriotic public; the goal of postwar, corporate perception management was a uniform public consuming the same products.

²⁷⁶ J. Walter Thompson Bulletin (April 1930), Folder "Research and Planning," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁷⁷ Paul Cherington, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Figure 4.2 Breakdown of JWTC's 78 Investigations in 1929



A major advantage that corporate leaders had over the orchestrators of governmental PM was more time to research the public and target markets within it. Varied were the ways in which they drew their conclusions about the American people. At a 1926 convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, Paul Cherington outlined two types of investigations: those "designed to produce simple facts" and those "designed to yield collections of opinions or judgments [coming from] considerable numbers of people." Cherington thought that measuring "human reactions" was as important as receiving answers to categorical questions when trying to ascertain the qualities of target markets. To measure "human reactions," he devised a four-step plan: first, determine appropriate "sample groups"; second, devise questions that would result in "a minimum of distortion due to self-consciousness on the part of those answering them"; third, when possible, use "personal visits" rather than "thoroughly impersonal" mail inquiries; and, finally, find the best way to tabulate reactions obtained in the study.²⁷⁸ Marketers and advertisers reached conclusions about the entire American public based on relatively small-scale research studies of "sample groups." Corporations' intensive programs for

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

research, set up for the purpose of more fully understanding target markets within the general public, indicated their actively targeting the American people. Far from a period without centralized influence over Americans' lives, the postwar decade witnessed some of the most earnest attempts to manage the social and economic conduct of the entire nation.

Both governmental and corporate leaders charged with conducting PM both targeted what they perceived to be a monolithic public, itself comprised of millions of "average Americans." As Olivier Zunz argues, "It is largely [human engineers'] theory of an average American and the techniques of measurement they invented to define such a hypothetical human being that accounts for our understanding of modern society as a 'mass.'" Governmental leaders and corporate professionals defined average Americans so as to draw conclusions about the whole of mass society and develop policies from there. For example, during World War I the War Department used statistical averages when it allowed psychologists to study military recruits' intelligence and submit their findings to the Army. As Zunz describes, Robert Yerkes, president of the American Psychological Association in 1917, convinced the War Department to use intelligence tests "to place recruits in appropriate jobs" and in the right levels of responsibility. In addition, the War Department could determine the average psychological and intellectual composition of each tier within each military occupational specialty.²⁷⁹ In the 1920s, the study of average Americans had become commonplace. As Zunz shows, governmental leaders, social scientists, and corporate PM strategists sought out "the average worker, the average buyer, the average voter and, even if the idea sounds farfetched, the average lover in a

²⁷⁹ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 48, 52, 68. Psychologists continued giving intelligence tests to military recruits and also provided expertise in the field of psychological warfare during World War II. For more, see Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

middle-class society." Reducing society down to averages, marketers and advertisers targeted "the middle," the largest class of consumers.²⁸⁰ Neither the state during WWI nor the private sector after 1918 wished to deal with the complexities of American society, and preferred instead to reduce the demographic landscape down to easily comprehensible averages. Regardless of whether PM occurred during a time of national crisis, a major goal of it was creating social uniformity. So, naturally, governmental and corporate leaders preferred to view the public as one of simplistic statistical averages.

Average or typical Americans comprising the larger public had been targets of governmental perception management in World War I, and continued as such for marketers and advertisers in their systematic efforts to influence people's behavior after the war. Sarah Igo argues that mobilization for WWI provided the impetus for deeper study into national averages. In *The Averaged American*, she contends that "[s]cientific characterizations of 'average' or 'typical' Americans were a striking phenomenon of the new century." During World War I, bureaucrats discovered "a broader utility to social scientific knowledge, especially in the areas of motivation, morale, and persuasion." But "[only] in the years after World War I did mass surveys telling Americans 'who we are,' 'what we want,' and 'what we believe' enter the public domain." Social scientists increased their studies of people and communities in the postwar decade; in turn, many executives who planned PM campaigns incorporated social scientists' findings to further their own aims.

²⁸⁰ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 68. Sarah Igo argued that in the first quarter of the twentieth century, "commentators invented the phrase *mass society*, a capacious term used to denote the transition from local communities to a national one, and not usually for the better." Igo, *The Averaged American*, 10. See also Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 24.

Perhaps the most popular study of average America in the 1920s was Robert and Helen Lynd's study of Muncie, Indiana, *Middletown*.²⁸¹ At the time of their investigation, the Lynds (especially Robert) increasingly believed that advertising was tremendously effective at shaping people's decision to purchase specific products. However, for marketers and advertisers, *Middletown* represented a microcosm of the entire United States. As Sarah Igo describes, the Lynds conducted thousands of interviews and attended Muncie's churches, town hall meetings, celebrations, sports events, and more, in order to draw "conclusions about how life was lived there—and by extension, in the modern United States." They "hoped to shed light not merely on a local community, but on the entirety of modern America: its economic relations, its social practices, its reactions to change, its core values." According to a report cited by Igo, "one of the largest New York advertising agencies is requiring that [*Middletown*] be read by [its] staff," not because the company cared about the goings-on in Muncie, Indiana, but because it represented an average, middle-class American town. As one contemporary source observed, "Middletown is—or at least is meant to be—America." The "averageness" discovered in *Middletown* and elsewhere was, for marketers, "a prized commodity." Put simply, "For commercial interests seeking to expand their sales of consumer goods nationwide . . . new data about the habits of a typical community could only be good news," a "marketer's dream," even a "godsend."²⁸² Muncie provided one account of the "averageness," the middle, upon which marketers and advertisers based their assumptions of a single American public. Corporate researchers cared to analyze the American public only as far as they wanted to reduce it to averages and identify its

²⁸¹ There were two studies of *Middletown*, one in 1929 and a follow-up in 1937. Because of its novelty, the study of 1929 is the better known of the two, and is the one to which the present study refers.

²⁸² Igo, *The Averaged American*, 3, 9, 11, 29, 39, 52, 70, 82, 85-86.

habits. Having adopted a methodical approach toward manipulating the emotions of the nation, marketers and advertisers appreciated that controlling the public's choices required a baseline measurement of the object itself. Perception management campaigns aimed at the average American represented corporate leaders' attempts to minimize or whitewash the social complexities in the United States.

Corporate executives had resources other than *Middletown* to know about average Americans and, by extension, the American public, which they targeted with PM in the 1920s. In a report from 1929 called "Consumption According to Incomes," the Social Science Research Council defined the "Average Man" as one who "apparently enjoys a greater money income and spends for a greater variety of purposes than before the war, even though he is periodically unemployed and faces persisting `agricultural depression.'" But the specifics of his state of living were subject to change. Averages continually had to be reevaluated. The Council reported, "Current indexes of the cost of living based upon the 1918-1919 budgets are considerably out of line with present consumption habits." Further, "Price changes from pre-war through the war and post-war periods have been violent enough to vitiate comparisons of budgets made strictly in monetary terms." To better understand the "Average Man," the Council proposed to Secretary of the Interior Ray Lyman Wilbur launching a fuller investigation in order to compile "a survey of the manner in which the American people spend their money according to income levels and of the meaning of these expenditures for their health and welfare."²⁸³ Reducing mass society to averages—average income, average spending, average home, average size of family, average commute, etc.—helped the state know about the nation it governed, and

²⁸³ "Consumption According to Incomes: An Inquiry into the Economic and Social Well-Being of the American People," September 23, 1929, 6-9, 14, Presidential Subject File—Cost of Living—1929, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

informed marketers and advertisers as they used perception management after World War I to define the U.S. permanently as a nation of consumers.

Because postwar corporate PM involved marketers and advertisers exploiting print, wireless, and visual media, companies constantly researched "typical" readers, listeners, and viewers. They studied reports written by, among others, Crossley, Inc., a research engineering firm, which by 1931 had conducted three national-level and numerous local studies of listening audiences. Crossley concluded that 3.1 people listened to each radio, totaling over 31 million people each day. It also determined that the average person listened to the radio for 2 hours and 25 minutes on a given day.²⁸⁴ In *Listening In*, Susan Douglas describes how social scientists, programmers, and advertisers tried to know typical listening audiences and average listeners. Douglas argues that the audience "was itself an invention, a construction that corralled a nation of individual listeners into a sometimes monolithic group that somehow knew what 'it' wanted from broadcasting."²⁸⁵ Identifying average listeners represented the systematic approach toward understanding the public for the purpose of controlling its choices in purchasing, proving that Americans remained targets of PM after World War I.

²⁸⁴ Report cited in "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 106, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

²⁸⁵ Douglas, *Listening In*, 125-130, 136-149. Herta Herzog, Paul Lazarsfeld, and others attempted to identify listening groups, often to no avail. Herzog's analyses offended advocates of researching markets because he told them what they already knew: "the 'audience' was an elusive, even mythological construct that defied categorization." Lazarsfeld believed that certain programs and advertisements appealed to certain groups of listeners. According to Douglas, Lazarsfeld "was too concerned with getting clear-cut findings, too focused on what he saw as the inverse relationship between income and radio listening." He believed that radio reinforced "preexisting class lines and patterns of consumption," while Herzog believed that the impact of the medium was "not always easy to quantify."

As part of its blanket wartime PM strategy, the state had appealed to the more basic emotions, not the rational faculties, of the entire nation. Seeking to chart the course of postwar America, marketers and advertisers similarly conducted PM on a national level, looking to the figurative average American rather than accounting for local and regional peculiarities. For practical reasons, they identified and targeted markets based on common human behaviors and the products being sold. But their concept of the public (and specific target markets) was not based entirely on statistics or empirically derived averages. There were subjective criteria as well. As previously discussed, corporate leaders held negative views about Americans' intellectual abilities and capacity for making rational decisions. Major corporate organizations including the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) and the United States Chamber of Commerce (COC), both of which had the "declared purpose of speaking for American business," articulated negative opinions about mental aptitude of "the masses."²⁸⁶

Corporate leaders divided people into two broad categories, buyers and non-buyers (Paul Cherington of the JWTC noted that anyone who did not possess "ability to buy, willingness to buy, and readiness to buy" was simply "not a buyer"). Still, all Americans theoretically possessed the same dismal intellectual and psychological qualities.²⁸⁷ As early as 1896 Charles Bates wrote, "Advertisers should never forget they are addressing stupid people," this in an era of Populism, the emergence of the Progressives, the growing strength of the American Federation

²⁸⁶ James Prothro notes that those organizations' founding predated the First World War (1895 and 1913), but he also said that they had achieved new relevance in the 1920s because, by then, business had reached "a respectable amount of maturity"; business was "sufficiently self-conscious and united to express a general point of view"; and the 1920s was "a time before the business community grew apologetic or ashamed." Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, xiv, xvii, xix.

²⁸⁷ Paul Cherington, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

of Labor, and other instruments of promoting popular enfranchisement.²⁸⁸ Likely more advertisers concurred with Bates a quarter century later, particularly after witnessing the perceived effectiveness of wartime PM. In the 1920s, marketers and advertisers exploited Americans' supposed "low tastes and limited intelligence."²⁸⁹ At a JWTC executives' meeting in 1929, one speaker explained that only fifteen percent of the public responds "to cold logic or long detailed explanatory copy." The other eighty-five percent of the buying public, counting "for a great deal in the total sales equation," did not "require the argument which is required by the 15% because it cannot understand or [is] not interested in that kind of reasoning." Directed at the eighty-five percent bloc, the right sort of advertising "repeated continuously can induce belief and ultimately bring about an almost mechanical acceptance of the product."²⁹⁰ The JWTC, espousing the general opinion of the advertising industry, believed that controlling what

²⁸⁸ Charles Bates, *Good Advertising* (New York: Holmes Publishing Company, 1896), 256, excerpted in McGovern, *Sold American*, 23.

²⁸⁹ McGovern, *Sold American*, 35-48; Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 66-69, 86-87.

²⁹⁰ Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. Some advertisers argued that the best sales campaigns possessed a "hypnotic" effect. To one marketing executive, "Some people are very suggestible and easily hypnotized and some extremely difficult to hypnotize, but almost anyone can be hypnotized if they are willing to be, or if they are caught at moments when their wills and reasons are off guard; but even those who are most difficult to induce into the hypnotic state, if once hypnotized, are therefore more subject to its influence." See Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; in late-1929, the Social Science Research Council placed "the feeble minded" in the "Social Waste" category alongside the sick, the unemployed, the elderly, the insane, the blind and deaf, prisoners, unemployed single women, and the young. See Ogburn to E. French Strother, September 23, 1929, Committee on Recent Social Trends—Correspondence—1929, E. French Strother papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

Americans bought required the rational application of certain marketing and psychological principles.

With full intention to steer the nation using PM after WWI, marketers and advertisers thought nothing of programming values and attitudes into the public because they believed that it lacked sophistication and sound judgment. In 1926, W.H. Beatty, an advertising executive from the Newell-Emmett Company, noted "that whenever . . . the great mass public exercise[s] what is known as popular taste . . . this popular taste is found to be [low] in standard."²⁹¹ In 1927, JWTC executives discussed a recent study, "The Mental and Emotional Life of a Tabloid Reader" and contemplated whether to use "low-brow" advertising in magazines of that type. William Esty, an advertiser from JWTC who founded his own advertising company, William Esty, Co. in 1932, recommended continued study of "all different kinds of approach—not necessarily merely the crude type."²⁹² In 1931, William Day of the JWTC wrote, "The great mass has never had an idea. It has no ideas about government, it has no ideas about religion, it has no ideas about biology; it is purely and simply a vast shapeless force which is led in one direction or another by leaders."²⁹³

In 1923, David Hirshfield, a member of the British press, jabbed the American public when he noted that "the Hearst newspapers [will] go all over the United States and be read by

²⁹¹ W.H. Beatty, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁹² Staff Meeting (September 8, 1927), Folder "1/A," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

²⁹³ William Day at a J. Walter Thompson staff meeting, February 17, 1931, quotation in McGovern, *Sold American*, 57.

some thirty million persons, of whom the vast majority are too ill-informed to suspect their truth."²⁹⁴ Ivy Lee, Edward Bernays, and Everett Dean Martin, each an expert in corporate public relations, believed the nation was "intellectually lazy," easily ruled by demagoguery and vulnerable to deception.²⁹⁵ Charles Fay, Vice-President of the National Association of Manufacturers and member of the Chamber of Commerce, argued that Americans "have not the initiative, or time, or brains enough to study policies, and make up their minds by themselves [or] how to vote."²⁹⁶ With those attitudes, it figured that marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors, acting on behalf of corporate interests, appointed themselves as the nobility in the socio-economic order and set out to chart the course of the postwar U.S. using perception management. In an age when many social and political elites believed in their own superiority to masses, corporate leaders allegedly sold comfort, leisure, and peace of mind to Americans, and hence claimed to be acting selflessly on behalf of the public. The active targeting of the American public continued beyond the war into the 1920s, disproving any return to pre-war normalcy.

Wartime perception management and the continuation of similar strategies in the commercial realm after the war convinced corporate leaders that controlling the nation's economic behavior had not only become possible, but quite simple to accomplish. While publicly claiming to promote the free market and to serve the American people, elitist corporate executives laughed at how easily they could sway the public's buying choices. They viewed

²⁹⁴ *Time*, June 25, 1923.

²⁹⁵ Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 228-229; Bernays, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, 214.

²⁹⁶ Charles Fay's quotation in Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 3.

their commission of leading the nation not with selflessness or benevolence but with snide arrogance. One advertiser argued that average Americans had the "mind of a child of ten," a common sentiment among other elitist executives which included James Webb Young.²⁹⁷ At his farewell ceremony from the JWT, Young presented a satire called "My Life in Advertising, by Fraud Hopkins," a play on the name Claude Hopkins, one of the most prominent advertisers in the early twentieth century. In it he exclaimed his love for "common people," simply "because they are so easy to fool. My millions have been extracted from their pockets I seemed to know that my mastery of their minds would make my fortune." He went on:

I believe God will always make a great many such people, and that therefore the future of the advertising business is secure. I believe in being simple, for nobody but simple people could believe the things we say in advertising. I believe that the greatest need of the human heart is for hokum—that without it merchandise would never sell, young ladies would never get married, and life would be unendurable.²⁹⁸

Receiving laughter and applause, Young's satire had resonated with the other advertising executives. In *The Dollar Decade* James Prothro describes contemporary corporate sentiments:

[Man] can be debased much more easily than [he] can be elevated But the desirable capacities assumed here are rigidly bound by his limitations. When he turns to thought, leisure, or political judgment, the average man is immediately beyond his depth; and his floundering efforts in each of these directions not only reveal his inadequacies but destroy his simple virtues.²⁹⁹

Some advertisers' views of the public's stupidity convinced them that researching consumers was pointless. James Webb Young wrote, "Various experiments have been made and one very valuable use has been found. If, on the days the fish won't bite, you give the Advertiser a

²⁹⁷ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 35.

²⁹⁸ "My Life in Advertising, by Fraud Hopkins," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. For background on Claude Hopkins, see Juliann Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes: A Cultural History of American Advertising* (Boston: Wadsworth, 1998), 108-110.

²⁹⁹ Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 13.

Multiple Correlation to play with, it takes his mind off his troubles." The idea of researching what "The Public wants," in Young's estimation, "creates an Ethical Problem, as it must be clear to you by now that human nature is fundamentally bad and what it wants is always wrong."³⁰⁰

Those types of statements and beliefs underlay the corporate sector's aggressive attempts to exercise control over the American public which inspired the continuation of PM after WWI.

Corporate executives were not only committed to using psychological means to influence Americans' behavior but also were completely blatant and unapologetic in their elitism, belying their altruistic claims of serving the public. Speaking at a 1926 convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, W.H. Beatty of the Newell-Emmett Company agreed with the likes of James Webb Young, saying, "If there is one thing which characterizes the American public, it is that it does not know what it wants. Can you imagine a more restless, searching thing than our Public? Think of the things we have helped it do over the past twenty years . . . the Public take what they see, so long as they understand it, and so long as it does not violate the fundamental requirements of living." Beatty captured marketers' and advertisers' general view of the public:

You will be told, and it is true, that Mr. and Mrs. Public, considered in millions of people, care nothing for the aesthetic, that they chose badly and crudely, that they like garishness rather than the restrained, that if you turn them loose in the Picture Gallery they are apt to buy a chromo with a mother of pearl inlay, and pass by a good reproduction of something sounder and more permanent in beauty, that they like the lurid in furniture and clothes, and the wild rather than the subtle and the conditioned. This is true and there is no escaping it. But the error which creeps in, in this sort of thing, is that we confuse the question of what the public chooses and what the public will look at. We give them credit for a critical faculty which they have just proven they lack. The question of [advertising] does not primarily involve any question of popular choice. The essential that one needs to remember when criticizing a piece of advertising art is its clearness and its chance of being understood, and those who fear that

³⁰⁰ "The Compleat Angler, Or, How to be an Advertising Man and Catch the Poor Fish," Howard Henderson, Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

anything which is high in art standards is distasteful to the public impute a power to the public mind which it actually lacks.³⁰¹

Supposedly monolithic in its low tastes and stupidity, "The Public" required leadership and direction, which corporate leaders claimed to provide by using perception management to order society. Thus, the public was no freer from attempts to manage its behavior after the war than it had been during it.

After 1918, corporate leaders, notably marketers and advertisers, viewed themselves as aristocratic leaders of the postwar order and, frequently, as male partners in a relationship with a feminine public. They believed that the public had supposedly female attributes; it was irrational, impulsive, emotional, and undiscerning. They concurred with Frederick Lewis Allen's appraisal that "the public is fickle."³⁰² It was also amused by trivial humor and entertainment. The increased consumption of popular magazines like *True Story* and *Daily News* strengthened advertisers' belief in a feminine, unsophisticated public. They took delight in that "it was the unsophisticated consumer whose judgment was crucial."³⁰³ Instead of trying to enlighten Americans by providing them with logical copy, marketers and advertisers deliberately chose the best strategies to influence people on their own emotional, irrational level. They

³⁰¹ Beatty also noted that advertisers can pick any image they want because "The Public do not recognize such abstract things as art standards"; therefore, "the picture is safe no matter what you or I may know or believe we know about its art quality." He also argued, "There is no permanent hope for anything like progress in our business if we are easy in our virtue and keep playing into what has been called 'slum-mindedness.'" See W.H. Beatty, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁰² Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 181.

³⁰³ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 38-72.

believed themselves to be heads of the American household, and perfectly within their right to determine how things should run in the United States after WWI.

The public was not only feminine figuratively; by the 1920s, corporate executives had found that women were perhaps the most active participants in consumer culture. The American Association of Advertising Agencies and the J. Walter Thompson Company both "[realized] the important part played by women in the marketing of many classes of products in use in the

Figure 4.3 Advertisement for Ivory Soap in Literary Digest, 1922. Housewives, the intended audience, determined the health, well-being, and happiness of their families. John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.



home." As Frederick Lewis Allen noted, women learned "to make lighter work" of homemaking and bought new products for doing so.³⁰⁴ Affordable home appliances followed on the heels of the electrification of homes across the country. In 1907, only 8 percent of American homes had electricity; by 1920, that number had risen to nearly 50 percent. According to Lynn Dumenil, the dramatic increase in the distribution and availability of mass-produced appliances, fixtures,

³⁰⁴ Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 83.

and canned goods aided "scientific management among home economists." Marketers and advertisers "encouraged the wife to think of herself as a modern professional, [reliant upon] expert advice." Advertisers became "the wise counselors in the spending of money that the clever housewife needs."³⁰⁵ They believed women were "the most numerous purchasers in the retail stores" and "they buy many articles which, at first one would suppose, would naturally fall within the province of the masculine patron." The 4 A's noted: "Even men's underwear is more often purchased by the wives and mothers than the eventual wearer."³⁰⁶ Just as the state had appreciated the pivotal role of women during domestic mobilization and targeted them with PM, marketers and advertisers realized that the success of their own PM strategy might depend entirely upon support and participation from women.

Numerous contemporaries noted of how women had not only embraced but helped drive mass consumer culture in the 1920s, facts which marketers and advertisers naturally attributed to their own superior ability to influence the perceptions and behavior of the nation. Historian Lynn Dumenil notes that "women's purchases of consumer goods represented two-thirds of the \$44 billion spent annually." A contemporary ad in the journal *Photoplay* described the "New Woman" as "Home Manager—Purchasing Agent—Art Director—Wife."³⁰⁷ Walter Lippmann was surprised that "the mass of women do not look at the world as workers; in America, at least, their prime interest is as consumers." In addition, "It is they who go to the market and do the shopping; it is they who have to make the family budget go around; it is they who feel

³⁰⁵ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 127-129.

³⁰⁶ *Boston Sunday Herald*, November 11, 1923; Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁰⁷ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 129.

shabbiness and fraud and high prices most directly . . . their influence will make the consumer the real master of the political situation."³⁰⁸ Lippmann also had ideas about how to elevate the public, but his brand of elitism was something far different from that of self-serving corporate executives. James Webb Young of JWTC believed "that women were the great consumers, and that I must have a laboratory in which to study them." (Young boasted that he had acquired "a diabolic knowledge of women.")³⁰⁹ In *Advertising the American Dream*, Roland Marchand states that in the 1920s, financially secure white males dominated the advertising profession and had little in common with their "female" public. "If [advertising] was to succeed," Marchand argues, "the distinctive and unrepresentative demographic characteristics of advertising men (and sometimes women) had to be surmounted."³¹⁰ Perhaps so, but it was not a stretch for elitist corporate executives who already thought of themselves as superior to the public intellectually, psychologically, and professionally to look at ordering American society from a gendered perspective. Marketers and advertisers, representing the status-driven, self-serving interests of the private sector, would not leave Americans to their own devices as they continually targeted the public with PM in the 1920s.

As one part of their systematic strategy of perception management after World War I, marketers and advertisers dispatched employees, often females, to research women's habits and

³⁰⁸ Lippmann's quotations in Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 106-107.

³⁰⁹ "My Life in Advertising, by Fraud Hopkins," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³¹⁰ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 38.

wants.³¹¹ They studied women's tastes to stay abreast of fads and trends in purchasing, an apparent contradiction to their claims that they could program wants and needs into the public at any time. In one example in 1927, the J. Walter Thompson Company researched several cities in Indiana to determine "what the housewife's reaction was to [Camay soap by Proctor & Gamble]" compared to Lux soap produced by their client, Unilever. To their dismay, the researchers discovered nearly "every woman was using Camay" instead of Lux because of its size, shape, and wrapper. The researchers discovered "that even the most economical women think in terms of unit price rather than what they get for that price." Advertisers used data from that kind of study to revise marketing themes and reinvent products' images in order to exercise some control over what people bought, usually by simply associating feelings and emotions directly with products.³¹² Those psychological, methodical approaches to selling products signified a larger strategy of using perception management to restrict choice while claiming to promote the free market.

As it had been with the various PM campaigns during WWI, the targeting of women after the war was conscious and deliberate. National marketing and advertising companies chose to hire women to provide insider's information about female psychology, preferences, and habits. While Lynn Dumenil argues that the war had "had little permanent impact on female employment," women had become valued employees in the fields of marketing and

³¹¹ Cynthia Swank, "Not Just Another Pretty Face: Advertising Women in the 1920s," presentation to J. Walter Thompson employees, March 9, 1983, Folder "Helen Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³¹² Staff Meeting (April 19, 1927), Folder "1/1," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

advertising.³¹³ Marketers and advertisers followed the same idea as that which was written in a Marshall Field monograph in 1927: "Very early this store realized that in catering to the taste of women it must have the guidance of women."³¹⁴ Acting in the interest of their employers, female associates did not think of simply "catering to the taste of women," but rather they helped to invent needs for them which could only be fulfilled by purchasing specific products.

Manufacturing needs and wants and raising fears, insecurities, and anxieties, especially among women, characterized the general postwar corporate PM strategy. J. Walter Thompson Company's female employees had helped invent needs in its campaigns for Pond's Cold Cream, Kraft, Simmons beds, Cutex, and many other products. Helen Resor (née Lansdowne) had personally developed themes for Crisco, Yuban Coffee, and Lux Flakes. She also created the tagline for Woodbury Soap, "A Skin You Love to Touch." According to Cynthia Swank, an employee of the JWTC decades later, Lansdowne "claimed she was the first woman to be successful in writing and planning national, as opposed to retail, advertising." Paradoxically, male advertisers believed that women did not know what they wanted or needed and therefore required leadership, yet they innately knew what was modern and stylish in appliances, fashions, and technologies, and hence must be studied closely to provide clues.³¹⁵ National advertising

³¹³ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 111.

³¹⁴ Marshall Field Memorandum, September 17, 1927, Box 77, Marshall Fields and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

³¹⁵ Cynthia Swank, "Not Just Another Pretty Face: Advertising Women in the 1920s," presentation to J. Walter Thompson employees, March 9, 1983, Folder "Helen Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; one advertisement for J.B. Hudson stated "the modern hostess . . . considers sameness identical with boredom." J.B. Hudson Incorporated Jewelers advertisement, December 21, 1929, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 6, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

organizations such as the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the J. Walter Thompson Company all but codified this belief. According to a press release from the 4 A's, the J. Walter Thompson Company had correctly stated that "in order to get the message across to this army of women purchasers they must talk in the language of women, they must make a natural appeal." Smartly, "they have put women on their staff, women with brains and a sense of fitness and who are 'up-to-date' in the best sense of that much abused phrase."³¹⁶ Companies' hiring of women may have been an admission that they did not understand women as consumers, but, in addition to reflecting women's growing place in society, it also indicated a conscious, deliberate policy of researching them in order to sway their decisions to buy specific products. They did not want women returning to more traditional mores, at least not without the convenience of consumer goods. Centralized attempts to manage Americans' perceptions and behavior continued in full force well after the war ended, now through the process of relating identity, worth, and quality of living to ownership of certain material goods.³¹⁷

Pursuant to their strategy of affecting the public's attitudes toward specific products and controlling its choices, corporate leaders hired women to appeal to other women. In 1928, J. Walter Thompson used celebrities from motion pictures such as Alberta Vaughn, Sally Blane, Agnes Ayres, and Rita Carewe to tell women to buy Lux Toilet Soap.³¹⁸ It hired Eleanor

³¹⁶ *Boston Sunday Herald*, November 11, 1923; Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³¹⁷ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 32.

³¹⁸ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Roosevelt, Alva Belmont, Queen Marie of Romania, Victoria of Spain, Anne Morgan, and others because it thought that their prominence would convince other women of the superiority and necessity of the specific products.³¹⁹ According to JWTC, those women exhibited "the principle of *noblesse oblige*" as they urged other women to buy Pond's Cold Cream, Simmons beds, and Cream of Wheat.³²⁰ It (along with other national advertisers) used women to divert buyers' attention from the products themselves and to have them relate to the famous endorsers.³²¹

³¹⁹ Belmont was the wife of William Vanderbilt and later O.H.P. Belmont, and founding member of the National Women's Party. To secure Mrs. Belmont's endorsement of Pond's beginning in February 1924, J. Walter Thompson handed her a \$1,000 check payable to the Woman's Party, and also a "finder's fee" of \$1,000 to Katherine Leckie, a "former suffrage campaigner." Anne Morgan, J.P. Morgan's daughter, had worked feverishly to aid war-torn France during and after World War I.

³²⁰ Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Cynthia Swank, "Not Just Another Pretty Face: Advertising Women in the 1920s," presentation to J. Walter Thompson employees, March 9, 1983, Folder "Helen Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Frederick Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 254.

³²¹ Speaking to John McKinlay, Vice-President of Marshall Field and Company, Bruce Barton described the reason for "personality" advertising: "In these days when such a tremendous mass of advertising is being pour over in the public mind, it is impossible for any mind to assimilate more than a small part of it. Nature always takes the easiest course, and more and more, American men and women are saying to themselves, subconsciously perhaps, but nonetheless effectively, 'We shan't try to read and assimilate everything; it's impossible. We'll pin our faith and our buying habits to a few big names that we know and can trust.'" See Barton to John McKinlay, February 15, 1929, Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Hiring famous endorsers was part of companies' strategy of building product-centric uniformity and evidence of the continued targeting of the American public with PM after World War I.³²²

To give women the sense that they had entered the age of modernity, marketers and advertisers tied women's consumer choices with their recently established constitutional right to the vote. They highlighted freedom while trying to exercise control over people's behavior, exactly the same as occurred during the war. With women as with the rest of the American public, they emphasized choice in the free market while suppressing the actual range of choice by generating demand in their assorted sales campaigns. According to Lynn Dumenil, those professionals and their advertisements, "by exaggerating the importance of the choices women made when purchasing, [gave] a false sense of women's freedom, and trivialized the more significant arenas of women's choice." She cites a contemporary ad in the *Chicago Tribune* that read: "Today's woman gets what she wants. The vote. Slim sheaths of silk to replace voluminous petticoats. Glassware in sapphire blue or glowing amber. The right to a career. Soap to match her bathroom's color scheme."³²³ The passing of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 provided marketers and advertisers a sales angle in which they could associate women's political freedom with their economic freedom.

As the state had done during World War I, postwar marketers and advertisers conceived of a monolithic public. They also dedicated time, money, and resources to finding commonalities between similar groups of people residing throughout the country depending on the specific products they aimed to sell. They identified, studied, and targeted specific groups of

³²² Lynn Dumenil made the point that personality and testimonial advertising "aimed at reassuring consumers that they had connections to their purchases, that they could exercise some control even in a mass society." See *Modern Temper*, 90

³²³ *Ibid.*, 129.

consumers and invented needs for them. In the 1920s, they methodically researched trends in marketing, engaged in commercial gerrymandering, and, as Olivier Zunz argues, "[did] not care about class except as an indication of consumption."³²⁴ For example, in 1927 J. Walter Thompson Company published its study "Retail Shopping Areas" in order to reclassify urban and rural areas into marketing districts.³²⁵ Early on JWTC demonstrated to its peers the value of methodically researching potential buyers for their clients' products. It had established a research department a couple of years prior to the U.S. involvement in World War I, earlier than many national advertisers, as part of its effort to understand and, by extension, unify, the millions of people who comprised the American public.³²⁶

In 1921, JWTC President Stanley Resor declared that companies needed to invest in programs for research in order to overcome the public's resistance to buying consumer goods. "Imagine then," he wrote, "the value of the complete record of the marketing of product after product . . . [These facts would] indicate the character of the resistance that had to be overcome." Statistics were important in those research studies, indicating the deliberate,

³²⁴ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 97. An informational booklet, *The Advertising Agency of Today* (1924), read, "It is the business of an advertising agency to study the market of the product by investigations among the merchants who will sell it and among the men or women who will ultimately use it." Booklet in Folder "Mrs. Mary O'Shaughnessy (London visit)," Box AF7, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³²⁵ Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³²⁶ The company often claimed it had been the first to establish a major marketing research department, even though the Harvard Bureau of Business Research had been established in 1911. See Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University, and Igo, *Averaged American*, 9, 110.

mechanical approach to influencing the public's perceptions and behavior. "In the course of a single investigation on [one] product," Resor recalled, "116 towns were visited and 1,267

Figure 4.4 Stanley Resor.

Resor served as President of the J. Walter Thompson Company and acting President of the American Association of Advertising Agencies.



interviews with consumers and 669 with dealers were obtained." Resor even dispatched marketing strategists within his firms to work as "actual salesmen or demonstrators behind the retail counter." In another study in 1926, sixteen advertising men conducted research for one of their clients. They covered 1,550 towns and discovered that greater than "90% of the company's sales volume came from 800 of these towns." Most of those 800 towns contained populations over 10,000. The remaining 750 towns all contained far fewer inhabitants, and together accounted for less than 3 percent of company sales in the studied area (with 7 percent coming by "mail from places which had never been called on"). Resor and others, decidedly committed to targeting and influencing the American public, sought that exact sort of "organized body of data" on national markets in order to shape the postwar U.S. permanently on consumerist lines using perception management.³²⁷

³²⁷ Stanley Resor, "Individual Effort Has Had Its Day," *The Fourth Estate* (November 5, 1921), Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson

The state's efforts in WWI had demonstrated the potentialities of massive, concentrated, national-level PM campaigns. While national advertising campaigns occurred prior to 1918, never before the 1920s had companies been so willing, able, and determined to target the entire American public. Now, after researching one or more independent locations, marketers and advertisers applied their findings nationally, indicating their preference for expanding local markets into regional and national ones, and, simply, "averaging out" American society. In mechanical fashion, they used numbers, indices, and other bits of data to construct nationwide PM campaigns after World War I. According to Sarah Igo, companies "stretch[ed] regional markets into national ones" in order to sell to "the widest possible market for their homogenous goods."³²⁸ In 1928, Bill Esty of the JWTC said that "instead of taking a geographical group, for instance, all a certain group who live in Syracuse, New York, you may take a social group who instead of living in Syracuse, move in common And setting that as an objective of what you want, you go about obtaining it by various methods."³²⁹ Marketers' investigations into

Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Staff Meeting (May 17, 1927), Folder "1/1," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. As part of its overseas market research, between 1927 and 1928 J. Walter Thompson conducted 222 investigations covering 37,076 consumers and 7,010 dealers. Of these investigations, 83 centered on food products, 31 on drugs, 55 on cars, 14 on media, and 39 on other topics. See Staff Meeting (August 8, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; in 1929, the Social Science Research Council observed, "Marketing agencies are interested in specific questions such as the approximate point on the income scale at which families begin to purchase radios, electric refrigerators, gas stoves, automobiles and other commodities, and in the manner in which increasing income affects the distribution of these commodities. Such information will be of widespread interest." See "Consumption According to Incomes: An Inquiry into the Economic and Social Well-Being of the American People," September 23, 1929, 10, Presidential Subject File—Cost of Living—1929, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

³²⁸ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 110.

magazines' readerships proved how research studies conducted in one geographic area were subsequently used to target the whole American public. In 1923, the JWTC conducted one such investigation in Cincinnati, "its suburbs and adjacent communities," an area containing more than 500,000 inhabitants. Forty-four publications granted access to their subscribers' names and addresses. Investigators categorized 78,933 readers by sex, occupation, and, in the case of women, marital status. Investigators "listed the percentage of subscriptions addressed to men, to married women, to unmarried women, and to institutions." They further divided them, first, into "executives" and "professional men"; second, into "clerical workers and skilled workmen"; third, into "laborers and public and personal service employees"; and, finally, into "institutions." For that investigation, the J. Walter Thompson Company received the Bok Award for "scientific research in advertising" in 1924.³³⁰ Ordering and leading society required a useful (if overly simplistic) measure of the American public, usually accomplished by examining a representative sample in one or a few locations. As they did with Muncie, Indiana, marketers and advertisers

³²⁹ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³⁰ "Harvard Awards \$10,500 Prizes for Advertising," Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. Resor cited the Cincinnati study at a 1924 meeting of the Executive Board. "We have complete records for that district on the quality of circulation of newspapers and 44 leading magazines. We know the types of people, sex, income, occupation, etc., of the readers of these magazines and we know the duplication of circulation among them." Speaking for his company, Resor announced he "would be glad to contribute the method employed in the Cincinnati survey which was as simple a method as could be worked out, and could be followed as effectively in other cities and could be extended to cover all classes of circulation." See Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, April 8-9, 1924, Folder "Minutes 1921-1924," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

used numerous studies of selected localities to stand in for the nation in order to target the entire American public.

In order to continue inspiring the sense of uniformity and common purpose among the American public, marketers and advertisers highlighted commonality between groups of people across the nation based on the products that they bought and owned. For example, the J. Walter Thompson Company's 1923 "Farmer Campaign" for Fleischmann's Yeast illustrated how firms targeted a national bloc of consumers based on researching a sample of that group in one location. J. Walter Thompson Company believed farmers constituted an untapped national market. Stanley Resor wanted "a very exhaustive study" to (1) "determine the extent of the existing market for our varied products" in small towns and farming areas; (2) expand markets in those areas; (3) determine optimal methods, media, and vehicles for distribution; and (4) have, in hand, "a complete study of all media reaching these people."³³¹ J. Walter Thompson wanted to apply the "Yeast for Health" campaign to animals since Fleischmann had created dry yeast for "poultry, swine, cattle, etc.," but more research was needed. An investigation to determine farmers' interest in Fleischmann's dry yeast soon followed. The American Association of Advertising Agencies agreed, saying "the farm field should be brought to the attention of all clients of agencies and that this field presents a fine opportunity for agencies."³³² Those and

³³¹ J. Walter Thompson staff memorandum (July 30, 1923), Folder "Research and Planning," Box 13, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection. Research of "the farm market" continued well into the late-1920s. In 1927, J. Walter Thompson executives planned to further investigate the distribution of *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Successful Farming*, and *Dairy Farmer* in rural areas to see how well advertisements in those publications were being received in the farming and home equipment markets. See Staff Meeting (July 26, 1927), Folder "1/2," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³² Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, April 10-11, 1923, Folder "Minutes (1921-1924)," Box AF2, Records of

other advertisers' attention to farmers prompted the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in 1929 to propose a study "concerned with the farmer as a consumer rather than as a producer."³³³

Wanting to target the entire agricultural market simultaneously, marketers and advertisers did not have the inclination to account for local and regional variations. They reduced the public to averages and lowest common denominators. As they did with other target markets, they regarded farmers, regardless of their places of residence, as a national bloc of consumers. Indeed, continuing the use of PM beyond the war years required such a blanket strategy.

Corporate leaders carefully planned how best to reach and appeal to the entire American population (or target markets within it) without a conspicuous, unifying cause, like a war or other national emergency. Believing that all Americans were the same intellectually, psychologically, and, ultimately, behaviorally, at least as far as consumption was concerned, corporate researchers used data collected from one locality to flesh out the marketing topography of the entire nation. In one study, J. Walter Thompson researchers interviewed 396 farmers. In another in late-1924, they conducted a trial investigation of an "average community" of farmers in upper New York so they could then apply their findings to a "similar effort on a nation-wide scale and [gain] an exact knowledge of the market for and resistance to dry yeast."³³⁴ Companies invested exorbitant

the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³³ "Consumption According to Incomes: An Inquiry into the Economic and Social Well-Being of the American People," September 23, 1929, 28, Presidential Subject File—Cost of Living—1929, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

³³⁴ There, J. Walter Thompson selected 472 dealers, advertised locally, and distributed booklets and other materials by post. Two months later nine JWT representatives interviewed 377 of those dealers and "132 actual buyers" of dry yeast. The results were disappointing. They discovered that buyers thought that the price of dry yeast was too high, and also that before buying new animal feed "bulk-minded" farmers wanted "positive proof of the efficacy of dry yeast feeding before [undertaking] the additional trouble and expense it entails." Folder

amounts of time and capital in local studies in order to influence the public's behavior and perceptions on a much larger scale. For example, J. Walter Thompson's campaign for Fleischmann's yeast in late-1923 appeared in thirty-two magazines and thirty-three newspapers in order to get "general coverage in cities up to 500,000."³³⁵ The 4 A's Committee on Exports developed "an advertisement for the New England territory." It began in Boston and spread to "thirty out-of-town dailies." The Committee praised its own work: "This is certainly the right kind of activity and [the] committee as a whole will foster this aggressive attitude through the coming year."³³⁶ Marketers and advertisers approached the exploitation of the public's emotional energies methodically, arrogantly, and with an "aggressive attitude" toward the practice of convincing Americans to behave as consumers using PM after World War I.

As previously discussed, control over various media was a key element of PM between 1917 and 1929. In the postwar decade the private sector's attempts to control Americans' actions required a substantial amount of research on those media. As they did in preparation for major PM campaigns using print media, marketers and advertisers studied local listening areas and used data to develop national campaigns using wireless media. In 1928, the company Certo conducted an experiment on a local radio station in Rochester, New York. As discussed in a meeting of JWTC executives, for fifteen minutes in the middle of the day a speaker for Certo

"Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, January 13-14, 1920, Folder "Minutes (1918, 1920)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

gave "a fairly dry talk" with "little entertainment."³³⁷ Requests for samples announced in the broadcast poured in from over 35 towns within a radius of 75 miles. Those types of experiments led advertisers to believe that a moderately priced time block on short-range radio station might provide returns on a much larger geographical scale, and also that local campaigns might be expanded into national ones. In a JWTC staff meeting in April 1929, one executive said, "You can buy one station in one city and aim a distinctly local message at a community, and get results . . . and you can duplicate the local campaign in as many selected cities or zones as you like."³³⁸ For the J. Walter Thompson Company, "there was no guess work" about "through what media their customers could most effectively be reached." It conducted experiments, tested campaigns in local areas, and, after analysis, applied the lessons to the development of national campaigns targeting the entire American public.³³⁹ That process exemplified the systematic way in which corporate leaders went about indoctrinating the nation after WWI.

Leaders conducting perception management during and after the war ensured that they accounted for all segments of American society, or at least those that they wanted to influence. For campaigns using print media, marketers and advertisers targeted certain groups of consumers based on analyses of readers and subscribers. Similarly, they tried categorizing listening audiences based on income and "demographic and cultural attributes" and directing certain PM

³³⁷ Staff Meeting (June 1, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³⁸ Staff Meeting (April 3, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³³⁹ *Ibid.* *Boston Sunday Herald*, November 11, 1923; Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

campaigns at those groups. As of April 1929, the J. Walter Thompson Company estimated that 26 million American families owned 11,032,855 radios.³⁴⁰ It concluded, "Families owning radios represented a higher income group than those without radio," citing as proof the disparity between costs of rent and mortgage for owners versus non-owners of radios. Not content with distinctions based simply on quality of living, researchers asked women how often they listened to their radios and to which stations they listened. Most of the respondents listened to their radios daily on only one or two stations. The JWTC's executives also cited a National Broadcasting Survey, the point of which was to determine "which types of program were preferred."³⁴¹ Marketers and advertisers found that targeting certain groups of listeners was far more difficult than targeting groups that were more disposed to buying or subscribing to a particular magazine. President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends observed that radio listening areas assumed "grotesque shape" and showed "no obvious geographical congruity with the station concerned." For example:

[T]he "listening area" of a station in Dallas, Texas, extends southwestward from Arkansas to Mexico in a highly irregular band, frequently only a few miles wide. Terrell County, at the Mexican border, nearly 400 air-line miles from Dallas, shows greater "listening intensity" than Denton, Kaufman, and Rockwall counties, each approaching within 15 miles of the city. The "listening area" of a Boston station extends in a narrow bow from the Penobscot River in Maine to Cape Cod and Nantucket; but it extends barely to Worcester, a short 30 miles to the westward. Lincoln County, Maine, nearly 200 miles up the coast, has closer listening

³⁴⁰ A fair approximation. In July 1930, the Department of Commerce estimated a total of 13,478,600 "radio sets in use in the United States," equaling one radio set for every 9.1 persons. See "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 99, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

³⁴¹ Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

affiliations with this Boston station than Bristol County, Massachusetts, almost within the metropolitan area.³⁴²

"Grotesque" listening areas, coupled with listeners' unquantifiable preferences for stations and programs, supplied "further evidence of unexpected radio contacts without basis in geographical propinquity." The Committee concluded that radio listening areas "often disregard completely the established regional, sectional, and political boundaries."³⁴³ If they could not target groups as precisely as they would have liked, marketers and advertisers still believed that wireless technology was an essential tool to reach, indoctrinate, and affect the behavior of the masses. Indeed, controlling the flow of information to the American public remained central to conducting PM after 1918.

As part of their deliberate strategy of targeting the American people after the war, companies institutionalized methods of PM and established standard operating procedures for internal use and for the industry. Establishing a new normal centered on consumption required such streamlined, systematic processes. While each advertising company competed against its peers for business, each used similar models to advance consumerism and set a new domestic tone after the war. Companies espoused the virtues of competition in the free market but they generally shared the same attitude toward targeting the public and they used similar mechanistic processes needed to for effective PM. National organizations such as the American Association of Advertising Agencies and the Association of National Advertisers set standards and drafted models for the marketing and advertising industries. Established in 1917, the American Association of Advertising Agencies sought "to act as an inspiration to some of our members to

³⁴² "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 107-108, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

organize their own agencies in a systematic, methodical manner." At a 1920 meeting of the Executive Board of the 4 A's, one member said, "As an Association, we wish to elevate the standards of advertising agency practice."³⁴⁴ At the 1923 4 A's convention, one participant remarked, "the whole tendency of our business is toward a standardization," and that "a majority of nearly 10 to 1" favored standardization of marketing and advertising practices.³⁴⁵

At the June 1924 convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World in London, an informational briefing sent with members of the 4 A's stated that the organization's purpose was "to establish higher standards of training and organization so that the business of advertising may better serve the economies of distribution." The 4 A's took no small credit for its work:

The achievements of the Association in formulating principles or the proper conduct of the agency business have been so outstanding that frequently they have blinded the business world to many of evidences of the Association's work, less tangible but even more valuable.³⁴⁶

³⁴⁴ Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, January 13-14, 1920, Folder "Minutes (1918, 1920)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁴⁵ Report of Chairman Dickinson of the Magazine Committee at the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, October 10-11, 1923, Folder "Annual and Various Reports," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. The 4 A's wanted newspapers and publishers to "adopt our standards of agency qualification and practice as their requirements for agency recognition The outcome should be, and . . . will be that our standards of agency qualifications and practices will be adopted by publishers' associations and also be generally accepted by advertisers." Again, the goal was standardization across agency lines. See, e.g., Report of the Committee on Newspapers to the Sixth Annual Convention of Members, American Association of Advertising Agencies, October 11-12, 1922, Folder "Minutes (1921-1924)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁴⁶ Informational booklet for Members of the American Association of Advertising Agencies attending the 20th Annual Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, July 13-18, 1924, Folder "Mrs. Mary O' Shaughnessy (London visit)," Box AF7,

Thus, despite some variations between companies, the industry as a whole shared a common worldview and commitment to using perception management outside of a time of national emergency. That proved the continued centralized influence over Americans' lives, even during a time of relative peace and prosperity.

As advertising conglomerates had done, individual companies offered standards and models for effectively conducting PM to others. The J. Walter Thompson Company offered its peers a model of "good practices" which involved: selecting or inventing the "right kind of 'associable' consumer [to] help the product"; "highlight[ing] and dramatiz[ing]" key ingredients or qualities of each product; accepting that the ends justified the means; continually reevaluating a product's "personality" and changing it when necessary; remembering that sales campaigns must reflect positively on the client and the advertising agency; and adjusting the positioning and presentation of products when appropriate. The model required advertisers to convince Americans of their immediate need for the product being sold. To achieve that, companies must: "End with a lively action line. This may be all wrong for the product—but you will never know unless you try it."³⁴⁷ Another model called "How Advertising Works" told corporate peers to "mak[e] something well-known" and "bring [it] into common use"; use constant repetition; overcome "inertias" among potential consumers, or, simply, create the demand for specific products; and "[add] a value not in the product," arguably "the most challenging field for creativeness in advertising." Advertisers could add a value that was "not in the product" by

Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁴⁷ Folder "Sam Meek Ad Work," Box 2, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

"reinventing the image of the product so that it assumes a heretofore unknown value."³⁴⁸

JWTC's executives offered their model to other advertisers. For example, Stanley Resor and James Webb Young, both senior executives in the JWTC, were also presidents of the American Association of Advertising Agencies and used the 4 A's as a vehicle to proliferate many of JWTC's ideas throughout the industry. Models created and disseminated by organizations such as the 4 A's and the JWTC revealed a collective, systematic corporate strategy of targeting the American public using PM. Americans enjoyed greater access to and ability to buy consumer goods than ever before, but remained targets for perception management after World War I.

To facilitate processes, operations, and perception management generally, companies imbued employees at all levels with common values and sense of purpose. For one, JWTC's President, Stanley Resor, argued that prior to 1917 advertising employees lacked "collective concept," and they "knew little about the product and less about the type of people who would use it. Their idea was to make a pretty picture." He sought to instill a sense of professional purpose in all of JWTC's employees. He boasted that his new employees cross-trained in every department within the firm to gain a deeper understanding of the process behind corporate PM. General training preceded more specialized training. Resor declared that all employees, regardless of function, should focus on the final target: the American public. He said, "Everyone who participates in the planning, production, or placing of the advertisements must always have

³⁴⁸ "How Advertising Works," Folder "James Webb Young Biographical Information," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also "Account Histories: The Fleischmann Company," Folder "Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

in mind the final effect upon the person whom the advertisement is intended to influence."³⁴⁹ A 1929 company newsletter boasted that the J. Walter Thompson Company, the self-proclaimed "Democracy Among Agencies," proved that "there is ample justification for [its] method which places emphasis upon the organization rather than the individual." By minimizing departmental parochialism, Resor hoped to facilitate the development of national campaigns.³⁵⁰ It was another way in which corporate leaders rationalized the process of perception management for the purpose of swaying Americans' decisions to purchase specific products in the 1920s.

The marketing and advertising industries developed standards and models for conducting perception management after World War I, and they also incentivized it. For example, in 1923, the Harvard Advertising (Bok) Awards were established to reward advertisers for being the most effective throughout the industry in a number of categories. According to a contemporary article "Harvard Awards \$10,500 Prizes for Advertising," the Bok Awards "were founded in the belief that formal recognition of notable excellence in the planning and execution of advertising will stimulate improvement in advertising, thereby making it serve business and society more effectively." Further, the awards recognized "the profession and science of advertising as an important factor in public service."³⁵¹ Rewards validated the private sector's deliberate,

³⁴⁹ Stanley Resor, "Individual Effort Has Had Its Day," *The Fourth Estate* (November 5, 1921), Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁵⁰ *Printer's Ink*, May 16, 1929, Folder "Sam Meek Ad Work," Box 2, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁵¹ "Bok Offers Annual Awards to Stimulate Improvement in Advertising," Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; "Harvard Awards \$10,500 Prizes for Advertising," January 27, 1925, Folder "Ad Awards (1923-

systematic policy of perception management in the 1920s. The nation had emerged victorious from the War for Democracy and its citizens supposedly became free to enjoy the material spoils of the postwar economy. However, corporate leaders were being rewarded for being the most efficient and effective at limiting and hence controlling Americans' economic choices.

In the 1920s, the private sector targeted the whole American public for perception management as the state had done in the domestic sphere during World War I. Corporate executives, especially those in the marketing and advertising fields, deemed the public to be stupid, irrational, and unsophisticated. They believed that they could easily dictate the public's attitudes and economic behavior, and that they should lead in the postwar domestic order. They approached PM mechanistically. They established elaborate programs and systems of researching target markets in order to reduce society down to averages. They used data acquired from local studies to develop national campaigns in which they invented needs and wants in specific blocs of consumers. They limited Americans' choice of products in the name of serving the public and promoting the virtues of the free market. This was how they helped chart the course of the postwar U.S. with PM, thus proving the continuation of that strategy beyond a period of national emergency. A key element of perception management throughout this period was leaders' insistence that they merely sought to inform, educate, and even serve the American public.

1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University, and *Printer's Ink*, September 20, 1923 and November 16, 1923. At the same time he began his advertising awards Bok offered \$100,000 to the winner of the American Peace Award contest "for the best practical plan by which the United States may cooperate with other nations to achieve and preserve the peace of the world." Over 22,000 entries flooded his offices at 342 Madison Avenue. A panel of prestigious individuals judged the winner of the Peace Award, and included Colonel Edward House, Major General Guthrie Harbord, Ellen Fitz Pendleton, Roscoe Pound, Elihu Root, William Allen White, and Brand Whitlock.

CHAPTER 5 - Information, Education, and Service: Catchwords of Modern Perception Management

Truth and Falsehood are arbitrary terms . . . there is nothing in experience to tell us that one is always preferable to the other There are lifeless truths and vital lies The force of an idea lies in its inspirational value. It matters very little whether it is true or false.³⁵²

Arthur Bullard, 1917

During the Great War and throughout the 1920s, those parties executing PM expressed a commitment to providing Americans with open information, which meant simply their version of the truth for the purpose of encouraging a certain attitude or response. Information, education, and service became signature terms used by governmental and corporate leaders to conceal their active effort to shape the perceptions and behavior of the American people. In 1917 and 1918, George Creel, Albert Bushnell Hart, Guy Stanton Ford, and many others claimed to give Americans "the truth" about the war, though the information they provided to the public was clearly in the interest of the state's perception management strategy. As historian Stephen Vaughn argues, Creel and others "probably did not appreciate the dilemma of attempting to educate the public while rousing it to such intensity."³⁵³ Corporate leaders also failed (or did not care) to appreciate that very same dilemma in the 1920s.

After the war, corporate leaders' devotion to the principles of information, education, and service, encompassed in the professional code of "truth in advertising," belied their deliberate strategy of PM. The American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Association of National Advertisers, the J. Walter Thompson Company, and other national advertising organizations publicly argued that their advertising claims, portrayed as factual and scientific, were meant to

³⁵² Quotation in Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines* , 3.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 21, 149.

inform and educate the public. For example, they warned of and offered cures for such maladies as *Tinea Trichophyton* (athlete's foot), comedones (blackheads), lordosis (bad posture), and the infamous halitosis (bad breath) for the purpose of selling the solution.³⁵⁴ Despite their claims of selflessly informing and educating, they decided what information to provide and to withhold for the purposes of convincing Americans of what products they should buy. While advertisers had used less than honest means to sell products in the past, now more than ever they heralded "truth in advertising," a professional code implying the avoidance of making misleading or false claims for products and providing consumers with enough facts to help them make informed buying choices. Like the state's executors of PM during the war, they had no intention of simply providing Americans with complete open information—i.e., the whole "truth"—so that they could make up their own minds. Their conscious decision to use PM after WWI to restrict choice by generating demand for specific products and services belied their professions of altruism. Claiming to inform, educate, and later to serve the public, many corporate organizations employed some of the same deceptive tactics in the consumer sphere as the CPI and supporting PVOs and NGOs had done in the war. Always justified as being in the interest of the American public, those methods which may have been regarded as acceptable during a time of national crisis were carried over into a period of relative peace and prosperity.

After the experience of World War I, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors appreciated that there was heightened sensitivity and suspicion within the U.S. toward any centralized attempt to control Americans' behavior and opinions. Yet they still thought they knew that which was in the public's best interest. Corporate professionals considered several

³⁵⁴ Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 160.

factors in order to adapt PM to a peacetime economy and society and hence provide the public with what they thought it ought to know.

First, the United States imagined itself to be what Stephen Ward calls an "objective society," meaning that Americans theoretically had high expectations of accuracy, objectivity, and scientific methods behind any claims made to them, and never more so than after the war.³⁵⁵ Objectivity, scientific methods, and rational processes had become traits of many professional fields.³⁵⁶ This had direct application in the employment of perception management. During World War I, many government agencies, to include the CPI, had hired intellectuals to help manage the nation's people, resources, and industrial assets. After the war, advertising firms such as the J. Walter Thompson Company hired many of the same persons as consultants.³⁵⁷ They used intellectuals to research products and markets, validate and lend credibility to claims, and—they hoped—to reveal secrets of Americans' collective psyche to facilitate perception management. With intellectuals' validation, marketers and advertisers argued that what they told Americans was the truth, or at least all that they needed to know in order to make informed buying decisions.

³⁵⁵ Ward, *Invention of Journalism Ethics*.

³⁵⁶ Igo, *The Averaged American*; Smith, *Social Sciences in the Crucible*; Zunz, *Why the American Century?*

³⁵⁷ For example, in 1917 and 1918, the War Department hired psychologists to test the mental acuity and abilities of new recruits; the War Trade Board, the Council of National Defense and other federal agencies hired economists to develop plans for industry in a total war economy; and Committee on Public Information hired and consulted with historians and political scientists to lend an objective tone to its perception management campaign. After the war, psychologists were valued in the marketing, advertising, and public relations fields to develop effective corporate perception management strategies. See Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, Kennedy, *Over Here*, and Schaffer, *America in the Great War*.

Second, because leaders conducting PM needed and solicited support from industries specializing in print, visual, and wireless media, they had to consider the professional and doctrinal changes in those media to more effectively feed the public the information that it supposedly needed. Since the late-1800s journalists and publishers had consciously tried breaking away from the stigma of partisan, sensationalist reporting that characterized the print media in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The professionalization of journalism resulted in more thorough, investigative reporting and industry-wide claims of objectivity.³⁵⁸ Many journalists had vocally opposed governmental PM during the war on professional, ethical, and legal grounds, and some suffered censorship, blacklisting, and imprisonment in reprisal. Likewise, after the Armistice, Henry Luce, Robert McCormick, and other prominent newspapermen feared the influence and implications of corporate PM, even while they used advertising revenue to expand their own enterprises. Journalists and publishers urged their colleagues to prevent marketers and advertisers from corrupting the professional ethics of journalism, just as many of them had exposed governmental corruption and fought back against the state's supposed impositions upon them in WWI. The interdependence of journalism and advertising required at least some congruence of ethics between the two industries, a difficult thing to achieve given that professionals within print media often worried about the extremely manipulative character of modern advertising. Marketers and advertisers claimed to promote and adhere to "truth in advertising" as evidence of the informative and educational nature of their work, though most journalists and publishers understood their deliberate policy of trying to

³⁵⁸ See, e.g., Richard Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Si Sheppard, *The Partisan Press: A History of Media Bias in the United States* (Jefferson and London: McFarland and Company, 2008), and Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*.

control what Americans purchased, often using deceitful tactics. Providing Americans with what they supposedly needed to be informed citizens, a common feature of PM from 1917 to 1929, forced corporate leaders to respect and, if necessary, work around the professional and doctrinal changes in other industries, especially the print media.

Third, wartime perception management showed corporate leaders what they might gain from effective national sales campaigns, but it had also revealed that Americans had a threshold which, when crossed, sparked them to resist. George Creel, the head of the CPI, battled with Congress, journalists, and others who had argued that the government's PM strategy was illegal, immoral, and un-American. Indeed, some Americans regarded deliberate perception management as a tool of militaristic governments with no place in a free republic.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹ That is why, since World War I, government and corporate leaders have used more comfortable terms like information, education, enlightenment, and objectivity to conceal their efforts at PM. In the case of motion pictures the government has packaged propaganda and labeled it documentary (the most obvious example being Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series during WWII, but another example was the U.S. Army's *The Big Picture* series during the Korean and Vietnam Wars). For PM it has used "information" bureaus such as the Committee on Public Information in World War I, the Coordinator of Information (COI) and the Office of War Information (OWI) in World War II, the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) throughout the Cold War, and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) in Vietnam. On the CPI, see Creel, *How We Advertised America*, Mock and Larson, *Words that Won the War*, Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, Kennedy, *Over Here*, and Schaffer, *America in the Great War*. The historiography of the COI (predecessor of the Office of Strategic Services) and the OWI is much spottier. While Alfred Paddock and Stanley Sandler do not dwell on the COI or the OWI at great length, they compile a fair amount of primary documents and discuss the two organizations in a fair amount of detail in the context of American public diplomacy and psychological operations capabilities during WWII. See Alfred Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), and Sandler, *"Cease Resistance!": A History of U.S. Army Combat Psychological Operations* (published by author, 1999). For an extremely thorough treatment of the origins and career of the USIA, see Nicholas Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). And the historiography of governmental and the military's PM during Vietnam is vast and full of controversy. From the perspective of trying to present a certain picture of the Vietnam conflict to the American people on the part of the U.S. military, see William Hammond, *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1962-1968* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988)

Appreciating the modern "objective society," particularly in light of how many Americans viewed wartime PM with disgust, marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants found ways to work around what Americans might construe as propaganda. As the CPI and supportive PVOs and NGOs (such as the Committee on Patriotism Through Education and the National Board for Historical Service) had done during the war, many senior corporate leaders masked their agenda by claiming to inform, educate, and even serve the American people. Individuals and organizations conducting PM between 1917 and 1929 believed that they knew what was best for Americans and fed them their versions of the "truth."

Finally, marketers and advertisers, adapting PM to postwar U.S. society, responded craftily to pressures from regulatory agencies and advocates for consumers' rights, such as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Vigilance Committee, and local Better Business Bureaus.³⁶⁰ Corporate professionals astutely realized that their own credibility and reputation, key aspects of any perception management strategy, hinged on the perceived—if not always the actual—truth of their messages. In the 1920s, the marketing, advertising, and public relations industries understood that they could not make false claims with impunity. To minimize the chance of complaints from consumers, governmental investigations, and possible litigation, the J. Walter Thompson Company (under the research directorship of Paul Cherington) and other national marketing and advertising firms expanded their programs for researching products and

and *Public Affairs: The Military and the Media, 1968-1973* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1996). The aggregate of the above sources provides readers with a sense of the difficulties and tensions of conducting PM in the age of mass information.

³⁶⁰ Mark and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 141-143; Transcript of the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (October, 1923), Folder "Morning Session Report (1923)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

markets to provide a factual basis for claims made in advertisements. Still, with the recent example of the effectiveness of wartime governmental PM fresh in their minds, they would not resign to providing dry facts to sell products and services; they used facts to aid their attempts to delude and deceive the American public. Armed with facts obtained from intensive research, marketers and advertisers proceeded to make exaggerated, sensational, and occasionally outright false claims about what buyers could expect from a given product. In short, all of those factors impacted the ways in which corporate executives, specifically marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants, provided Americans with the information that they supposedly needed to know in order to be educated citizens and consumers.

Intellectuals provided governmental and corporate leaders with data for use in a variety of purposes, including perception management. For example, as Sarah Igo points out, sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* (1929) provided corporate leaders with indicators about the nature of average middle-class American consumers, an invaluable tool for developing national marketing and advertising campaigns. Pollsters George Gallup and Elmo Roper collected and analyzed data to understand currents of opinion throughout the U.S. (certainly invaluable information when deliberating on public and corporate policy), aiming "to make sure they tuned their social scientific instrument to democratic rather than propagandistic purposes in an era of heightened fears of manipulation from above." George Creel, the coordinator of the government's PM campaign during WWI, and Edward Bernays, one of Creel's lieutenants in the CPI and an architect of corporate PM after WWI, both saw the necessity of selecting those facts which were most likely to impact Americans' emotions, attitudes, and behavior. Igo argues that Creel, Bernays, and others "applauded efforts to filter information—whether about the enemy or consumer goods—through expert channels." Doing

this "was simply the most efficient method for communicating ideas to the populace."³⁶¹ During WWI, George Creel, Stanwood Menken, Albert Bushnell Hart, Pomeroy Burton, and others had claimed they would "inform the people" and "tell the people of America the truth, the whole truth, about the war" through scholarly expertise, open information, and disinterested presentations of facts. However, their version of open information and the "truth" was based on a plan to supposedly educate the Americans about their own victimization by the Central Powers for the purpose of calling the public into action.³⁶² Similarly, after the war, marketers and advertisers shrouded the manipulative qualities of corporate PM with public pronouncements of informing and educating consumers with facts and upholding the tenet of "truth in advertising."

Both the federal government and the private sector hired intellectuals from the social sciences to help them with their PM campaigns, among other tasks. They hired them for their expertise and skills in researching and making practical use of data. They hired them to lend legitimacy to claims made in PM campaigns since, as historian Mark Smith argues, they had made great leaps squaring "two of America's most cherished values: the utility of the scientific method and the normative goals of social thought."³⁶³ During World War I, the federal government hired economists, psychologists, political scientists, historians, and sociologists in a

³⁶¹ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 74, 108, 124.

³⁶² Albert Bushnell Hart, *Reasons for and Objects of Speakers Training Camp for Education in Patriotic Service and Conference of Organizations Engaged in Patriotic Education* (New York: Published by the National Security League, 1917), 6; Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront*, 28-30; *New York Times*, July 9, 1917; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 53-54; *Independent*, June 30, 1917, July 7, 1917, and February 16, 1918. For the most detailed account of McElroy's role in the highly nationalistic Committee on Patriotism Through Education, see John Edwards, "Princeton's Passionate Patriot: McElroy's Committee on Patriotism Through Education," *New Jersey History* 95 (1977), 207-226.

³⁶³ Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 8.

number of capacities. Historians, political scientists, and others supported the CPI's perception management program and, in Smith's opinion, "abandoned any pretense of scientific objectivity."³⁶⁴ As intended by the partnership between the American Psychological Association and the War Department, psychologists tested the mental acuity of military recruits in order to place them at the optimal levels of responsibility and in the correct military occupational specialties. The Wilson administration also hired economists, planners, and managers for work in the War Trade Board and Council of National Defense to help it manage the U.S. economy and industry. In short, the executive bureaucracy had seen great benefit in using intellectuals to help it manage the nation at war, and had done so with presumptions about what was best for Americans and the nation writ large.

In 1917, Randolph Bourne argued that "it has been a bitter experience to see the unanimity with which the American intellectuals have thrown their support to the use of the war-technique in the crisis in which America found herself An intellectual class, gently guiding a nation through sheer force of ideas into what the other nations entered only through predatory craft of popular hysteria or militarist madness!"³⁶⁵ After the war, the government dismissed many intellectuals, many of whom returned to academia. Mark Smith argues that "private businesses, impressed by the results of the war work, hired many [intellectuals]" for senior management, research directorships, and to assist with their PM strategy.³⁶⁶ Advertising firms

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 24-25.

³⁶⁵ Bourne, "The War and the Intellectuals."

³⁶⁶ Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 24. Charles Beard, one of the most prominent historians of the twentieth century, strongly and vocally opposed the Central Powers. He contributed to the Committee on Public Information's *War Cyclopaedia* in which "he recited the standard Allied propaganda of Hun barbarisms."

hired psychologists to explain the nature of human and collective psychology, as when the JWTC hired controversial behavioral psychologist Dr. John Watson. After 1918, the private sector, like the CPI and other federal bureaus had done during the war, capitalized upon intellectuals' knowledge and expertise, skills in researching, and reputations to build and support PM campaigns. Companies used intellectuals in their strategy of telling Americans that they should view themselves as consumers, if only so that companies could claim that they sought to inform or educate consumers with scientifically derived facts.

Many intellectuals had questioned the state's effort to manipulate the American people in 1917 and 1918, and many feared it continuing on an even greater scale in the 1920s. Indeed, some intellectuals charged that corporate PM, because of its manipulative and deceitful nature, would corrode American society. For example, as historian Mark Smith describes, that issue (as part of the subject of consumerism writ large) caused a rift in President Hoover's Committee on Recent Social Trends, which had been commissioned to analyze modern Americans' habits. Sociologist William Ogburn, director of research for the committee, chose Robert Lynd, the author of *Middletown*, to write the commission's report on consumption and consumerism, but he soon regretted his selection. Ogburn had criticized Lynd's *Middletown* as "too interesting to be science," believed that "the scientific method consisted solely of gathering facts," and opposed interpreting data in general (dismissing the possibility of bias even in supposedly dry presentations of facts). Lynd said that "'knowledge for its own sake' is not science." Lynd's report, called "The People as Consumers" (as opposed to Ogburn's desire to name it "Consumption Habits"), focused less on statistics and indexes than on "the conditioning factors out of which our American pattern of consumption emerges." Lynd argued that advertising, the most explicit form of corporate perception management, had molded Americans into mindless

consumers, and he called "for a need to balance increased advertising pressure with government sponsorship of consumer literacy." Ogburn was appalled that Lynd's report had contained so many recommendations and that it criticized the government (particularly the Bureau of Standards) for not shielding consumers from corporate PM. Lynd's report, an indictment of corporate PM, divided the Committee on Recent Social Trends.³⁶⁷ Intellectuals stood divided over whether consumerism, supported by corporate PM, was a constructive or destructive phenomenon within the U.S.

Informing, educating, and serving the American people required the support from external industries. During World War I, the Wilson administration worked earnestly to garner the support of journalists and publishers, knowing the necessity of their support to the government's overall PM strategy.³⁶⁸ After the war, advertising agencies, like the CPI, similarly understood their dependence upon print media for their PM strategy.³⁶⁹ Marketers and advertisers had an obvious historic relationship with journalism (in 1926, W.H. Beatty, an advertiser from Newell-Emmett Company, said, "Looking back, it almost seems as if advertising

³⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 142-145. For more on Lynd's view of the irrationality of consumers, the corrosive influence of advertising over American life, and his desire to have intellectuals wrest control from business interests, see Richard Wightman Fox, "Epitaph for Middletown: Robert S. Lynd and the Analysis of Consumer Culture," in Richard Wightman Fox and T.J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983).

³⁶⁸ Committee on Public Information's Preliminary Statement to the Press, read to members of the press on May 23, 1917, and printed in the *New York Times*, May 28, 1917; Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:305.

³⁶⁹ See, e.g., Richard Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press*, Si Sheppard, *The Partisan Press*.

grew out of the side of journalism").³⁷⁰ Marketers and advertisers adapted to doctrinal shifts in professional media as a necessary step to indoctrinate the American people. As journalists and publishers had done for years, marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants claimed to inform Americans with open, factual information as part of their PM strategy. And, like journalists, they claimed to interpret and simplify information as a service to and convenience for busy Americans, though perhaps with less sincerity.³⁷¹ But they would not provide dry, "unbiased" presentations of facts about products. Corporate leaders set out to control which products Americans purchased based on abstract notions of what was best for them. Marketers and advertisers intended to control the decisions of the public while claiming to inform it, acting in accordance with one of Dale Carnegie's chief tenets: "No one likes to feel that he or she is being sold something or told to do a thing. We much prefer to feel that we are buying of our own accord and acting on our own ideas."³⁷²

With the growing might of corporate perception management in the postwar decade, some publishers now feared that advertising undermined respectable, objective reporting. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, journalists had instated objectivity as a standard for their profession, to break away from the more traditional partisan style of reporting, and to distance themselves from the excesses that typified the age of "Yellow Journalism." Although since the

³⁷⁰ W.H. Beatty, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁷¹ Henry Luce, co-founder of *Time*, factored this into his journalism formula from the outset. See James Baughman, *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

³⁷² See Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 165.

eighteenth century detractors (such as those writing to the *Baltimore American* and *New York American Citizen*) had called journalists' attempts at neutrality "all delusion" and even "injurious to the best interests of mankind," the supposed "rise of objectivity" around the turn of the twentieth century supposedly signified a new dawn of professional journalism.³⁷³ By World War I, journalists and publishers, even those of a muckraking suasion, believed that they had a responsibility for a higher quality of reporting and to thwart undue outside influence on their trade. They, like those executing governmental and corporate PM, publicly advocated the idea of an enlightened citizenry.

Claiming the moral high ground, professionals in print media resented the conspicuously manipulative tactics of corporate perception management and often refuted the notion that promoting consumerism was informative or educational. As early as 1904 Joseph Pulitzer wrote, "Nothing less than the highest ideals, the most scrupulous anxiety to do right, the most accurate knowledge of the problems it has to meet, and a sincere sense of moral responsibility will save journalism from a subservience to business interests, seeking selfish ends, antagonistic to public

³⁷³ Quotations originally found in *Baltimore American*, May 16, 1797 and *New York American Citizen*, March 10, 1800, respectively, cited in Sheppard, *The Partisan Press*, 18. Kaplan argues that journalists in the Progressive era "dispensed with the celebratory partisan rhetoric typical of the Gilded Age and proceeded to adopt a sober style of impartial, expert reporting." Objectivity represented "a particularly refined and elevated philosophy of journalistic independence," disguising "the intrinsically political nature of journalistic muckraking." Similarly, Lynn Dumenil argues that the "rise of independent journalism . . . spelled an end to party-controlled newspapers which had helped to maintain political party identification." Si Sheppard explains journalism's shift from overt partisanship to objectivity using models of *external* and *internal* diversity. External diversity meant each journal exposed its biases and political views. Internal diversity described a pattern in which each publication tried capturing a myriad of socio-political viewpoints in its pages to appear thorough and objective. In Sheppard's model, journalists moved from external to internal diversity in efforts to become more objective and credible. Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press*, 184-199; Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 53; Sheppard, *The Partisan Press*, 9-10.

welfare."³⁷⁴ Will Irwin, the publishers of *The Masses*, and others regretted advertising's negative influence on respectable journalism. Robert McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune* and Henry Luce of *Time* frequently and publicly delineated their publications' morals from their business aspects (often disingenuously or with ulterior motives), something that Stephen Ward claimed to be akin to the separation of "church and state" within the industry of journalism.³⁷⁵ Claiming to act on the public's behalf, journalists worried that marketers and advertisers undermined objectivity because they were motivated by profit and did not have Americans' best interests in mind.

Because of their professed belief in objectivity and Americans right to open information, many journalists and publishers decried the deceitful tactics of marketers and advertisers as unethical and inherently manipulative.³⁷⁶ (To their dismay, despite claiming to rely solely upon

³⁷⁴ Joseph Pulitzer, "The College of Journalism," *North American Review* 178 (May, 1904): 655-659.

³⁷⁵ In 1911 Will Irwin criticized the corporate orientation of the press in several articles in *Collier's*. See Will Irwin, "The Power of the Press," in Clifford Weigle and David Clark, eds., *The American Newspaper* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1969); Pulitzer and Irwin's quotations cited in Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 221-222.

³⁷⁶ The American Society of News Editors and Sigma Delta Chi (later the Society of Professional Journalists) codified objectivity in 1923 and 1926, respectively. According to Stephen Ward, after it was codified objectivity became stricter, "more methodical, and more professional." Journalists distinguished between news and opinion because of the "demanding form of empirical reporting" and because millions of readers demanded it. Methodologically, objectivity only worked through the "policing of reports for subjective elements" and rigid standards for "gathering news, constructing facts into stories, and editing reports." Objective reporting had become the "prime characteristic of a professional journalist." Journalists wanted to redeem themselves from a tarnished past of partisan reporting and "Yellow Journalism." Bert Bostrum, *Talent, Truth, and Energy: Society of Professional Journalists Sigma Delta Chi* (Chicago: Society of Professional Journalists, 1984), 177, cited in Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 214-215. For general information on the codification of objectivity, see Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 214-220.

facts, research, and objectivity, they constantly faced charges of bias and sensationalism.)³⁷⁷ In adapting the strategy of PM to a peacetime economy, marketers and advertisers had to work around journalism's apparent shift to objective reporting, or at least take measures not to undermine it. In reality, print media's alleged shift to objectivity had little actual bearing on marketers' and advertisers' determination to use PM to tell Americans what to buy and to get them to think of themselves as consumers.³⁷⁸

Making similar moral claims as those made by Creel and his subordinates during the war, corporate executives claimed to provide an educational service to Americans while deliberately trying to sway their opinions and behavior. For example, Ivy Ledbetter Lee, a pioneer of public relations, advocated open information and corporate transparency—which meant simply that companies shared as much information as possible without being legally coerced—because Americans supposedly deserved to know. Industrialism, labor-capital strife, and regulation by the government in the early twentieth century convinced Lee of the need for sound public relations policies. Prior to World War I, he had advised the Pennsylvania Railroad, the

³⁷⁷ For example, Charles Heitman of the Christian Science Committee on Publication responded to British press members' criticisms of the *Christian Science Monitor*: "The *Monitor* assumes no self-righteous attitude and makes no such claim to absolute perfection in its construction; it does, however, stand for honesty, accuracy, and fair dealing and would not even for the success of that which it deemed worthy to deviate from that established policy and purpose so definitely indicated by its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, when she said, 'The object of the *Monitor* is to injure no man, but to bless all mankind.' While those identified with the *Christian Science Monitor* are not indifferent to its success, I can say . . . that they 'would much rather fail of success than attain it by reproachable means.'" *Time*, June 4, 1923.

³⁷⁸ Interestingly, Stephen Ward argues that professionals in the print media operated within an "empirical paradox." Reporters could only achieve *passive* empiricism "if they simply record comments and events and write in a stenographic manner." In contrast, in *active* empiricism journalists "[seek] out stories, [investigate] events, [select] news angles and sources, and [eliminate] material not germane to the news hook." Ward argues that most reporters in the early twentieth century claimed to practice *passive* empiricism but actually practiced *active* empiricism. Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 190-191; 197-198.

Rockefellers, and other corporate clients. In 1914, during the strikes (and subsequent massacre) at a Rockefeller-owned mine in Ludlow, Colorado, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. asked Lee what course of action he should take. Lee recommended transparency and urged that the company's senior leaders personally inspect their own miners' working conditions. According to Dale Carnegie, Rockefeller, on Lee's insistence, "presented facts in such a friendly manner that the strikers went back to work without saying another word about the increase in wages for which they had fought so violently."³⁷⁹ Lee believed that leaders' openness would help reduce laborers' anger, inspire them to give up on their legitimate grievances, and earn the sympathy, respect, and goodwill of the American public. Simply, he argued that presenting one's version of the truth and withholding other facts while calling it "transparency," "publicity," or "open information" would positively influence Americans' attitudes and, ultimately, their behavior, an approach that characterized PM from 1917 to 1929.

To be fair, marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants generally believed that solid facts and sound research should underlay the claims they made in advertisements and public statements.³⁸⁰ They believed that thoroughly researching products and markets before making claims would assure the public of the informative, educational nature of their messages and mask their efforts to manipulate its behavior. In its "Report of National Committee on Agency Service" of April 1918, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4 A's) alluded to the empirical standards comprising ethical, "respectable" marketing, but mostly from the perspective of self-interest and self-preservation of the industry. It sought "[to] visualize

³⁷⁹ Bates, "'Mini-Me' History," 10-12; Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 143-144.

³⁸⁰ Sheppard, *The Partisan Press*, 197.

those practices that do not make for the good of the business" and "to undertake a comparative study of practices and methods which make for good, and which it will be in the interest of all to standardize." But the 4 A's claimed to serve the public by telling it what it purportedly needed to know: "Agency Service consists of interpreting to the public, or to that part of it which it is desired to reach, the advantages of a product or service." The 4 A's suggested that advertisers should research products and markets before making claims about products' advantages to the public.³⁸¹ But its members, representing numerous national advertising agencies, would select which facts to release and then present them creatively with the express purpose of urging people to buy the same homogenous goods. Perception management endured in an age supposedly free from central control over people's choices.

Between the Great War and the Great Crash, leaders cherry-picked which facts to release to the public based on what would most likely sway it to support their agenda and the belief that it did not know (or did not care to know) the truth. The selective release of facts was simply a means to get Americans familiarized with a limited number of products. Ivy Lee, who handled Standard Oil and other corporate accounts before World War I, the American Red Cross during WWI, and Bethlehem Steel, Charles Schwab, Charles Lindbergh, Walter Chrysler, and the German chemical company Interessen Gemeinschaft Farbenindustrie after the war, argued that the public only cared about facts by "the way in which they are published." "Besides," he said, "what is a fact? The effort to state an absolute fact is simply an attempt to give you my

³⁸¹ American Association of Advertising Agencies, "Report of National Committee on Agency Service," April 9, 1918, Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

interpretation of the facts."³⁸² Lee, a man experienced in PM during times of war and peace, believed in packaging selected facts in an emotionally appealing way and claiming to Americans that they were receiving "the truth." He personified elitism in postwar corporate culture. In that elitist culture, many executives believed that most of the public did not care about the validity or truthfulness of what it was told, nor was it capable of making rational decisions even with enough facts in hand to do so. That view of the public underlay the employment of perception management between 1917 and 1929.

In light of suspicion toward governmental PM during World War I (which became more pronounced in the 1930s), marketers and advertisers moderately considered Americans' attitude toward "propaganda" when they adapted PM to the realm of consumerism (even as they believed that most of the public was too intellectually lazy to notice attempts to influence its behavior anyway).³⁸³ Historian Stephen Badsey argues that after WWI many Americans regretted that the state had "deliberately institutionalized" psychological methods as weapons of war while using more palatable terms like "information" and "education." While executors of PM might have repeatedly stated "that any official statement must be based on the truth as it was known at the

³⁸² Stuart Ewen, *PR!: A Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 81. See also Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*, 224-228, and Bates, *"Mini-Me" History*, 12.

³⁸³ "Propaganda" is related to but different from "perception management." Perception management is a broader concept that denotes both the conveyance *and* denial of information, truth *and* deception, and revealing *and* concealing sources of information. Propaganda implied the promotion of an idea, whereas PM allows for a myriad of techniques, media, and institutions to both influence and restrict audiences' behavior. Therefore, propaganda here primarily refers to the projective aspect of PM, even though at the time propaganda was used to describe a broader, overarching governmental strategy. For a breakdown of the various aspects of PM, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 3-13, *Information Operations: Doctrine, Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, paragraph 1-27, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/DIME/documents/FM%203-13%20-%20Info%20Opns%20Doc,%20Tactics,%20Tech,%20and%20Proced%5B1%5D.pdf> (accessed February 13, 2011).

time," they also knew that "information might be withheld or a greater emphasis placed on some facts rather than others" as part of a deliberate PM strategy.³⁸⁴ Continuing PM in the 1920s, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors had to at least take into consideration Americans' moral antagonism toward institutional deception, manipulation, and "propaganda."³⁸⁵ According to one lesson in the first U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Officers Course in 1951, "The political warfare [conducted by the state during WWI]—the extent of the promises made for a democratic, war-free, prosperous post-war world—probably contributed to the post 1918 reaction against 'propaganda' which continued down to World War II. In retrospect, it appears excessive and certain to have caused post-war disappointment and embarrassment to the government."³⁸⁶ In sum, corporate leaders took careful measures to mask institutional efforts to manage the attitudes and behavior of the American public, usually by claiming to inform, educate, or act for its own good.

³⁸⁴ Stephen Badsey, "Psychological Warfare," in Gordon Martel, ed., *The Encyclopedia of War* (Working Manuscript, 2011), 2-3.

³⁸⁵ Meg Jacobs argues that Americans' antipathy toward deceptive tactics was coincident with widespread calls for fairness in the consumer market from World War I into the 1920s. Jacobs, *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁸⁶ Lesson PW-23-S-51 in Robert Asti, ed., *Original and First Edition of Psychological Warfare Officers' Course* (Fort Riley, Kansas: Psychological Warfare Division, Army General School, 1951), 4, Robert Asti Papers, Asti Family Collection, Little Rock, Arkansas and Monroe, North Carolina. For more on contemporary and historical views of the effectiveness of propaganda during World War I, see Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 218; H.D. Kehm, "The Methods and Functions of Military Psychological Warfare," *Military Review* (January 1947): 4; Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 176; Edward Fellows "'Propaganda': History of a Word," *American Speech* 34 (October 1959): 182-189; Agnes Repplier, "A Good Word Gone Wrong," *Independent* 107 (October 1921): 5; Will Irwin, *Propaganda and the News or What Makes You Think So?* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1936).

Referring to governmental PM in 1917 and 1918, many Americans feared the implications of PM in the United States during war and perhaps even more so during peace. Public apprehension toward centralized PM forced marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors to be more nuanced when carrying it over into the realm of consumerism. Eminent scholar Charles Beard wrote, "Never before in our history had such a campaign of education been organized [as happened during WWI]; never before had American citizens realized how thoroughly, how irresistibly, a modern government could impose its views upon the whole nation and under a barrage of publicity stifle dissent with dedications, assertions, official reasons, and reiteration." In *New Aspects of Politics* (1919), Charles Merriam, a prominent political scientist who had worked for the CPI in Italy during World War I, advocated further study of psychological strategies in modern society due to what had happened in WWI. He, like Beard, expressed concern about the dangers of state-sponsored (or any other centrally directed) perception management. Perhaps the most familiar study of wartime PM was Harold Lasswell's *Propaganda Technique in the World War* (1927). While Lasswell acknowledged the potential dangers of propaganda (state-sponsored PM), he argued that it was no less moral than a "pump handle" and was, in any case, superior to "governments' previous reliance on brute force."³⁸⁷ In Lasswell's opinion, leaders should avoid the word "propaganda" but should feel free to use "nonviolent persuasion." Claiming to act on the public's behalf, marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants certainly used "nonviolent persuasion" to inspire millions of consumers to want and to purchase the same goods after the war.

³⁸⁷ As recounted by historian Mark Smith, Lasswell identified five major aspects of effective propaganda during war: (1) demonizing the enemy; (2) addressing all segments of populations domestically and abroad; (3) "assur[ing] the civilian population of ultimate victory"; (4) "preserv[ing] friendships among allies and influence neutrals"; and (5) creating internal conflicts amongst the enemy. Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 218-220.

After World War I, Americans were on the lookout for "propaganda," a term insinuating the release of information to cause a feeling or reaction among the target audience that was consistent with the intent of the source. Therefore, the continuation of PM in the 1920s required marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants to portray their efforts as "transparency," "open information," or "publicity." Planners and executors of corporate perception management basked in the conceptual ambiguity between "propaganda" and "publicity."³⁸⁸ President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends was unable to draw hard lines between propaganda and publicity: "Propaganda, publicity, and mass education are terms expressing the fact of purposive mass impression, which may be designed to affect either private or public ends."³⁸⁹ Corporate leaders followed the example of George Creel who, in April 1917, argued that the government's PM strategy should be "so overlaid by the publicity policy that [it] will go unregarded and unresented."³⁹⁰ In 1928, James Webb Young of the J. Walter Thompson Company wrote, "Advertising you pay for, Publicity you cadge for. This makes Publicity more

³⁸⁸ However, as public relations consultant Ivy Lee had suggested, distinguishing between "propaganda" and "publicity" was entirely subjective. In September 1923, Paul Harrison from University of Kansas' Department of Journalism asked Ivy Lee, publisher William Randolph Hearst, and journalist Herbert Bayard Swope: "How do you distinguish between legitimate publicity and propaganda?" To Hearst, "'Legitimate publicity' is the spreading of truthful information, or facts, about any cause or condition which is of interest or importance to the people generally 'Propaganda' is the giving out (or hiring of) opinions, arguments, or pleas to induce people generally to believe what some individual, group of individuals, or organizations want them to believe." Lee agreed, but qualified that in publicity "it is made plain who is responsible for distributing the information and who is financing its distribution, together, of course, with details as to the amount of money spent and the methods by which it is expended." Swope argued that "propaganda may be anything or everything; that limitation is readily set by the assumption of a personal responsibility." *Time*, September 10, 1923.

³⁸⁹ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 113, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

³⁹⁰ Memorandum by George Creel in Link, ed., *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 42:39.

dignified than Advertising."³⁹¹ Young, an executor and a direct supporter of governmental PM during WWI, thought of "publicity" as a superior form of PM because it obscured the manipulative intent of advertising. In a meeting in 1929, one of JWTC's executives mentioned, "all of us advertising men instinctively see something of enviable value in publicity." Within publicity was "an element of power which is inherently lacking in all advertising, no matter how powerful we make it from a display standpoint."³⁹² As had Creel and the CPI, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors saw "something of enviable value in publicity" because it lacked the negative insinuations of "propaganda." They claimed to publicize information while trying to get Americans to buy the same products and brands. Publicizing represented a creative form of psychological manipulation that was emblematic of PM from 1917 to 1929.

Claims of publicizing and providing open information notwithstanding, marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants often lied in order to sell products, indicating a disregard for the public's intelligence and a deliberate effort to influence its actions. Often, they did so with impunity; sometimes, their lies were exposed and their credibility was jeopardized. For example, throughout 1928 advertisers for Palmolive liquid soap lied to motion picture celebrities and workers regarding a supposed city ordinance banning "using cake soap in Hollywood." The California Board of Health responded that "that there was no such ordinance." That turn of events opened the door for J. Walter Thompson's client, Lever Brothers, and its product Lux Toilet Soap. Palmolive sought retribution and challenged JWTC's statements that

³⁹¹ "The Compleat Angler, Or, How to be an Advertising Man and Catch the Poor Fish," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁹² Staff Meeting (January 30, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

"nine out of ten used [Lux] and that it was the official soap used in the dressing rooms in Hollywood," an unsubstantiated claim.³⁹³ Advertisers frequently exaggerated (or sometimes outright lied about) the characteristics of a product, the effect it would have on the buyers' lives, or its popularity, in most cases knowing but not caring about the (un)truthfulness of the claims.

During WWI, the CPI's Four-Minutemen made hyper-inflated or false claims of Prussian barbarism, among others, to induce Americans to feel a certain way and to take a certain action. Likewise, in the 1920s, the frequency of false or purposefully misleading claims indicated marketers' and advertisers' continuation of PM and undermined their claims of "truth in advertising." But starting in the Progressive Era and increasing during and after World War I, many consumers, advocates for consumers' rights, progressives, publicists and journalists, and legislators thought that tougher measures were needed to check false and misleading claims. Concerned members of society including George Creel, author and consumer rights' advocate Frederick Schlink, journalist Stuart Chase, and the publishers of *Printer's Ink*, helped found consumer watchdog associations such as the Advertising Men's League, the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, and Consumers' Research, as well as what Mann and Plummer call "advertising-vigilance groups" in cities across the United States. As historian Kathleen Donohue rhetorically states, "If consumers had responsibilities, then did they not also have rights?"³⁹⁴ By 1913, fifteen state legislatures had passed states mandating "truth in advertising"

³⁹³ The volleys in false advertising allegations continued. Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Box 1/4, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

³⁹⁴ Donohue, *Freedom from Want*, 115.

and by 1921 twenty-three state legislatures had done so.³⁹⁵ In 1914, the Federal Trade Commission was established, and soon it had responsibility for investigating false claims in advertising. Other than exposés in the print media (which the Department of Justice considered grounds for censorship or imprisonment of the offending parties), no external check existed to control the state's false and misleading claims to shore up popular support in WWI. Consumers' rights groups and the looming threat of government regulation became major concerns for marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants as they adapted PM to postwar society and economy. Still, they were not deterred from using manipulative tactics.

Despite increased awareness and tighter regulation of marketers and advertisers trying to manipulate buyers after WWI, they still deliberately lied to and misled consumers, even when dealing with potentially harmful pharmaceuticals.³⁹⁶ For example, since before WWI, Sterling Bayer had made inflated claims for its products, and in the 1920s, it actually *increased* exaggerated claims. The brand name "Aspirin" flashed everywhere, and fictional, unsubstantiated health claims for the product abounded.³⁹⁷ The American Medical Association, the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, and many other parties (including George Creel) advocated for a federal agency to regulate false claims made for pharmaceuticals as little had

³⁹⁵ Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 141; Smith, *Social Science in the Crucible*, 146.

³⁹⁶ Technically, there was no legislation or federal agency in place to prevent false advertising specifically relating to medical products. The Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 required pharmaceutical companies to clean up product labeling but mentioned nothing about claims made in advertisements.

³⁹⁷ The American Medical Association and advocates for consumers' rights opposed selling brand-name pharmaceuticals over the counter in the first place; it feared advertisers misleading patients who would buy a well-known brand without appreciating its potentially dangerous chemical compounds.

been done to stem the flow of misinformation about over-the-counter drugs. The difficulty of regulating false claims in advertising, particularly for potentially harmful or fatal products, stemmed from the impracticality (or impossibility) of checking or proving the truthfulness of every one. As Mann and Plummer argue, "truth becomes harder to establish . . . if the claim is for a product with capabilities (or shortcomings) beyond the understanding of the average person." In those cases, "determining the veracity of an advertisement becomes next to impossible."³⁹⁸ Still, advocates for consumers' rights would not give up the fight to have a federal agency regulate truth in advertising, especially with lives on the line. Knowing that truth was "hard to establish," marketers and advertisers for pharmaceutical companies increased deceptive advertising as part of the private sector's postwar PM strategy.

To continue using PM after World War I, marketers and advertisers had to consider that one of the FTC's chief responsibilities was monitoring, investigating, and even prosecuting companies that made deliberately false claims. In September 1914, President Wilson signed the Federal Trade Commission Act into law to prevent "unfair methods of competition in commerce."³⁹⁹ In 1915, the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World asked the FTC "to treat false advertising as an unfair method of competition." Though regulating false and misleading advertising fell outside of the FTC's original charter, no other executive agency did it at the time and the Commission soon assumed the burden. According to its first annual report, "The Commission has . . . in certain cases of misbranding and falsely advertising the character of

³⁹⁸ Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 37, 138-139.

³⁹⁹ "Federal Trade Commission: A History," <http://www.ftc.gov/ftc/history/ftchistory.shtm> (accessed March 12, 2011).

goods where the public was particularly liable to be misled . . . taken jurisdiction."⁴⁰⁰ With a general mission of preventing "unfair methods of competition," the FTC represented the first major regulatory agency to curb the potential excesses of corporate PM. No such check on the state's wartime PM had existed; marketers and advertisers now had to employ even more creative and subtle psychological tactics in order to persuade Americans to think of themselves as consumers.

Beginning in July 1916 and continuing as the state was primarily concerned with mobilization for total war after April 1917, the FTC began heavily investigating (and, if necessary, prosecuting) cases of deceitful corporate PM, some more serious than others. For example, in the *Federal Trade Commission v. A. Theo. Abbott Co.*, the complainant "charged the respondent with labeling and advertising certain fabrics manufactured by it as 'silk' when such fabric was not silk, or did not contain silk substances." The report noted that "[a]fter the issuance of the complaint the respondents took substantial steps to correct every possible confusion or deception which the practice involved, and an order was entered requiring [the company] to cease and desist from the practices complained of." Another was "Complaint No. 7," *Federal Trade Commission v. Muenzen Specialty Co.*, where it investigated "[u]nfair methods of competition in connection with sale of vacuum cleaners by misrepresentation in advertising, by injurious statements relative to competitors' cleaners, and competitors' financial standing, etc., in alleged violation of section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act." It investigated Shredded Wheat for "threatening to withdraw its advertising from newspapers that advertised the goods of

⁴⁰⁰ Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report of the Federal Trade Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 10, 1916*, 5-6. For example, on February 28, 1916, senior commissioners discussed an investigation of false and misleading advertising of the Keystone Varnish Company. See Federal Trade Commission, *Minutes of the Federal Trade Commission*, February 28, 1916.

the competitor" and "falsely advertising that it had exclusive rights to manufacture and sell its products."⁴⁰¹ In January 1918, the FTC investigated the National Biscuit Company in part because it had been "making contracts with advertising agencies which tend to stifle and suppress competition." In February 1918, the FTC investigated Sears, Roebuck and Company for "stifling and suppressing competition by means of false and misleading advertising."⁴⁰² By the end of World War I, the FTC was heavily involved in keeping companies from using less than honest means to stifle competition and exploit the American public. Despite greater measures in place to regulate advertising after WWI, marketers' and advertisers' cleverness in adapting PM to postwar society made it much more difficult for the FTC to prevent "unfair methods of competition" in the 1920s.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report of the Federal Trade Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1917*, 9-11, 54-58.

⁴⁰² Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report of the Federal Trade Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1918*, 58, 63.

⁴⁰³ The FTC looked to the courts to establish a standard by which to measure false and misleading advertising claims because thus far it had been subjective in determining which complaints to investigate and which investigations to litigate. Providing little guidance for what constituted misleading information, the courts generally conceded that advertising must be accurate to the "reasonable man." "The FTC . . . could not," according to Mann and Plummer, "go into the business of protecting nincompoops from their own stupidity." Between 1918 and 1929, many advertisements offended the "reasonable man." In 1918, 10 out of 154 complaints involving misrepresentation were valid; in 1928, the number of valid complaints rose to 36 out of 62. In 1929, the FTC created sub-committee comprised of attorneys solely to handle "false and misleading advertising published in newspapers and periodicals," but this proved insufficient to handle the great number of claims placed to the commission. By the early 1930s the FTC "was up to its neck in false advertising." In March 1925 alone, the FTC was overseeing the following cases of false or misleading advertising in the furniture industry: *Associated Advertising Clubs of the World v. Spear and Company*; *Associated Advertising Clubs of the World v. Sheppard Knapp Son and Company*; *S. Karpen and Brothers v. Black and Gates, Inc.*; *Associated Advertising Clubs of the World v. Ludwig Baumann and Company*; *Mahogany Association, Inc. v. Gimbel Brothers*; *Mahogany Association, Inc. v. Pacific Southwest Import Company*; *Mahogany Association, Inc. v. Frank Paxton Company*; *Kirschmann Hardwood Company*; and *Mahogany Association, Inc. v. Hammond Lumber Company*. Federal Trade Commission, *Annual Report of*

Leaders conducting PM between 1917 and 1929 acknowledged the detrimental effects of purposeful deception (when discovered) upon their own credibility. Many elites in the public and private sectors maintained the view that, while knowing what was best for the public, they needed credibility in the eyes of American consumers for effective PM campaigns. Naturally, for legal and professional reasons, most PM strategists advocated using subtle forms of suggestion rather than risk making outright false statements. For example, at the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies in 1923, John Benson, President of the 4 A's and Chairman of the convention, hoped "advertising . . . could eliminate the pseudo-scientific claims that the dental and medical profession are more or less disgusted with." He warned his colleagues not to knowingly mislead the American public (or allow it to know it was being misled), primarily to stay in the good graces of the FTC and the Better Business Bureau (BBB). Members of the conference even praised the recent activities of the National Vigilance Committee (NVC) and local BBBs. Rather than dictate what constituted good, "fair," or truthful advertising, the NVC existed "to gather facts as to complaints that may be made of abuses, and then chiefly by moral suasion to bring about changes in the use of advertising." The BBBs did the same on the local level. The speaker of the convention believed that the BBBs had benefitted corporate PM, primarily because they had "reversed the public's attitude toward advertising" as their investigations had proved that usually "the complaints were not justified." The speaker reminded the convention that the thirty-eight BBBs "are operated and managed by human beings, and human beings will make some mistakes." Still, "no one activity

the Federal Trade Commission for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1929, 55; Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 141-143; Federal Trade Commission, *Minutes of the Federal Trade Commission*, March 11, 1925.

in advertising has been able to do more in promoting good will and confidence in advertising than has been done through the National Vigilance Committee and these bureaus."⁴⁰⁴

In 1925, the NVC won the Harvard Advertising Awards' gold medal "given to the individual or organization deemed by the jury of award to merit recognition for distinguished contemporary services to advertising." The NVC earned the award due because it "[gave] impetus to the credibility of advertising, in fighting the misuse of advertising and in drawing the attention of advertisers and the public to the fact that advertising is more effective when truthful and credible."⁴⁰⁵ With the increasingly manipulative nature of PM since WWI, advertisers acknowledged the NVC's and BBBs' role in their industry's credibility, if only because of those agencies' inability to prove or prevent every instance of false advertising.

The advertising industry may have outwardly expressed gratitude toward the FTC, NVC, and BBBs. However, believing like all planners and executors of PM that they knew what was in the public's best interests, many executives still sought ways to beat out their competitors using more creative and effective tactics. Many marketers and advertisers often expressed annoyance, sometimes indignation, at the FTC's efforts to prevent "unfair methods of competition." At least as early as 1923, representatives from the FTC attended advertisers'

⁴⁰⁴ Transcript of the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (October 1923), Folder "Morning Session Report (1923)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁰⁵ "Harvard Awards \$10,500 Prizes for Advertising," Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. The FTC had similar fortunes as the NVC and BBBs when investigating complaints. The Annual Reports of the Federal Trade Commission from 1916 to 1929 indicate the time, effort, and detail entailed in each investigation of false or misleading advertising. Many complaints were dispelled not because they were invalid, but because the results of the FTC's investigations were inconclusive.

meetings and conferences, offering consolation that "members could talk as frankly as they liked, that anything that was said [would] not be divulged except to the government."⁴⁰⁶ At the 1926 Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, Roy Durstine, President of the 4 A's, criticized the FTC for its overly formal and, in his opinion, punitive methods. He wondered, "Why can't we all sit down around a table and talk it out? Why must we be put to expense of a long series of hearings to get into a record a series of facts which are not disputed at all?" In Washington, "we have an Administration committed to a policy of economy." Why, then, "in the name of all that is sensible and thrifty should one branch of the Government refuse to come to an agreement on self-evident facts and prefer to cause itself and the taxpayers and the publishers of this country, to say nothing of the [advertising] agencies, the needless and heavy cost of these hearings?"⁴⁰⁷ The FTC promoted fair play, competition, and public safety, but advertisers resented the supposed limitations on what they could say to the American people.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, April 10-11, 1923, Folder "Minutes (1921-1924)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁰⁷ Roy Durstine, Speech at the Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. In January 1925 alone, the FTC had two dockets involving the American Association of Advertising Agencies. See Federal Trade Commission, *Minutes of the Federal Trade Commission*, January 19, 1925.

⁴⁰⁸ For example, the FTC was particularly concerned with ensuring that advertising claims for pharmaceuticals did not put the public in danger. Howard Watson Ambruster, a lone chemical engineer, declared a personal war against Bayer's advertising, particularly its claims that "Genuine Bayer Aspirin Does Not Harm the Heart" and could "cure flu, colds, and sore throat, all without any side effects." Ambruster attacked Bayer at hearings of the Food and Drug Administration and argued on the radio that Bayer's leaders should be imprisoned. He sent letters to heads of numerous medical associations; *Collier's*, *Time*, and *New York Times*; to

Between 1917 and 1929, leaders insisted that what they presented to the American people was "the truth" for informational and educational purposes, all the while trying to get them to take specific actions. PM strategists claimed to serve the public in the information-dense U.S. by sifting through facts, drawing conclusions, and presenting it with "the truth" about a particular topic. Many marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants publicly endorsed "truth in advertising" to reassure people of the private sector's commitment to preventing false and misleading claims in advertising. Indeed, continuing PM into the postwar era required such a conciliatory (if sometimes disingenuous) gesture. They realized that reckless abuse of the public's trust threatened the credibility and integrity of their professions and was counterproductive to their overall corporate PM strategy. At a 1926 convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of America, Robert Tinsman of the Federal Advertising Agency tried convincing his co-attendees that advertising "must tell the truth to be believed." "Trite as that may sound," Tinsman said, "there are many seemingly successful advertisers who do not yet appear to agree with it." He continued:

I do not refer to the obvious case of misrepresentation to which the Better Business Bureau would soon direct its valuable attention—rather to the crass and foolish exaggeration addressed to the mass moron with apparent disregard of the instability of such a market and the increasing expense of its cultivation, for I believe sufficiently in America's good sense to prefer an advertising appeal of sincerity and credibility.

congressmen; the FTC; every radio station broadcasting Bayer's "Does Not Harm the Heart" campaign; governors; and anyone else he thought could make a difference. Ambruster received few favorable responses until 1934 when, after convincing Ewin Lamar Davis, Commissioner of the FTC, that Sterling Bayer had lied to the American public, the Commission ordered Sterling to stop claiming "that aspirin did not upset its stomach, harm the heart, or hurt the body, no matter what the dose." Although for some time its "illegal advertising continued," the FTC forced Sterling to settle on its one true claim: "It cannot harm the heart." Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 95-96.

At this conference, Tinsman advocated "truth in advertising" in response to a recent write-up in the *New York Morning World*, in which the writer refuted "the practicality of advertising Florida lots by telling the truth about them. The superiority as drawing cards of ballyhoo and bunkum to a plain statement of facts has been demonstrated so many times that there will have to be a complete change in the mental makeup of the American people before any results can be hoped for from the latter method." Tinsman urged his colleagues to resist urges to exaggerate, mislead, and spread falsehoods. Harkening back to the days of product-centered advertising, Tinsman believed that advertisers should "[confine] their advertising to the merit of their product rather than to a romantic relation of the results which would follow the use of a cake of Ivory or the eating of a plate of Campbell's." Tinsman concluded that if a campaign "destroys credulity and makes advertising ridiculous, it must pay the price in the long run."⁴⁰⁹ Having seen the successes and setbacks of wartime PM and understanding the importance of credibility, Tinsman proclaimed the advantages of "truth in advertising" to the welfare of the industry (though his statements may have seemed more romantic than realistic to others attending).

For an industry bent on influencing Americans' behavior during peacetime, its public support for "truth in advertising" served as little more than a front for corporate PM. At the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers in 1927, Irwin Rosenfels, advertising manager for Sears, Roebuck, and Company, presented a talk titled "How Much Sincerity Does Advertising Want?" Amidst discussions of honesty, credibility, and truth in their profession, Rosenfels described two competing viewpoints toward modern advertising, one "conservative" and one "radical." Rosenfels argued that conservatives believed advertising "is not only the

⁴⁰⁹ Robert Tinsman, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

worthy shrine of our devotion, the standard-bearer of progress, but also the bulwark of our business investments and the protector of our dividends." Radicals believed that "advertising has filled our lives with useless luxuries that we can't pay for without cheating the landlord or the butcher—that far from being a gold bond, it is more like a gold brick—the careless oratory of a carefree quack." To radicals, advertising "threatens to destroy our thrift and strangle our civilization." Rosenfels opined that advertisers should be sincere, which did not necessarily mean entirely truthful. He explained, "For years [advertising] has pursued truth—literally pursued it as one chases a golf ball or even a rainbow, either of which may provide beneficial exercise if nothing more." Rosenfels continued: "this turn toward sincerity did not originate in a religious revival—but entirely in self-interest. We simply discovered a new sales appeal—CREDIBILITY—and we worked it for all it was worth." Rosenfels saw the advantages of sincerity, but expressed no interest in chasing down or presenting the whole truth to Americans. In fact, he made numerous statements describing the ridiculousness of advertisers' boasts of being truthful. For example: "A leading cigarette maker proclaims on billboards that his advertising TELLS THE TRUTH! A golf ball advertiser says, 'This is not advertising copy—these are facts.' Right here a disquieting thought intrudes: Is the time coming when we shall all have to advertise that our advertising is *not* advertising?—and then what?"⁴¹⁰ Not only was Rosenfels not personally committed to providing entirely truthful information to the public, but he insulted the idea of "truth in advertising" as a corporate ethos. Rosenfels, a career advertiser with a disdainful attitude toward consumers, felt no compulsion to abandon the more manipulative aspects of centralized perception management.

⁴¹⁰ Irwin Rosenfels, "How Much Sincerity Does Advertising Want?", address at the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers, November 1, 1927, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Wartime perception management consisted of inflated claims of the barbarism of the enemy and the purity of American motives, among other themes. As commercial advertising transitioned from a more product-centric to a person-centric format during and after World War I, marketers and advertisers also made inflated claims about the advantages of owning certain products and the consequences for not buying them.⁴¹¹ Speaking at the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers in 1927, Irwin Rosenfels, the same man who had mocked truth in advertising, argued that "Exaggeration may have shades and degrees. That which is not utterly false may be partly true `A half-truth is better than a whole truth for exactly the same reason that a half brick is better than a whole one—it carries farther.'" He concluded, "Most exaggeration is free from any conscious intent to deceive—on the contrary, it aims to convince."⁴¹² Exaggerated claims, sometimes reaching the point of being what historian T.J. Lears describes as "carnavalesque," stemmed from leaders' belief that they knew what was best for Americans (who did not want or care to know the entire truth anyway) and typified PM from 1917 to 1929.⁴¹³

As part of their effort to promote product-centric conformity on a national scale in the 1920s, advertisers often hired celebrities to endorse their clients' products. Knowing the essentiality of credibility to the success of PM, advertisers worried about whether consumers would believe celebrities' exaggerated claims for products, but not so much that they would forego capitalizing upon their stardom. First, advertisers wanted to know if celebrities used and

⁴¹¹ Ward, *The Invention of Journalism Ethics*.

⁴¹² "How Much Sincerity Does Advertising Want?" by Irwin Rosenfels, address at the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers, November 1, 1927, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

⁴¹³ T.J. Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 42, 50-51, 56, 80, 149, 162.

preferred the products for which they vouched. Affirmative answers to those questions virtually guaranteed "genuineness." In an executives' meeting in April 1928, Stanley Resor, President of the JWTC, addressed that matter frankly. He said, "I would absolutely not be a party to having a person say that he used a thing if he did not." The workaround was simple; often, as they did in campaigns for Simmons mattresses and Pond's facial creams, companies sent celebrities samples of products after they had already agreed to endorse them. Resor justified this practice: "I do believe . . . as on Lux [toilet soap], if you can bring about a situation where you can get the product used quickly instead of gradually over a long period of years, I think it is legitimate to use it."⁴¹⁴ The second major problem was ensuring that celebrities' exaggerated statements were credible. One of J. Walter Thompson Company's executives, Stewart Lea Mims, a Yale scholar turned professional advertiser, worried about this: "take some of the statements made by these movie stars, that they owe all their glory and fame to Lux [toilet soap], that their skins are made beautiful by Lux." Mims continued, "I feel we are dealing with a powerful thing and we are running the risk of crossing the line." Resor agreed: "We may have overstepped it in some instances, but we certainly will use every effort not to do it again." Another attendee at the meeting said that "we don't want to use a Simmons endorsement if we know that the woman is not going to have a Simmons bed in her house." They hoped celebrities believed in the products that they promoted. One executive said remembered that "Alice Roosevelt on Pond's was so insincere . . . she had no respect for the product."⁴¹⁵ Though Resor and Mims did not want

⁴¹⁴ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.* Using "insincere" testimonials had been the basis for the Federal Trade Commission's decision in 1930 against Lucky Strike that the company must stop using testimonials from people who did not use the product, reveal when it had paid for testimonials,

celebrities to exaggerate their experiences with products to the point that they seemed fake or insincere, it was worth it in some instances just to have their endorsements. Indeed, exaggeration as a form of deception characterized perception management during and after World War I.

In an effort to continue PM beyond 1918, advertisers set some basic industry standards and agreed to publicly support "honesty" in advertising.⁴¹⁶ In 1919, Stanley Resor heralded truthful claims and honesty as pillars of advertising. "It is now time to eliminate loose methods in advertising," he said, "in order that decisions may be based upon definite knowledge and sound principles rather than on guesswork and `opinion.'" Like George Creel, Resor believed that a façade of honesty was needed to earn the trust of the American public. To Resor, honesty "is the ability not only to be honest with other people but with the facts and with ourselves—to maintain this attitude not only when it is easy to be honest, but under pressure when it would be easier to color facts and conditions than to present them as they are."⁴¹⁷ Resor and others endorsed honesty in the abstract but they did not seek to rein in all exaggerated, sensational, and plain false claims in advertising. Some executives of the J. Walter Thompson Company hoped that the "[product] advertised [would] match, and preferably excel, the verbal claims made for it." According to one JWTC executive, "Exorbitant and superlative verbal claims may at times produce large sales," but advertisers had to be careful in how they made them. There was another option: "Subsidiary suggestion . . . may be used to magnify the excellence or desirability

and stop claiming that cigarettes helped people to lost weight. See Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 169.

⁴¹⁶ McGovern, *Sold American*, 25; for more detail on the professionalization of advertising, see also Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising*, 112-183.

⁴¹⁷ Folder "Helen and Stanley Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

of a product, so long as such suggestion is indirect, and by indirect suggestion I mean suggestion that induces or allows one to form his own deductions."⁴¹⁸ By "suggesting" rather coercing, advertisers could deny propagating falsehoods to the buying public. As a method of PM, "suggestion" helped to make Americans feel that they wanted to purchase and own specific products.

The marketing and advertising industries had only a lukewarm commitment to telling Americans the truth, and they usually only brought it up when it provided an advantageous sales angle. Irwin Rosenfels frequently mocked advertisers who pointed out how truthful their messages actually were. Historian Emily Rosenberg argues that professionals bent on profit frequently "sling around the word `truth' on the apparent assumption that no one would buy or read anything that did not claim it."⁴¹⁹ In 1923, Edward W. Bok, founder of the Harvard Advertising Awards, said that "truth shall be recognized as the most important factor in practical advertising and for this reason the jury in making the awards will be instructed to lay particular stress on accuracy and fair statement." James Mosely "heartily" praised Bok, saying they "give great impetus to the movement for `truth in advertising' and create a new appreciation on the part of the public of the importance of advertising as a great business force."⁴²⁰ Marketers' and advertisers' assurances of their commitment to "truth in advertising" belied their dragging the strategy of PM beyond the war in order to control consumers' buying choices.

⁴¹⁸ Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴¹⁹ Rosenberg, *A Day Which Will Live*, 155.

⁴²⁰ "Bok Offers Annual Awards to Stimulate Improvement in Advertising," Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

There were some anomalous voices within the marketing, advertising, and public relations industries who harshly criticized the use of perception management outside of a national emergency on the scale of World War I. One such individual was Bruce Barton, a titan in corporate public relations who, when he said that he was "constitutionally against dishonest advertising of any sort," seemed to have meant it. Historian T.J. Jackson Lears argues that Barton was somewhat disillusioned with the direction that advertising and the consumer economy had taken, including its manipulative and seemingly undemocratic aspects.⁴²¹ He took pride that his company, Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn, "has always been a little weak in the kind of advertising that tells men if they change from one cigarette to another their throats will feel better, or women that if they change from one toothpaste to another they will have more telephone calls." During World War I, Barton helped raise money for the Young Men's Christian Association and the National War Work Council, and established himself as a talented and sincere advertiser and public relations advisor. Citing the respectable nature of his work during WWI and afterwards in the private sector, Barton claimed to be in a higher ethical tier than most of his peers. Regarding false and misleading information, Bruce Barton could accept some things during war that he could not during peace. He regretted that corporate perception management had not only perpetuated but exceeded the deceptive qualities that were characteristic of wartime PM. In 1946, Barton scolded James Webb Young, formerly of the

⁴²¹ T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture," in Fox and Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption*.

Figure 5.1 Bruce Barton and James Webb Young



advertising firm J. Walter Thompson Company, who, like Barton, had assisted governmental perception management in 1917 and 1918. Young, who thought nothing of the continuation of PM outside times of crisis, personified the spirit, culture, and dubious ethics of the advertising industry writ large.

Young later assisted the governmental PM in World War II via the War Advertising Council (WAC). After the Allied victory, Young kept the WAC alive, though he dropped the first word of its title and it became simply the Advertising Council. The WAC's continuation past the war outraged Barton, who thought it undermined respectable advertising. Barton acknowledged that the WAC had been established "to help win the war" and admitted that "the first casualties in every war are truth and morality." Barton told Young:

We sacrificed 'truth in advertising' and did it cheerfully in order to adhere to the party line We did a credible and workmanlike job and were commended for it We did not tell the truth, of course . . . we made [people] more conscious of the war and helped to inspire them with the warm feeling that they were helping to win it.

He then blasted Young for continuing the Advertising Council, arguing that "at this point we ought to raise the serious question of whether we have any right to prostitute the great power of advertising to this partisan and immoral end." Barton could not justify using a purposefully manipulative body outside of a total war scenario. Young replied, "I am certainly glad that you

delivered yourself of what was on your chest about the Advertising Council." He continued, "The Council is bound by its charter not to accept any request from the government which represents merely an administration policy." It would not promote anything "contrary to the public interest." Adding a personal touch, Young concluded, "I have always been worried, Bruce, by the fact that we do not have your personal, active participation in this Council effort. Either some of us are crazy, or this is the most important thing the advertising business ever did; and you are too important a figure in the business not to be an active part of it When I get back here in November for the winter, I am going to try to get hold of you and indoctrinate you."⁴²²

Going back to his time in the J. Walter Thompson Company in the 1920s, Young had always been flippant about the idea of guiding Americans' behavior through misleading PM, even in peacetime. He had also openly acknowledged the propagandistic nature of modern advertising, something even the boldest of advertisers feared doing publicly. Neither Barton or Young converted the other, and the Advertising Council went on to create numerous campaigns featuring themes, icons, and slogans that Americans immediately recognize, such as the United Negro College Fund ("A Mind is a Terrible Thing to Waste"); McGruff the crime dog ("Take a Bite Out of Crime"); Smokey the Bear ("Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires"); and Vince and Larry, the Crash Test Dummies. Barton and Young each argued that his opinion best served the public's interests, but they disagreed about whether marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants had a moral obligation not to deceive the public in order to influence its behavior outside of a time of national crisis.

⁴²² Barton to James Webb Young, September 19, 1946, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; Young to Bruce Barton, September 24, 1946, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

In the 1920s, corporate leaders had the advantage of time over governmental planners and executors of PM during the world war. Pressed by the national emergency at hand, Creel, the CPI, and supportive PVOs and NGOs had to hastily develop their PM strategy, whereas corporate leaders could spend additional time researching products and markets and planning PM campaigns. Additional time for research helped marketers and advertisers discover new sales angles. They also believed that it would minimize their having to account for falsehoods in advertising claims (in formal investigations) after they had been released to the American people. In a talk in 1926 called "Using Facts to Build the Advertising Campaign," Milton Towne of the Joseph Richards Company argued that the old way had been "inspiration first and fit the facts in after." Basing advertising claims on research was "the new order." Towne concluded, "In his dual capacity of architect and builder of advertising campaigns, from plan to printed page, the agent finds that inspiration must flow from or be checked by indurated facts."⁴²³ In 1919, C.S. Duncan of the University of Chicago had made a similar observation, saying, "The day of shrewd guesses in business is fast growing to a close . . . the urgent demand now is for facts which have been carefully collected and scientifically analyzed."⁴²⁴ Louis Wiley assured *Printer's Ink*, "No harm will come to the publishing and advertising business if the facts are properly presented." James O'Shaughnessy of the 4 A's echoed Wiley's sentiment: "To put it

⁴²³ Milton Towne, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴²⁴ Duncan's quotation in Igo, *The Averaged American*, 111.

mildly . . . advertising, above all things, cannot afford to straddle a lie."⁴²⁵ The passing of the national emergency of World War I allowed for more time to research and preparation for PM campaigns. Research provided marketers and advertisers, supposedly committed to improving the republic, with the ability to more carefully select what information to share with the American people.

In the interest of informing, educating, and serving the public—i.e., adapting PM to the consumer economy—marketers and advertisers invested more time, resources, and manpower in their research programs to have factual bases for claims made for products, even if those claims were exaggerated, misleading, or even false. According to Paul Cherington, Director of Research at the J. Walter Thompson Company, "Research is a particularly widely favored term in business just at the present time It is difficult to appreciate fully how thin the partition has become between many branches of science and the process of business The General Electric Company, some of the Standard Oil Companies, the DuPont interests and many other progressive American business concerns have research work continually in progress."⁴²⁶ In October 1923, at the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, the Chairman of the Magazine Committee proclaimed, "If we do not recognize that our business is becoming more and more scientific and that there are many things in it which require greater and greater accuracy and sense of values, we certainly are living in a fool's

⁴²⁵ *Printer's Ink*, September 27, 1923, Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴²⁶ "The Obligations of Business Research," Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

paradise."⁴²⁷ In 1927, Irwin Rosenfels boasted, "Testing laboratories were established and technical men were ordered to analyze all sorts of goods, furs, fabrics, hardware, drugs and toilet preparations, and tell the exact truth about their ingredients and specifications."⁴²⁸ Providing Americans with "the truth" was only of ancillary concern, if of any at all. Without many of the same pressures felt by planners of PM during WWI, marketers and advertisers invested in their research programs simply to find more effective ways to sell products and thus have people preoccupied with consumption.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁷ Report of Chairman Dickinson of the Magazine Committee at the Seventh Annual Convention of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (October 10-11, 1923), Folder "Annual and Various Reports," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴²⁸ "How Much Sincerity Does Advertising Want?" by Irwin Rosenfels, address at the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers, November 1, 1927, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

⁴²⁹ Research was not optional in the pharmaceutical industry since its products could be harmful or fatal to purchasers, even though companies and their hired advertisers continued to make inflated claims about their products' health benefits. In *The Aspirin Wars*, Mann and Plummer argue that "the modern drug industry" brought forth "the marriage of science and business" by virtue of its expansive research programs. By and large, drug companies of that era used scientific research partly as a preemptive effort to ward off criminal and civil liability. Background research was as important for making claims for food products as it was for pharmaceutical drugs. J. Walter Thompson Company began bio-chemical research in 1922 to make claims about their products' health benefits and, accordingly, claimed itself to be the "first agency to hire a domestic scientist and set up a test kitchen." For example, scientific research helped advertisers reinvent the image of Fleischmann's yeast from a "bread-making" ingredient to a health prophylactic. At the height of the vitamin fad Fleischmann's fell back on science to prove that "yeast has been found to be rich in vitamins, an element the body urgently requires." The J. Walter Thompson Company, Fleischmann's advertising agent beginning in July 1920, developed a thorough research program involving "dieticians and physicians" in order to determine "exactly what yeast would do" to improve consumers' health. Through this research advertisers concluded they could "prescribe" yeast for four health issues: skin and stomach "troubles" and "constipation and general run-down condition." Laws required companies to research and make accurate statements for pharmaceuticals and food products, but companies frequently discovered new sales angles in the process. To validate their work and convince the public that they were committed to high professionalism, marketers and advertisers rewarded

Effective perception management required effective presentations of ideas and products. During the war, the CPI's Divisions of Advertising, Pictorial Publicity, Films, and others used the appropriate media and formats to relay the nation's objectives to the public and to direct its behavior. Similarly, in the 1920s, marketers and advertisers chose the best visual formats to present their products and to enhance the credibility of the claims they made for those products. For example, some advertisers used photos instead of illustrations because they believed that photos provided a more realistic effect, much as the CPI's Division of Films chose to use actual footage provided by the U.S. Army Signal Corps for a more documentary feel. Visiting a J. Walter Thompson Company staff meeting in January 1928, renowned professional photographer Edward Steichen argued, "The value of the camera is its objectivity," but qualified, "I believe it is impossible to get the whole truth and nothing but the truth in any photograph" because they all

themselves and each other for research which had translated into effective PM campaigns. Not only had scientific (sometimes pseudo-scientific) research become a sound practice in the advertising industry, but it even became prize-worthy. The 1926 Harvard Advertising Awards awarded Barton, Durstine, and Osborne (BDO) a \$2,000 cash prize for its research report, "Report and Recommendation for Johnson and Johnson, New Brunswick, New Jersey." BDO's "thorough-going and workmanlike" research had "attained results of real significance." That sort of accolade convinced advertisers that so long as their claims were rooted in "science," they should have no moral qualms about making them. Marketers and advertisers used facts creatively to give them new sales edges. In adapting PM to the postwar society, they wanted to create the impression that manipulation and deception were things of the past and that the factual, scientific nature of their work indicated a new dawn for corporate marketing and advertising. In actuality, if they cared about truth in advertising at all, it was thought of as a "defensive measure" to ward off liability. Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 23, 31. See Irwin Rosenfels, "How Much Sincerity Does Advertising Want?", address at the annual meeting of the Association of National Advertisers, November 1, 1927, Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; *The Fourth Estate*, February 19, 1927, Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

tell stories. Realism and detail were two important aspects of photography, but to Steichen "the greatest kind" of objectivity photography could achieve was "aliveness," its ability to portray a slice of real life. Steichen warned his colleagues, "If you are looking for an easy solution of getting out an issue, don't settle on photographs as the easy way of doing it. You have to do a great deal of work. [It is] objective, and don't think you can fake it."⁴³⁰ Marketers and advertisers may have preferred photos in some instances because they thought that they more accurately portrayed real life, but they did not overly concern themselves with whether it was possible "to get the whole truth and nothing but the truth in any photograph." They believed that they knew what was best for Americans, and simply sought the best media and formats to present selected information to the public as part of the systematic approach to PM.

Despite claims of informing, educating, and serving the American public, marketers, advertisers, and public relations advisors used manipulative, sometimes deceptive, tactics as part of their deliberate strategy of perception management after World War I. "Truth in advertising," a professional slogan portrayed as an intra-industry solution to prevent false and misleading statements made to the American people, was used to mask the inherently deceptive aspects of corporate perception management. They exclaimed their commitment to "truth in advertising" in the face of watchdog agencies such the Federal Trade Commission, the National Vigilance Committee, the state and local Better Business Bureaus, the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, and others concerned with the rights of consumers. Yet they were completely unashamed in their belief that Americans were, by and large, stupid, irrational, impulsive, and in need of leaders. Indeed, a common feature of perception management from 1917 to 1929 was leaders'

⁴³⁰ Staff Meeting (January 31, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

conviction that they knew what was best for the American public as well as the kind and amount of information to which it was entitled. That belief, masked by claims of informing, educating, or serving others, underpinned governmental and corporate leaders' use of perception management to guide Americans' behavior inside and outside of times of national emergency.

CHAPTER 6 - Defining and Promoting Typical American Behavior in the Postwar Decade

An advertisement is an effort to obtrude an idea to a disinterested mind.⁴³¹
J. Walter Thompson executives meeting, 1929

. . . an unselfish, constructive force [makes] possible the present unprecedented volume of advertising on a sound and profitable basis.⁴³²
The Advertising Agency of Today, 1924

After World War I, corporate leaders used perception management not simply to sell products (as had been the point of advertising since the eighteenth century), but to instill within Americans the perception that products offered them solutions for all problems. Claiming to serve the public, the private sector actively promoted typical social and economic behavior in the postwar United States by associating status, success, and acceptance in society with what one owned, and failure, embarrassment, and stigma to what one did not own. During WWI, the Committee on Public Information linked direct action to patriotic citizenship; after the war, marketing and advertising companies linked people's purchasing choices to normal social behavior. In short, using PM, they defined model citizens according to what they bought and owned. The chapter addresses the themes, methodologies, and technologies used by marketers and advertisers in their PM campaigns to promote typical or normal American behavior (occasionally requiring breaking Americans of existing mores) and to establish the nation as one permanently defined by consumption.

⁴³¹ Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴³² *The Advertising Agency of Today* (1924), Folder "Mrs. Mary O'Shaughnessy (London visit)," Box AF7, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Marketers and advertisers believed that they could shape the perceptions and control the choices of the entire American public, defining typical behavior just as the state had done during the war. Historian Sarah Igo argues that in the 1920s, corporate leaders "shifted their attention from manufacturing to marketing, from needs to desires, and from products to consumers."⁴³³ Gary Cross argues that they "welded human physical needs, impulses, and fantasies to packaged goods."⁴³⁴ More than ever, marketers and advertisers emphasized comfort over subsistence. What is more, they used perception management to make comfort appear as a necessity. Corporate leaders wanted to order society by inventing needs that could be solved with the purchase of mass produced, homogeneous goods. In linking economic choices to what supposedly constituted typical or acceptable American behavior, corporate leaders thus continued a deliberate, systematic strategy of PM after World War I.

The war had temporarily provided the nation with a unifying cause. However, the postwar U.S. was as complex and diverse as ever, and its future was uncertain. According to Edward Eyre Hunt, member of the Committee on Recent Economic Changes:

Modern life is everywhere complicated, but especially so in the United States, where immigration from many lands, rapid mobility within the country itself, the lack of established classes or castes to act as a brake on social changes, the tendency to seize upon new types of machines, rich natural resources, vast driving power, have hurried us dizzily away from the days of the frontier into a whirl of modernism which almost passes belief . . . In times of war and imminent public calamity it has been possible to achieve a high degree of coordinated action, but in the intervals of which national life is largely made up coordinated effort relaxes and under the heterogeneous forces of modern life a vast amount of disorganization has been possible in our economic, political and social affairs.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 109.

⁴³⁴ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 5.

⁴³⁵ Hunt's comments reflected an understanding of the nationalization of American life discussed in Chapter 1. He argued that "we may hold steadily to the importance of viewing social situations as a whole in terms of the interrelation and interdependence of our national life, of analyzing and appraising our problems as those of a single society based upon the assumption of the common welfare as the goal of common effort." See enclosure contained in a letter from

Hunt correctly highlighted the complexities in the modern U.S., but did not acknowledge the intensive efforts of the private sector to order society along consumerist lines. As Warren Susman argues, "In a world of increased complexities, mass technology, and fearful changes . . . advertisements offered a chance to retain human dignity as well as individual meaning and development."⁴³⁶ On behalf of corporate interests, marketers and advertisers resolved to limit Americans' choices in the 1920s by providing them with ideals of social acceptability and success, thus perpetuating perception management beyond the crisis of war.

Instead of repudiating the state's methods of perception management during the war, marketers and advertisers simply adapted them to promote consumerism after it. One of the main similarities was the methodical approach to exploiting the emotions of the American people. According to executives from the J. Walter Thompson Company, advertising "should appeal to the imagination and not to the critical faculty. It should make people feel and not think."⁴³⁷ J. Walter Thompson Company's advertisers wanted to create a sense of immediacy through emotion-laden phraseology and images, regardless of the product or idea.⁴³⁸ One of JWTC's publications laid out a simple formula for doing so: "Dominant space, ingenious layout, striking headline—with these we can stop the reader. Careful search for just the right word, plus

Hunt to E. French Strother, October 1, 1932, Committee on Recent Social Trends—Correspondence—1932, E. French Strother papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

⁴³⁶ Susman, *Culture as History*, 128.

⁴³⁷ Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴³⁸ Folder "Sam Meek Ad Work," Box 2, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

an equally careful restraint, will help us convince him."⁴³⁹ Advertisers acknowledged that they "spent most of our time trying to get inserts that we thought had 'stopping' value."⁴⁴⁰ Speaking at a convention of the 4 A's in 1926, Guy Richards argued that advertisers "are not buying space—whatever that means." Richards said that advertisers "buy human reactions, we buy attention."⁴⁴¹ In *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), Dale Carnegie wrote that one key way to influence other people "is to talk about what *they* want and show them how to get it."⁴⁴² One of the difficulties corporate leaders faced when trying to "buy human reactions" was competing in the dense informational environment. Executives from JWTC acknowledged that "it's hard to make argument as interesting as melodrama [An] advertisement on washing machines, say, has to appear side by side with the details of the latest Jersey scandal—side by side with the latest thriller from the pen of E.M. Hall."⁴⁴³ Unlike the state which, during World War I, could use institutional assets to control the flow of information, marketers and advertisers

⁴³⁹ "They Don't Want to Read It," *J. Walter Thompson News Bulletin* (November 1922), Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁴⁰ Staff Meeting (July 26, 1927), Folder "1/2," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁴¹ Guy Richards, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁴² Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 33; Lynn Dumenil correctly observed that Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* concentrated on "manipulation of others, presentation of self, and an acute consciousness of impressions." Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 88.

⁴⁴³ "They Don't Want to Read It," *J. Walter Thompson News Bulletin* (November 1922), Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

had to improve upon the ways in which they exploited the emotions and impulses of the American people.

As the CPI's various divisions had done during the war, national marketing and advertising companies carefully planned the best ways to make emotional impacts on the public in the 1920s. They perceived of two general types of advertisements: "One, is the kind that you read. The other, is the kind that you don't."⁴⁴⁴ They first had to catch target audiences' attention, which they often did through the use of carefully planned, powerful imagery, much of which was reminiscent of poster art during WWI. Reflecting upon the effectiveness of wartime recruiting and atrocity posters, commercial advertisers used bold images to make an emotional impact. For example, in 1919, the J. Walter Thompson Company used colorful cartoons in its campaign for Aunt Jemima in *Saturday Evening Post* and in 1926 it used the "all-picture page" for Maxwell House Coffee to appeal to potential consumers. In 1927, JWTC built vivid, four-page color inserts for various campaigns in *Printer's Ink* (in contrast to the "great bulk of advertising in *Printer's Ink* [which] is, as you know, the trade-papery kind").⁴⁴⁵ According to one advertiser in 1929, "in merchandise today color is becoming a more and more important factor in advertising, as evidenced by the great number of color pages in magazines." For

⁴⁴⁴ Robert Tinsman, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁴⁵ Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Staff Meeting (July 26, 1927), Folder "1/2," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

example, the "Penney Company advertising women's ready to wear garments, beautiful fabrics, [uses] this to great advantage and convey[s] the thought of style and beauty merely by the use of color." In 1926, advertiser W.H. Beatty noted, "Advertising is in transition. It seems to be moving out of its original sphere, which was in the realm of words and ideas and into a new era of pictures and modes." According to Beatty, "there is an emphasis and even a worship of picture." He wanted fellow advertisers to be sure that careful, deliberate planning underlie all images: "[T]here are ever so many more of us thinking in terms of pictures, and in spots confusing good art with mere prettiness, or stuntiness, and employing art intelligently."⁴⁴⁶ That sort of statement indicated how marketers and advertisers used images to exploit audiences' emotions as part of their conscious, deliberate strategy of perception management.

During the war, the Division of Films within the Committee on Public Information used actual footage provided by the U.S. Army Signal Corps for its realistic, documentary feel. With a similar rationale, advertisers often chose photos over colorful, cartoonish depictions for increased realism and credibility of messages. In some cases they believed that Americans would consider the value of products in their own lives if they were presented in realistic scenarios. J. Walter Thompson Company credited itself for the "first major swing to realism in advertising illustration."⁴⁴⁷ Quite immodestly, it claimed to have introduced "modern

⁴⁴⁶ W.H. Beatty, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁴⁷ "Contributions Made by J. Walter Thompson Company to the Development of Modern Advertising Principles," Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

photography" into commercial advertising.⁴⁴⁸ To appeal to the modern homemaker, the JWTC used photos in its Fleischmann's yeast campaign in 1923 because they "added [the] appearance of reality and [competed] in interest with the editorial pages of magazines and the photographic pages of the rotogravure sections of newspapers." They wanted photos to show "real people," and they included the "names and addresses of the testimonial writers" with each one.

Throughout 1925, JWTC's advertisers made these photos appear "as human and life-like as possible." "In this way," they wrote, "the 1925 campaign became absolutely accurate in every detail."⁴⁴⁹ Realizing the importance of credibility and hence using photography for supposedly realistic effect, corporate executives wanted Americans to think of the benefits that specific products would provide in their own lives.

Marketers and advertisers seemingly did not appreciate photography beyond its supposed ability to depict reality and add credibility to their strategy of PM. In a meeting in January 1928, executives from JWTC listened to a presentation by Edward Steichen, an eminent photographer. He had been Director of Photography for the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, and after the war he took up commercial photography, working for *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, Ford, and others. His work was of such high quality that he had turned down \$50,000 worth of work the previous year (over \$610,000 in 2010 dollars). He held strong beliefs about the benefits and drawbacks—even the morals—of photography. In Steichen's opinion, "Commercial art is the kind of thing which has been looked down upon for a long time." He called photography a new

⁴⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁹ Folder "Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

brand of "creation" and the photographer a "creator." He believed passionately in photography, and that for an advertiser to pay \$500 for a photo to "tell the story, and sell his product . . . is not expensive," especially when he is already willing to pay \$5,000 to \$10,000 for advertising space. He thought photos could capture culture as it was and Americans as they were. Photos made psychological impacts and helped audiences "feel it" and "get a kick out of it."⁴⁵⁰ In many campaigns, corporate executives chose photography to depict reality and convince Americans that products defined their lifestyle, identity, relationships, and even their patriotism in the postwar U.S.

In perception management from 1917 to 1929, governmental and corporate leaders described certain behaviors as American or un-American. In *Sold American*, Charles McGovern argues that "consumption became [as much] a right and entitlement" as anything guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Moreover, advertising "highlighted consumption as the key not only to individual society but also to the health of American society." Wartime perception management had effectively linked behaviors and levels of participation to patriotism and loyalty to the U.S. In the 1920s, "Abstractions such as liberty and freedom assumed immediate and powerful meanings in the arena of goods and leisure."⁴⁵¹ While claiming to promote the free market and economic choice, both hallmarks of a free society, marketers and advertisers used PM to obscure their attempts to convince Americans to buy specific products.

During World War I, corporate leaders explicitly related people's buying choices to the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of American citizenship. They used military and political

⁴⁵⁰ Staff Meeting (January 31, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁵¹ McGovern, *Sold American*, 10, 17, 19, 24.

terms and themes to promote specific products. For example, in June 1917, an advertisement in the *Minneapolis Evening Tribune* promoted "Regiments of Frocks Answer Summer's Roll Call." Soon after, an ad in the *Minneapolis Journal* exclaimed, "Boys Wanted!" (to "Fill These Bright Wash Suits"). In December 1917, an ad for "A Winter 'Entrenchment' Underwear Sale" warned readers: "December seems to have brought up old King Winter as a reinforcement. We are opening fire on him at once with a sale that will completely protect you."⁴⁵² Under the headline "Guiding Star of the Service," Elgin Watch Company told consumers that "hundreds of thousands of Elgins are in hourly use by the fighting men of America and her gallant Allies." Claiming that it "follows the flag," Ivory Soap made no less a claim for its product than it provides "provides the very joy of living to Our Boys when they are relieved from the front lines for rest, recreation, clean clothes, and a bath." PM told Americans how to tangibly support the war effort and often told them what to buy by linking consumption with patriotism.

After November 1918, some advertisements referred to the Armistice and America's victory. On November 20, 1918, an ad for Dayton Company in the *Minneapolis Journal* asked, "Where Can You Shop Comfortably, Quickly, and Satisfactorily at the 'Eleventh Hour?'" Three months later, another ad warned readers "It's the 'Eleventh Hour' in the Semi-Annual Furniture Sale."⁴⁵³ Those advertisements underscored the tight bond between patriotic pride and consumerism. The association between political and economic freedoms carried far beyond the

⁴⁵² *Minneapolis Evening Tribune*, June 11, 1917, and *Minneapolis Journal*, June 29, 1917, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 50, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; *Minneapolis Journal*, December 7, 1917, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 51, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁵³ *Minneapolis Journal*, November 20, 1918 and February 26, 1919, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 54, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

war years, though copy writers gradually stopped using themes directly referring to the Great War. In the 1920s, marketers and advertisers used PM to convince the public that that spending money on commodities was an expression, a privilege, and even a requirement of American citizenship.

Corporate leaders portrayed political and economic freedoms as two key benefits of living in the United States. The state's PM campaign in World War I had shown them how to place conditions on citizenship while emphasizing Americans' choices. In *Sold American*, Charles McGovern argues correctly that "Americans came to understand spending as a form of citizenship" and "embraced a material nationalism that placed goods and spending at the center of social life." Linking commercial choices with political liberty, marketers and advertisers sought to create a sense of "consent and belonging based on consuming." During and after the war they "[adapted] 'American' ideals, cultural icons, traditions . . . [and] framed consuming as the basis of a reconstituted citizenship."⁴⁵⁴ For example, during the 1917 Christmas season, one advertisement called "Let's Make it a Cheery Christmas" in the *Minneapolis Evening Tribune* read:

Christmas is one of the "landmarks" looming over the waves of disturbance and change to keep our hearts and minds normal . . . War has already affected our food, our clothing, our very habits. We should not let it disturb such an unselfish custom as Christmas represents . . . For while adapting ourselves to the spirit and the needs of the times, do we not want to keep up certain ideals of home and sentiment that are the heart of our American life? The men at the front think of the Nation as standing behind them staunchly true to all the splendid customs and institutions that have made it so good to live in—they would not be as confident if they thought we were neglecting our ideals and sentiment or had ceased the American trait of turning always a smiling front to the world.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵⁴ McGovern, *Sold American*, 3, 63, 94-95. According to Olivier Zunz, by 1914 Walter Lippmann had already "associated democracy with the right to purchase consumers' goods at low prices." See Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 78.

⁴⁵⁵ *Minneapolis Evening Tribune*, December 5, 1917, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 51, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

A subsequent advertisement called "Carry On" asked: "[Did] you see that great Christmas crowd in the [Dayton Company] store, Saturday? . . . There was the answer to any question about how America is going to behave in war-time."⁴⁵⁶ Corporate leaders told consumers that even during times of national crisis, they must purchase goods in order to be good, loyal Americans.

Through perception management, the war had offered immigrants opportunities to prove their loyalty to their host nation and, more importantly, to become Americanized. When the clouds of war lifted, many ethnic groups became victims of nativists who scrutinized their loyalty with renewed intensity. Frederick Lewis Allen argued that "the emotions of group loyalty and of hatred, expanded during wartime and then suddenly denied their intended expression, found a perverted release in the persecution not only of supposed radicals but also of other elements which to the dominant American group—the white Protestants—seemed alien or 'un-American.'"⁴⁵⁷ In contrast to the state's efforts during World War I, corporate leaders did not focus on Americanizing foreigners using perception management. Immigrants were not of concern to marketers and advertisers, who had other ideas about what it meant to be an American in the 1920s. By and large, corporate leaders were complicit supporters of postwar nativism.

If they felt no moral compulsion to Americanize immigrants, corporate leaders feared the specter of leftism and radicalism (as had Woodrow Wilson, George Creel, Albert Burleson, and

⁴⁵⁶ *Minneapolis Evening Tribune*, December 17, 1917, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 51, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁵⁷ Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 54. Dumenil agrees, stating simply, "War's end did not shut off the currents of nationalism and nativism." Adding a finer point, she continued, "The war's abrupt end in 1918 did not stop the official and unofficial drives for 100 percent Americanism, but merely redirected their focus to radicals, especially alien radicals." See *Modern Temper*, 206, 222.

others in 1917 and 1918), which they thought derived from foreign elements in the U.S. Ironically, some believed that Wilson's democratic rhetoric had been responsible for radical behavior after the war. In 1920, William McCarroll, former Vice-President of the National Association of Manufacturers, expressed disdain for President Woodrow Wilson's "loose talk" about "the time having come when people are in the saddle" which "had the effect of inflaming the minds of the mass of unthinking people." According to McCarroll:

We can hope to be delivered from disaster only by recognizing and facing the facts and by taking heed to the sober utterances of our clear headed and experienced "men who know." Happily the country has some of those to whom we can look, in this day of superficial thinking and loose talking.⁴⁵⁸

National Association of Manufacturers' President John Edgerton stated that the NAM "stands now and will continue to stand openly for the eternal principles of right, reason, and justice enshrined in the constitution of our republic, in the Golden Rule, and as construed and applied by those whose names and deeds have made this country the greatest among the nations of the earth."⁴⁵⁹ D.M. Edwards, editor of *American Industries*, argued that "the socialists, the communists and other discontents" within the United States constitute "a threat as repulsive to the ideals of a free country as it was foreign to established American procedure." To those corporate nationalists' surprise, many supposed malcontents like Robert LaFollette had even managed to enter the political realm and "represented quite a different trend which sought to

⁴⁵⁸ William McCarroll, "Collective Bargaining and the Closed Shop," *American Industries* 20 (April 1920): 32; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 18-19.

⁴⁵⁹ John Edgerton, "President Edgerton's Annual Address," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1923): 112-113.

disrupt the fundamental organization and administration of many of the national institutions."⁴⁶⁰ Many senior corporate leaders held firm ideas about what constituted loyal American behavior.

As a way to combat the looming threat of leftism and radicalism, planners of corporate PM avowed to exploit Americans' characteristic selfishness. Executives' belief in selfish people revealed a paradox in their concept of the American public whereby, on the one hand, people were inherently conformists and sheep and, on the other, each person was driven by his own desires and impulses. James Prothro articulates this paradox in corporate leaders' concept of the American public. According to Charles N. Fay, vice-president of the National Association of Manufacturers, though man cannot make rational decisions and will generally stay with the herd, "Human beings are not fundamentally cooperative, but on the contrary are individualistic. They are not altruists, but self-seekers, if we tell the honest truth."⁴⁶¹ Most corporate elites believed that the "central and fundamental principle in the American theory of industrial life is the freedom of the individual."⁴⁶² Prothro quotes Ben W. Hooper, member of the Railway Labor Board, who argued that man's "individualistic motive-power has driven mankind onward and upward . . . it has been the mother of invention . . . and the inspiration of ambition and hope."⁴⁶³ Publisher and author William Feather reinforced the notion of individualism, if more irreverently: "The 100 per cent American believes in the doctrine of selfishness."⁴⁶⁴ Charles

⁴⁶⁰ D.M. Edwards, "Get out Vote Campaign a Success," *American Industries* 25 (November 1924): 5; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 80-81.

⁴⁶¹ Charles Fay's quotation in Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 38.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 82.

⁴⁶³ Ben Hooper's quotation in *ibid.*, 39.

⁴⁶⁴ William Feather's quotation in *ibid.*, 43.

Schwab acknowledged that "men under me were human beings, with something of the same desires and motives that I have had, and that they were as likely to be right within their sphere of understanding as I was."⁴⁶⁵

Corporate leaders believed that Americans' selfishness would stamp out such potentially dangerous ideologies as socialism because, as Charles Fay argued, "no socialist, collectivist, or progressive takes the least account of such trifling things as fact and human nature!"⁴⁶⁶ Olivier Zunz recounts that Simon Patten, a political economist in the early twentieth century, said that "invidious social and cultural differences would dim if the masses could share democratically in the new consumption."⁴⁶⁷ Business elites took it upon themselves to improve society using PM because, according to James Emery, general counsel of the NAM, "the quality of the individual makes the quality of the republic."⁴⁶⁸ Satisfying human selfishness and motivating individuals to act required an object which, naturally in corporate leaders' opinion, centered on owning goods. Simply, as one of the NAM's *Pocket Bulletins* read in 1927, "Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; is a positive good in the world That some should be rich shows that others may become rich, and hence is just encouragement to industry and enterprise."⁴⁶⁹ Lynn Dumenil argues that the nation's "preoccupation with material progress," largely a result of the private sector's use of PM to promote consumerism, contributed to the "characteristic tone of the

⁴⁶⁵ Charles Schwab's quotation in *ibid.*, 48.

⁴⁶⁶ Charles Fay's quotation in *ibid.*, 41.

⁴⁶⁷ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 78.

⁴⁶⁸ Emery's quotation in Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 83.

⁴⁶⁹ "Great Exponents of American Industry," *Pocket Bulletin* 27 (February 1927): 1; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 42.

1920s."⁴⁷⁰ While Americans' herd mentality and selfish individualism might have seemed paradoxical, marketers, advertisers, and other senior corporate executives used PM to convince Americans that they all (should have) wanted the same things.

The state's wartime PM strategy had proved that in order to sell an idea or product it must be displayed everywhere, omnipresent. Similarly, in their own effort to control Americans' behavior and perceptions, marketers and advertisers increased the size and scope of PM campaigns dramatically between 1917 and 1929. According to President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends, "coincident with the end of the World War advertising lineage increased in a single year by nearly 40 per cent, thereby attaining a new level below which it has not subsequently dropped." In 1917, lines of advertising totaled 769,735; by 1929, lines of advertising reached 1,292,746. The Committee concluded that this increase reflected "the extension of national advertising campaigns."⁴⁷¹ Lynn Dumenil points out that in 1914 advertising volume stood at \$682 million and at \$2,987 million in 1929. Gary Cross offers similar but slightly higher figures: \$542 million in 1900, \$2.94 billion in 1920, and nearly \$3.43 billion in 1929. Though these numbers can only be taken as approximations, they reflect the meteoric rise of advertising and more aggressive attempts to sway people's choices.⁴⁷² According to Olivier Zunz, corporate leaders believed that "aggressive advertising" was needed

⁴⁷⁰ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 7.

⁴⁷¹ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 90, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

⁴⁷² Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 89; Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 34.

to combat "underconsumption," the idea that Americans were not buying enough goods due to an unnatural devotion to thrift and savings or because of excessively low wages.⁴⁷³

There were other indicators that marketers and advertisers had consciously decided to be more aggressive in managing people's perceptions and behavior after the war. For example, advertising increased proportionally with the increase of printed publications' circulations, especially in urban centers, in the 1920s. According to the Census Bureau's estimate in 1923, advertisements appeared in over 13,000 publications with a combined circulation of 232,000,000. In 1926, the American Newspaper Annual and Directory stated that the number of publications jumped to over 20,000 with a relative rise in circulation. That same year, some 45 percent of magazine circulation reached 35 percent of the American population residing in big cities, and 80 to 85 percent of dealers operated in "small towns and country districts," making exposure to advertising inescapable.⁴⁷⁴ Sarah Igo calls this the "revolution in mass

⁴⁷³ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 82.

⁴⁷⁴ As early as 1920, the 4 A's Committee on Outdoor Advertising observed, "As a general rule, the large cities are oversold [on outdoor advertising] for 1920 and some of them are well sold for 1921. Of course the smaller cities, as a whole, are not in quite such an oversold condition." Six years later, some advertisers still worried "city business had approached much more nearly to the saturation point than the country business," but took solace in the fact that "in the latter direction lay the chief gain for the future." See Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, January 13-14, 1920, Folder "Minutes (1918, 1920)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, and Milton Towne, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. Interestingly, according to President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends, the number of newspapers decreased while total circulation increased. "The trend since 1920 in the number of newspapers of general circulation is . . . [in] general, though with some irregularity . . . downward." In the committee's estimate, this downward trend was owed to "the centralization in the number of opinion-making agencies resulting from the extension of newspaper chain ownership." The committee suggested "the approach of a saturation point for newspaper circulation in general." See "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 83-85, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on

communications, a dramatic expansion of the media that by the end of the 1920s 'formed a new constellation of power . . . visible to a vast public, national in scope.'⁴⁷⁵ As the Committee on Public Information had done, marketers and advertisers exploited all forms of media, only now to saturate Americans with notions of prosperity. Lynn Dumenil notes that the widespread "sense of unprecedented prosperity—made all the more striking by its dramatic collapse in the stock market crash of 1929—helped to give the decade its singular tone."⁴⁷⁶ Between the Great War and the Great Crash, Americans could not escape leaders' deliberate efforts at PM.

To corporate leaders, heightened sales of commodities and luxuries in the 1920s across the nation validated their PM strategies. As Zunz describes, they "envisioned all of American society as potential customers." While envisioning a monolithic national market, they knew that successful campaigns required "breaking down the mass of consumers into niches that reflected economic and social-psychological realities."⁴⁷⁷ From coast to coast people bought, owned, and displayed the same products, reinforcing marketers' and advertisers' belief that Americans were inherently materialistic and conformists. Part of President Hoover's *Recent Social Trends*, Robert Lynd's "The People as Consumers" reported that in the 1920s, for the first time ever,

Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

⁴⁷⁵ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 12.

⁴⁷⁶ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 6. See also Guy Richards, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Milton Towne, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 64-65;

⁴⁷⁷ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 95.

Americans bought nearly everything in their homes rather than having made or bartered items. In 1927, behavioral psychologist Frances Stuart Chapin proposed using a "living room scale" as a way to measure modern middle-class consumers. Stuart shared marketers' belief that "the best way to measure class was to observe consumer behavior."⁴⁷⁸ Executives believed that the spread of homogeneous goods confirmed the existence of a single nationwide class of buyers and revealed that Americans tied their identity, success, and patriotism to their purchases.⁴⁷⁹

Mass marketing and advertising were conspicuous manifestations of corporate PM, both of which helped shape Americans' attitudes toward consumption after World War I. Corporate leaders used PM to build a nation of consumers because, as Carl Crow, a prominent businessman in the early twentieth century, noted, "[mass production] started long before there was anything that could be called mass consumption."⁴⁸⁰ Stanley Resor, President of both the JWTC and the American Association of Advertising Agencies, commented, "The achievements of 'mass production' would fall of their own weight without the mass marketing machinery which advertising supplies."⁴⁸¹ Upon electing Stanley Resor as its President in November 1923, the American Association of Advertising Agencies quickly adopted his principle of "mass marketing machinery." Marketing campaigns "cannot fail to derive immense benefit" from "the wider distribution of their products and consequent increase in sales." Accordingly, it was "necessary not only to produce in large quantities, but to sell in large quantities as well." Advertisers must

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁴⁷⁹ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 31.

⁴⁸⁰ Crow, *The Great American Consumer*, x.

⁴⁸¹ Folder "Helen and Stanley Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

use the best phraseology "to present the merits of a product" and "choose the media . . . that would reach the highest percentage of possible buyers."⁴⁸² A short piece called *The Advertising Agency of Today* (1924) read, "From hundreds of magazines, from thousands of newspapers, an advertising agency must be able to select those which reach the greatest percentage of possible purchasers at the least cost to the advertiser."⁴⁸³ By and large, marketers and advertisers adopted a blanket strategy of guiding Americans' choices, evidencing that PM extended beyond the national emergency.

Persuading Americans to adopt a consumerist worldview was a clearly a deliberate strategy. One advertiser made the point at a meeting of executives at the JWTC in 1927: if agencies advertise "long enough, and often enough, and widely enough, it is probable that over a period of years their advertising will have some effect [Although] there are exceptions to every rule, experience has proved that its generally better to sell 20 people hard with every advertisement than merely to flash your name before 100."⁴⁸⁴ Marketers and advertisers generally preferred "intensive cultivation of the better [territories of over 10,000 inhabitants]."⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² *Boston Sunday Herald*, November 11, 1923; Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing, Duke University.

⁴⁸³ *The Advertising Agency of Today* (1924), Folder "Mrs. Mary O'Shaughnessy (London visit)," Box AF7, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁸⁴ "They Don't Want to Read It," J. Walter Thompson News Bulletin (November 1922), Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. The purpose of the outdoor posters was continual visual presence. "The net result" of outdoor advertising "is that you see it every day so many times so that circulation becomes very large." See also Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

For the same reason that the state had conducted a massive nationwide PM effort during the war, companies dramatically increased the doses of advertising to reach as many Americans as possible. At another JWTC meeting in 1929, one executive said that the "lapse of time" between advertisements "induces forgetfulness," and therefore "forgetfulness requires repetition." Citing the work of "eminent psychologists" Walter Dill Scott, William James, Henry Foster Adams, and Hermann Ebbinghaus, one executive reported:

25 people out of a 100 forget a definite impression after a lapse of 24 hours, and that 50% forget after a lapse of 2 days. 85% forget after a lapse of 4 days. Dropping down below the 15% line on this Chart [holding chart] we run into the *stronger minds* that can retain impressions for a longer period of time.⁴⁸⁶

The executives thought that if they cared only for the 15 percent of people with "stronger minds," one or two advertisements a week or month would suffice, but that risked cutting out the remaining 85 percent. Corporate leaders believed that "it is necessary to repeatedly lift them up within the memory of the advertised brand." Outdoor advertising, specifically, served as a "reminder medium" to "reinforce and keep alive the impressions created by . . . other advertising. It delivers its reminder message close to the point of purchase." Put simply, "Advertising which is interrupted cannot do as good a job as Advertising which is Continuous." President Hoover's

⁴⁸⁵ Staff meeting (May 17, 1927), Folder "1/1," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁸⁶ Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 92, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch. Walter Dill Scott had argued for some time that trying to convince Americans was pointless. Even the most talented copywriter could not "describe a piano so vividly that the reader can hear it"; "describe a perfume so that the reader can smell it"; or "describe an undergarment so that the reader can feel the pleasant contact with his body." Scott's quotation originally in Frank S. Presbrey, *The History and Development of Advertising* (New York: Doubleday, 1929), 442-43, and cited in Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 113.

Research Committee on Social Trends observed that in advertising, "Reiteration is important. The purpose is always the same: to induce attitudes or behavior by the public in accordance with predetermined calculations of private interests."⁴⁸⁷ As recognized by the committee and acknowledged by corporate leaders themselves, using psychological methods to affect Americans' decisions in purchasing was a deliberate strategy in the 1920s.

As strategists from the Committee on Public Information's Divisions of Advertising and Pictorial Publicity had appreciated during World War I, PM required advertising repetitively and in great volume. Corporate leaders adopted a similar aggressive advertising strategy. On March 26, 1925, JWTC broke the previous world record (earned also by JWTC in October 1924) for "a greater volume of advertising in the *Ladies Home Journal* than any agency has ever before placed in a single issue of any publication." To JWTC's executives, this proved their "constant leadership" in understanding "feminine needs and habits." The JWTC broke its record again in May 1925, exceeding March's total spending in *Ladies Home Journal* by \$19,380. In 1927, JWTC boasted of placing more advertisements in magazines and taking up more space than any other agency. Given the aggregate of advertising revenue spent on print media in 1927, JWTC's spending constituted 8.52 percent of that total (2,282 pages at a cost of \$13,210,968) and 46 percent more than the second place spender. It ranked first in "Women's Magazines," second in "General Magazines," third in "weeklies," and fourth in "class magazines."⁴⁸⁸ The J. Walter

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸⁸ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter (March 26, 1925 and June 4, 1925), Folder "Agency Rankings," Box 10, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Daniel Foote, "J. Walter Thompson Company Places More Magazine Advertising in 1927 than any other Agency," J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter (June 1, 1928), Folder "Magazines," Box 14, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Thompson Company took the same approach toward outdoor advertising. According to J. Walter Thompson Company's research, 17,000,000 people resided in the twelve U.S. cities in which the Penney Company had stores in 1928 (J.C. Penney had 300 stores in 1920, and nearly 1,000 by 1928). JWTC's executives believed that poster advertising alone registered 68,000,000 "impressions" on those 17 million people every 24 hours. JWTC recommended that Penney "have a poster showing from coast to coast that tourists can never get away from."⁴⁸⁹ J. Walter Thompson Company rejected subtlety in its PM campaigns, aiming instead to make consumerism foremost in Americans' consciousness.

J. Walter Thompson Company's strategy of aggressive perception management represented a general trend in the private sector after World War I. Bayer became much more assertive with advertising in the 1920s as an indirect result of the state's policy toward German companies in the U.S. during the war. For decades, Bayer only promoted its products (primarily Aspirin) to medical professionals. According to Mann and Plummer, Bayer flooded "physicians' offices with samples, flyers, article reprints, and personal letters; [sent] salespeople to doctors' offices; and [advertised] in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, then the most widely read medical publication in the country." The change in hands from German to American ownership during WWI resulted in the company's targeting the general public. The Office of the Alien Property Custodian, responsible for enforcing the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 and initially headed by A. Mitchell Palmer, ordered the auction of U.S. Bayer (Farbenfabriken) because of its alleged failure to abide by the legislation. In December 1918, Sterling Products, Inc., "a patent medicine outfit [that] lavishly advertised laxatives, dandruff nostrums, and

⁴⁸⁹ Staff Meeting (January 23, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Silvulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 147.

impotence cures," bought Bayer for \$5,310,000. Once Sterling Products, Inc. assumed ownership of the company, Bayer began advertising much more heavily. Mann and Plummer describe how Ernst Möller, U.S. Bayer's export manager, saw "vast, empty spaces, and dreamed of filling them up with billboards, posters, and handbills proclaiming the miracle of Aspirin." According to Möller, "Advertising was not a *cost*, it was an *investment*. It was the seed from which grew tomorrow's sales."⁴⁹⁰ While Möller was most obviously concerned with the profit which might be realized through a more aggressive policy of advertising, he grasped the extent to which American advertisers actively tried to exercise control over what Americans bought.

But corporate executives did more than merely increase the volume of advertising. They found ways to appeal to individuals as part of shaping the perceptions and behavior of the public as whole, also of paramount concern to Creel and his deputies in WWI. Marketers and advertisers used what they called "personality advertising" to give a personal appeal to the homogeneous goods that they promoted. Stanley Resor believed that advertisers' success rested

⁴⁹⁰ Möller noted that "Americans did not hesitate . . . to spend \$100,000 advertising a product in South America and \$300,000 in the United States." Möller tripled spending on advertising for Aspirin in Latin America and "blanketed" Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. Max Wojahn, Möller's lieutenant and later head of the department of exports, had "a salesman's drive and a salesman's optimism," as well as an outspoken enthusiasm for advertising. Into the 1920s U.S. Bayer undertook a strategy of hegemonic advertising in the United States and Latin America—"newspapers, billboards, posters, newsreels, printed flyers, placards on streetcars, and, later, radio People saw the posters or heard the radio programs or watched the newsreels, thereby learning that a small white tablet could eliminate headaches, cure arthritis, and wipe out the flu." Sales surged. Argentinian affiliates informed Wojahn that the market there was saturated with advertising and "further growth was inconceivable." Wojahn was not swayed. He repeatedly increased spending on advertising, and the company's profits in Argentina tripled by 1930. During the years 1929 to 1933, ones of harsh economic conditions, Wojahn *increased* advertising in his area of operations. He dispatched employees of Bayer throughout Latin America, "blaring the wonders" of Aspirin through loudspeakers. Sometimes speakers used 16-millimeter movies projected onto screens mounted aside their vehicles. Bayer became a powerful corporate player in both North and South America, owing to the investments of its owners and executives in advertising. Mann and Plummer, *The Aspirin Wars*, 35, 46-53, 57, 77-80, 85.

on their ability to reconcile individualism with anonymity in mass society. Throughout the industry, campaigns had transitioned stylistically over the years from the "display" format to the "editorial" format, and finally to the "personality" format. Advertisers hoped that the "personality format," which Warren Susman argues "emphasized being liked and admired," would convince Americans that individualism was possible in the "culture of abundance."⁴⁹¹ As a strategy, appealing to individuals to get them to buy the same mass-produced goods in the 1920s was akin to the state's wartime initiatives urging individuals to take personal action in defense of Wilsonian democracy.

Corporate leaders' conscious shift to "personality" advertising indicated their desire to control Americans' buying choices. In their opinion, previous formats had allowed people too much of a role in their own economic decisions! According to James Webb Young, "display" advertising, a "crude" form of persuasion, placed "the product in the optical center of the page" and counted on the "sheer strength" of the descriptions of the product to get people to buy it. Advertisers and their clients grew impatient with the "display" approach since it relied more upon convincing Americans of the merits of products; increasingly, Gary Cross argues, "the product itself took second place."⁴⁹² Although advertisers had shifted away from products themselves for about ten years, the federal government's wartime PM strategy confirmed the advantages of appealing to Americans' emotions instead of trying to rationalize with them. Similarly, they gradually turned away from explaining the qualities of products in detail and focused more on people and how the products would revolutionize their lives. In 1928, Young proudly claimed that he had never wanted to focus on products. He said, "My first campaign

⁴⁹¹ Susman, *Culture as History*, xxii.

⁴⁹² Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 34.

was for Superior Underwear. Its previous advertising had been a failure. The men who wrote it sought for merit in the product itself. I have never made that mistake."⁴⁹³ Young, a representative executive in the advertising industry, never hesitated to describe how leaders could and should direct Americans to purchase the same products.

The evolution in how marketers and advertisers presented products in the early twentieth century reflected the changing approach to changing people's attitudes toward purchasing. In the years leading up to WWI, executives replaced "display" advertising with "editorial" advertising, both of which were essentially product-centric and lacked the desired emotional impact that characterized PM between 1917 and 1929. Advertisers adopted the "editorial" style for three reasons: first, "[p]eople wouldn't read long advertisements"; second, when a "duped" reader finds out that he's reading an ad, he will turn against the product; and third, "display" advertisements all looked too much alike. During the "editorial" stage, an editor "looked up his facts in the encyclopedia and after infinite pains produced . . . accurate information on the subject [product]." With "editorial" advertising, executives intended to highlight, often exaggerate, positive features of products.⁴⁹⁴ Although they chose the "editorial" format to give themselves a more active hand in persuading the public, by the early 1920s they still felt too passive in the sales process. They decided to more actively influence Americans' buying choices by showing them how to use products and telling them how they should feel when using them. They devised the format called "personality." Using "personality," advertisers wanted individuals

⁴⁹³ "My Life in Advertising, by Fraud Hopkins," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁹⁴ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Silvulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 112.

feel a sense of self, status, and success in mass society. With "personality" advertising (and perception management writ large), they wanted Americans to participate in and feel a sense of contributing to a common social experience, a consistent objective of PM from 1917 to 1929.

Personality and testimonial advertising seemed to pay off. Corporate researchers determined that the strategy of using people to appeal to other people had earned massive returns for *The News*, *Evening Post*, and *American Weekly*, and other prominent publications, and national name-brand companies like Ponds, Royal, Lever Brothers, Fleishmann, and Simmons. Still, marketers and advertisers sometimes debated about whether celebrity alone granted one authority to speak for a product or whether an individual should be paid for endorsing a particular product he or she had never used. Stanley Resor "went on record as standing unqualifiedly against manufacturing evidence or using anyone who is not a user of the product being sponsored." However, he believed:

that we are on safe ground in paying for the privilege of using certain names . . . for we take a lot of the endorser's time. In the case of Simmons, for example, 15 out of 17 endorsers have continued to be enthusiastic boosters for Kenosha products. The same is true of Ponds, Lux, Fleishmann, etc.⁴⁹⁵

According to Roland Marchand, by highlighting individuals rather than products, "advertising writers operated on a higher level of production: they manufactured customers."⁴⁹⁶ Executives thought of personality advertising as the best way to appeal to people's emotions and influence their behavior, the ultimate goal for corporate PM in the 1920s as it had been for governmental PM during World War I.

⁴⁹⁵ Folder "Stanley Resor (1)," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁹⁶ Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, 8, 10, 31.

President Wilson had established a massive state-sponsored PM campaign partly to combat neutrality and pacifism to the point where his cohorts had called indifferent people "dead weight."⁴⁹⁷ Similarly, marketers and advertisers regarded Americans' boredom, complacency, and inactivity as things to overcome. Paul Cherington, director of research for the JWTC, argued that "markets rest on habits and customs" and advertisers needed to know them or, occasionally, break Americans of them.⁴⁹⁸ First, they set out to learn people's routines, habits, and customs, which might provide them with clues about how best to reach potential consumers. For example, when considering "newspaper position," or where publishers placed advertisements, executives from J. Walter Thompson Company sought "to determine [readers'] reading habits." They wanted to know the proportion of people "who fold their papers once lengthwise and just read through them," seeing "only the right-hand upper corner as they go through the papers." The executives believed that, because riders on subways were crowded together so tightly, "90 percent fold [newspapers] that way." They initiated an informal study to confirm their suspicions.⁴⁹⁹ While studying readers' habits to determine the best "newspaper position" was not itself earth-shattering, it provided an example of how marketers and advertisers became familiar with people's habits and routines in order to reach them and then induce them to take action.

⁴⁹⁷ Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines*, 3-6, 13.

⁴⁹⁸ Paul Cherington, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Speeches (June-October 1926), Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁴⁹⁹ Staff meeting (July 19, 1927), Folder "1/2," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University. See also Guy Richards, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Corporate and state-sponsored PM both accounted for Americans' habits, customs, and rituals while setting out to combat inertia, inactivity, complacency, and lack of interest.

Marketers and advertisers believed that through perception management they could in fact change the nation's habits. In 1923, a writer to *Printer's Ink* observed, "The number of products that were at one time or another considered nothing more than fads only to make good is legion." The writer cited Barbasol's recent challenge to men to use its new product with the headline, "They said that safety razors were a fad too." It continued: "Habits handed down from fathers to sons for centuries are not easily broken Those men who would rather step on the self-starter of a motor car than turn the engine over by hand, who look forward to the day when they will travel as safely by airplane as they now do by rail, will shave with Barbasol, daily, once they give Barbasol a fair trial."⁵⁰⁰ In 1922, an executive from the J. Walter Thompson Company stated, "A cigarette, a bit of chewing gum, a chocolate bar—with such casually purchased products, where the appeal is to habits long-established, you may sell your reader in a dozen staccato words. A cake of yeast, a rifle, an electric cleaner—here where a new habit must be formed or a heavy initial outlay made, heavier guns will probably be needed."⁵⁰¹ In one campaign, Lasker urged women to "Reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet."⁵⁰² John Watson, J.

⁵⁰⁰ *Printer's Ink*, September 20, 1923; Folder "Ad Awards (1923-1939)," Box AF1, Records of the American Associations of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁰¹ "They Don't Want to Read It," J. Walter Thompson News Bulletin (November 1922), Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁰² Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Walter Thompson Company's hired psychologist, studied consumers' habits and choices of brands. When researching smokers, Watson discovered "that even the most hardened adorer of a

Figure 6.1 Dr. John B. Watson



particular brand of cigarette can't recognize his favorite smoke when he is blindfolded or prevented in any other way from seeing the label." He concluded that one month of heavy advertising would attract the most brand-loyal patrons to a different brand. According to one observer, "The psychologist himself started on Camels and ended up on Luckies at the conclusion of the experiment."⁵⁰³ Marketers and advertisers believed that changing people's loyalty to brands proved their ability to control others' behavior and to dictate people's choices in the market.

Marketers and advertisers often reinvented the image and the intended use of products in order to switch people's their loyalties to new brands. Appealing to people's fears, anxieties, and desires, a strategy familiar to the Committee on Public Information during the war, corporate executives portrayed products as instrumental or indispensable to consumers' welfare, success,

⁵⁰³ "The Adventure of the Behaviorist," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

and social status. By 1927, J. Walter Thompson Company's advertisers had learned "there comes a time when it can no longer pay to spend money on the exploitation of an old idea if a new one can be developed which can be expected to start where the old one began to lag, and show, from that point, a new 'curve of normal growth.'"⁵⁰⁴ J. Walter Thompson Company's campaigns for Fleischmann's Yeast evidenced how marketers and advertisers reinvented products to change people's perceptions of them. Obviously, Fleischmann's had always been associated with "bread-making," but marketers realized that "due to changes in our modern way of living, the chief of which is probably the vogue of the apartment house, home baking gradually and steadily fell off." They had to make Americans believe that they still needed the product; put simply, they had to create a new demand for the product. During the war, Fleischmann turned to the medical community for ideas. The company presented its dilemma to Dr. Phillip Hawk of Jefferson Medical College who, with a team of associates, published his findings in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in an article called "An Investigation into the Therapeutic Value of Compressed Yeast." Dr. Hawk and his team alleged that Fleischmann's Yeast "aided considerably in relieving boils, acne, and various ailments of the skin and gastro-intestinal tract." Fleischmann's advertised that finding in "five or six medical journals" and sent "three to four million" booklets on "Yeast for Health" to grocers nationwide in 1918 and 1919, but sales "were not extremely good" due to the "'vitamin' fad." The company hired Donovan and Armstrong as its advertising agent shortly before hiring J. Walter Thompson Company. Executives from the JWTC splashed statements of the healthy attributes of yeast in *American Weekly*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Literary Digest*,

⁵⁰⁴ Staff meeting (March 22, 1927), Folder "1/1," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Woman's Home Companion, and others. The J. Walter Thompson Company "realized that the eating of yeast for health was at the moment a fad, and, as such, would soon die out, unless it was backed by facts and authority."⁵⁰⁵ Typical of corporate perception management in the 1920s, marketers and advertisers wanted Americans to feel that their lives were unfulfilled or at risk if they did not purchase specific products, even something as innocuous as yeast. It was not catering to naturally developing demand, but the creation of a demand with perception management.

To support their general PM strategy, corporate leaders deliberately ensured that emotional appeals accompanied the reinvention of products to the extent of raising or inventing concerns about the public's health. J. Walter Thompson Company's first campaign for Fleischmann in the fall of 1920 highlighted the "general health" value of yeast and "the value of yeast specifically for pimples, blackheads, and constipation." The campaign ran in "five national magazines," *American Weekly*, and in newspapers in New York, Chicago, Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma, Salt Lake City, Portland, Vancouver, Alberta, and Calgary, "on account of their special adaptability to 'test out' the campaign before it appeared in all sections of the country" and because the more coastal areas "offered an entirely fresh field for intensive work in newspapers." Over the next two years, JWTC's advertisers found new ways to make Americans believe that they needed to purchase yeast for their own well-being. Executives thought that yeast could not beat out the "vitamin fad" and they chose to concentrate instead on "elimination," its laxative benefits. They soon feared that the effectiveness of that approach "had begun to wear off" and decided to "dispense largely with this type of background." They initiated a "testimonial

⁵⁰⁵ Folder "Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

campaign" in the fall of 1923 in order to get Americans to realize that they all suffered from the same ailments and needed the same therapy. J. Walter Thompson Company mainly advertised in "general" and women's magazines because they believed that women were the "guardians of the whole family's health." While bombarding readers with facts, photos, and testimonials from "sufferers," JWTC still appealed to yeast's main customer, the baker. Rather than simply promote yeast, JWTC helped bakers by promoting bread to aid "the general welfare of the whole industry."⁵⁰⁶ The ongoing "reinvention" of yeast or, more accurately, the creation of new uses for it by exploiting "sufferers'" fears and concerns, indicated the private sector's methodical approach toward swaying Americans' buying choices. It demonstrated that the public remained a target of PM after the war.

Marketers' and advertisers' reinventing products and changing people's attitudes toward them paid off financially, which in turn helped secure their social and professional statuses. For example, during the war, the "materials from which [Fleischmann's Yeast] is made increased from 100 to 400 per cent" but, Fleishmann's Vice-President Daniel Woolley boasted in 1925, "we increased the price of our product approximately only seven per cent." More importantly, "we showed an increase in sales of 300 per cent between 1916 and 1924," a feat in which "advertising played a big part." According to J. Walter Thompson Company's figures, Fleischmann's yeast sales increased from \$13,597,257 in 1917 to \$37,246,806 in 1926. Additionally, yeast amounted to less than 50 percent of total sales of Fleischmann products in 1917, where in 1924 it had reached 80 percent of total sales. J. Walter Thompson associates

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

attributed those accomplishments to its "Yeast for Health Campaign" in the early 1920s.⁵⁰⁷

Senior executives believed that profit and, by extension, their own professional success depended upon controlling people's economic behavior after the war.

Corporate leaders both helped create and capitalized upon "fads," short-lived habits or products. They believed that fads evidenced people's predilection for conformity and their susceptibility to centrally directed perception management. It reinforced executives' belief that they could determine the habits, routines, and choices of the nation. Historian Paula Fass argues that fads resulted in nationwide conformity, convinced people (especially the youth) that their identity was determined by what they owned, and provided them with a way of knowing if they "belonged." On the effectiveness of corporate-derived fads, President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends' study on communications commented:

One of the leaders in the nation's shoe industry states of a given star, that whenever she wears a new style of shoe, it is necessary "to change our pattern to conform, which means an expenditure of many thousands of dollars. Every time a new picture is released a new style is created and there is an instantaneous demand for it from women in all parts of the country."⁵⁰⁸

Fass argues that "'style' in dress separated students from ordinary mortals and gave the college man or woman a distinctive air and the group identity that enhanced a sense of personal security."⁵⁰⁹ In 1928, executives from the JWTC observed, "Style [has] a dominant role . . . Nor

⁵⁰⁷ "Fleischmann Sales Increased 300% Between 1916 and 1924" and "Campaign Results," Folder "Fleischmann Company," Box 6, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁰⁸ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 97, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

⁵⁰⁹ Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, 229-234

is fashion strictly defined to mean clothes in its new importance."⁵¹⁰ Many fads besides clothes—Mah Jongg, crossword puzzles, and the writings of Sigmund Freud, for example—speckled the postwar decade. The coming and going of popular fads strengthened marketers' and advertisers' belief that they could change people's attitudes and determine the choices that they made.

Using perception management, corporate executives wanted Americans to believe that they may now afford previously unattainable goods without a correlative loss of quality, image, or prestige. By "giving the common American access to the world of luxury," advertisers told consumers that status and an image of success may be attained through what they bought, owned, and displayed.⁵¹¹ Bruce Barton observed that modern consumers were "studying fashions, measuring values, wondering how this article or that would appeal to his neighbors." With each purchase, consumers had "the satisfaction of knowing that millions of families, buying through smaller stores in every town, are linked to your home by invisible bonds of comfort and taste."⁵¹² For example, J. Walter Thompson Company attached status and prestige to no more of a product than soap when it introduced Lux Toilet Soap for Lever Brothers in 1925 with the phrase "The first popular priced soap milled in the French way."⁵¹³ As with other products, it

⁵¹⁰ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection.

⁵¹¹ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 37.

⁵¹² Bruce Barton, "The Man Behind the Counter at the Crossroads," September 21, 1927, Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

⁵¹³ Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

presented the exquisite as attainable and affordable. Advertisers presented sold products not simply as individual units stocked on shelves, but as things which helped Americans define themselves, each other, and greater society.

In addition to their wanting to indoctrinate Americans with the belief that what they owned determined their standing in society, senior executives held strong views about what constituted loyal American behavior and they advanced those views using PM. They spewed out nationalist rhetoric to counter Bolshevism, one of many domestic enemies in the 1920s. In *The Dollar Decade*, James Prothro argues that businessmen battled ideological threats against the economic and commercial order. Elbert Gary, one of the founders and Chairman of the United States Steel Corporation, branded Bolshevism a disease and lamented that "there has been some inoculation even in this best of countries." Gary believed that the solution "is to stamp it out, to meet it boldly wherever it can be found, to expose it and to give it no chance for development." He wanted loyal Americans who shared his "faith in this country and its institutions" to be vigilant patriots and, more, devout consumers.⁵¹⁴ Stephen Mason of the National Association of Manufacturers advocated deporting foreign "undesirables" and "pests."⁵¹⁵ Silas Hardy Strawn, Chairman of the Board of Montgomery Ward and Company, agreed and said that "we should applaud and encourage the efforts of our government officials promptly to deport the cranks and communists who, having fled from the oppression, hardship, and poverty of their own countries, as soon as they are comfortably within our borders commence to harangue about the defects in

⁵¹⁴ Elbert Gary, "The Menace of the Closed Shop," *American Industries* 20 (January, 1920): 31-32.

⁵¹⁵ Stephen Mason, "Revitalize the Nation's Industries!" *American Industries* 20 (March, 1920): 8.

our form of government and our laws."⁵¹⁶ Gary, Mason, Strawn, and others also wanted to indoctrinate—or, if that failed, punish—native-born Americans not "saturated with American loyalty and patriotism." Speaking to the National Association of Manufacturers in 1920, Senator Walter Evans Edge of New Jersey said:

Almost everyday discloses the un-Americanism of some native-born American; how much less than are we to expect true Americanism in those recently landed, many of them impregnated with the political heresies and fanaticisms of discontented lands? Every man, woman and child in this country, whether native born or an immigrant, should be saturated with American loyalty and patriotism.⁵¹⁷

Aware of the unconstitutionality of repressive measures against American citizens, corporate leaders advocated other "techniques of coercion," to include perception management.⁵¹⁸

Often holding an elitist worldview, corporate leaders largely believed that Americans possessed a herd mentality and, if influenced by evil ideologies, might exhibit radical, subversive, or anarchic behavior. Executives feared that as a potentially direct threat to the idea of a consumerist public. John Edgerton, President of the National Association of Manufacturers, feared that the masses were prone to radicalism and unrest. Speaking at the annual convention of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1924, President Edgerton repeated his fear of "tendencies toward 'mob rule' in the United States."⁵¹⁹ Just as the federal government used PM supposedly in defense of democracy, Edgerton and others in the private sector believed that they

⁵¹⁶ Silas Hardy Strawn, "Problems of the Manufacturer," *American Industries* 30 (October, 1929): 119.

⁵¹⁷ Walter Evans Edge, "Will Immigration Injure Our Industry or Our Labor," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1920), 183-184.

⁵¹⁸ Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 101-104.

⁵¹⁹ John Edgerton, "Annual Address of President Edgerton," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1922): 115-117, and "Annual Address of the President," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1924), 118. Edgerton's quotations in Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 1, 48-49.

should indoctrinate the nation in order to prevent "mob rule" and the toppling of the political and economic order in the United States.

Leaders in business opposed socialism and an overly regulatory state, primarily because both represented competing influences on Americans' perceptions and behavior. Indeed, one objective of PM between 1917 and 1929 was minimizing or eliminating the presence and effect of alternative ideologies. Julius Barnes, President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce starting in May 1922, argued that regulation and state socialism "[destroyed] the spirit of enterprise." He believed that socialism was like "opium" for people who were looking for a way to deal with not owning more consumer goods.⁵²⁰ Corporate leaders ridiculed and mocked any socialistic agenda. In 1927, executives from the J. Walter Thompson Company revisited Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, an exposé of health and sanitary conditions and exploitation of labor in the meatpacking industry. Twenty years after its publication, JWTC dismissed *The Jungle* as "Socialistic propaganda" and took comfort that "the public ignored and has long since forgotten Sinclair's biting treatise on Socialism and his efforts to usher in a theoretical paradise on earth."⁵²¹ Most senior executives, especially in the fields of marketing and advertising, believed that corporate PM could ably counter the threat of radical and socialist ideologies. They promised "to come to the defense of individualism." Exaggerating the altruism of many senior leaders in the private sector, James Prothro argues that "the [corporate] elite is moved primarily by the desire to advance civilization" because he knew that "self-interest itself becomes

⁵²⁰ Julius Barnes, "The Service of Organized Industry," *Addresses, Presidents of the Chamber of Commerce* 1 (1923): 10.

⁵²¹ J. Walter Thompson Company Newsletter (December 15, 1927), Folder "Quotations and Anecdotes about Advertising," Box 15, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

identified with the general interest."⁵²² Using perception management, corporate leaders presented consumerism as a far superior alternative to socialism. It was a continuation of the wartime trend of defining what constituted loyal, patriotic, American behavior. For example, a advertisement for Chevrolet in 1924 asked readers, "How can Bolshevism flourish in a motorized country having a standard of living and thinking too high to permit the existence of an ignorant, narrow, peasant majority? Is not the automobile entitled to the major credit in this elevation of our standard of citizenship?"⁵²³ Warren Susman suggests that the strategy of using materialism to counter leftist ideologies had proven effective: "Many [Americans] who might have chosen the socialist way went instead with the hope of a culture of abundance."⁵²⁴

Leaders in the private sector argued that Americans' universal and competitive selfishness, along with an entrepreneurial spirit and healthy work ethic, would improve "the quality of the republic." At a meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers in 1922, Gus Dyer said, "Everything in this country that belongs to anybody is for you. Find your place, make your own fight, accept your own responsibility. To whine, to complain is to acknowledge defeat and confess yourself less than an American citizen."⁵²⁵ Adaptive, productive, self-motivated, and materialistic individuals could bring about positive social change. Charles Kettering, an executive at General Motors, argued:

There are no places where anyone can sit and rest in an industrial situation. It is a question of change, change, change, all the time—it is always going to be that way. It must always be that

⁵²² Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 27-29, 33-37, 51-54.

⁵²³ Advertisement cited in Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 37.

⁵²⁴ Susman, *Culture as History*, xxix.

⁵²⁵ Gus Dyer, "Government and Business," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1922).

way for the road only goes along one road, the road to progress. Nations and industries that have become satisfied with themselves and their way of doing things, don't last.⁵²⁶

If agitators for labor would focus on economic self-improvement and consumerism they would, according to Charles Schwab, "get a square deal."⁵²⁷ He and others portrayed consumerism as inherently American and socialism as inherently subversive and destructive. While promoting consumerism, they reminded Americans of what constituted loyalty and patriotism, even during that era of relative peace and prosperity.

Corporate executives lambasted socialism and provided definitions of what constituted "American" behavior but, as true capitalist elitists, they did not want social and economic classes to go away. They wanted the nation shaped along consumerist lines, but not at the expense of losing its base of productive workers. Everyone should be a consumer, but not everyone should be a wealthy consumer. In 1927, John Edgerton said before the National Association of Manufacturers: "emphasis should be put upon work—more work and better work, instead of upon leisure—more leisure and worse leisure." Two years later, he echoed that sentiment: "Nothing breeds radicalism more quickly than unhappiness unless it is leisure As long as a people are kept profitably and happily employed there is little danger from radicalism."⁵²⁸ In 1920, the National Association of Manufacturers issued the statement: "What this country needs now is one of our war drives—a national campaign for industriousness, thrift, and common

⁵²⁶ Charles Kettering, "Keep the Consumer Dissatisfied," *Nation's Business* 17 (January 1929): 31.

⁵²⁷ Charles Schwab, "What I've Learned About Business," *Nation's Business* 18 (February 1930): 196; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 85-86, 98-99.

⁵²⁸ John Edgerton, "Industry has Advanced Further than Religion," *Pocket Bulletin* 27 (April, 1927): 4; John Edgerton, "Annual Address of the President," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1929): 23; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 8-9.

sense. A work slacker is no better than a soldier slacker."⁵²⁹ This sort of sentiment had been seen in advertisements during the war, including Dayton Company's "Young Women of Minneapolis":

Young women are needed in almost every branch of [Dayton], to replace man called to serve their county . . . Every woman without other absolutely necessary duties occupying her full attention and time should accept useful employment for idle hours are more than ever slacker hours today."⁵³⁰

Edgerton and others believed that by channeling the Americans' restless energies into productive work while urging them to enjoy the consumer market, they could prevent radicalism in the U.S.

According to Warren Susman:

[The] American learned that he was largely to think of himself as a consumer. He was encouraged increasingly (ways were found to help him) not to hoard his savings . . . but to spend and spend. He was told he no longer lived in a world of scarcity but in one of abundance, and that he must develop new values in keeping with that new status. Leisure was rapidly becoming almost as important as labor, and he must learn a pleasure ethic, if not to replace, at least to put beside, his work ethic.⁵³¹

Convinced of people's innate selfishness, corporate leaders promoted both consumerism and a strong work ethic as typical American behavior.⁵³²

⁵²⁹ "Report of the Committee on Industrial Betterment, Health and Safety," *Proceedings, National Association of Manufacturers* (1920): 71; Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 68.

⁵³⁰ *Minneapolis Journal*, September 23, 1918, Advertisement Scrapbook, Box 53, Records of Dayton Company, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵³¹ Susman, *Culture as History*, 111. Gary Cross similarly states that "employment brought income roughly commensurate with effort, and money bought an endless array of appealing items. Under modern capitalism, people accepted displays of wealth as tokens of achievement and as things for those who had 'not yet' arrived to strive for." Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 8.

⁵³² According to the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce, "[Goods] became so important in the business theory as to constitute almost an exclusive point of focus for man's energies and aspirations." Prothro, *The Dollar Decade*, 60.

During the war, Woodrow Wilson, George Creel, and members of the CPI did not think of African Americans as an important target audience, and only reluctantly and occasionally targeted them for perception management. Similarly, corporate executives largely ignored them as they did not match their vision of typical American consumers. Paul Cherington, Director of Research for the J. Walter Thompson Company, admitted, "Racial influences are among the strongest factors determining markets."⁵³³ Sarah Igo argues that "[no] longer were 'foreign elements' or 'negroes' deemed crucial" to whites' study of communities and markets, as they had become "hindrances to locating the typical." As the Lynds thought when studying the town of Muncie, Indiana, corporate leaders thought of blacks and immigrants as "complicating factors" and not "components of the community."⁵³⁴ Professionals in the marketing and advertising industries (comprised mostly of upper-middle-class white males) usually ignored blacks as the latter did not fit into their vision of postwar consumerist America, if for no other reason that they had less money with which to purchase national brands around which PM was based. Historian Gary Cross suggests that corporate PM "seldom addressed the needs of laborers, blacks, or ethnic minorities. Advertisers freely admitted that they directed their messages to only the richer two thirds or even half of the population."⁵³⁵

⁵³³ Paul Cherington, "Address Made at Agency Departmental Philadelphia Convention of the Associated Advertising Clubs of the World," Folder "Speeches (June-October 1926)," Box AF3, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵³⁴ Igo, *The Averaged American*, 55-57.

⁵³⁵ Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 18, 34-35. If, as Gary Cross argues specifically of immigrants, commodities "gave [them] tools for coping with an alien culture and offered new meanings of democracy during a time when politics was becoming even more remote to average citizens," it was unintended by elitist marketers and advertisers in the 1920s.

Occasionally, however, corporate leaders used images of blacks or African American culture when they saw it advantageous to do so. In 1928, executives from the J. Walter Thompson Company questioned whether to display an African American on products made by Cream of Wheat. Sam Meek explained how another advertiser for Cream of Wheat said that "the most important and first thing to do was to take the negro off the package and the Cream of Wheat Company had decided that that was the thing to do." Cream of Wheat actually polled consumers on the matter. Sam Meek did not believe "there were more than 5% of the people interviewed who objected to it." Moreover, most respondents "thought it was interesting and evidenced a genuine interest in the negro."⁵³⁶ Cream of Wheat wanted him to remain on the package. Another product, Aunt Jemima's Pancake Flour, was "advertised by a troop of darkies who sing and play for the white folks at Col. Higbee's plantation." Those "real negroes" included two African-American singers associated with the Harlem Renaissance, J. Rosamond Johnson and Taylor Gordon, who played the roles of Uncle Ned and Little Bill, respectively. With the short-term goal of selling pancake flour, the musical act hearkened back to days of slavery and symbolized some whites' views of blacks' proper role in American society.⁵³⁷ As an audience, blacks hardly factored into the planning of state- or corporate-sponsored perception management during or after the war since native born whites supposedly comprised the real Americans.

⁵³⁶ Staff Meeting (August 8, 1928), Folder "1/5," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵³⁷ Staff Meeting (April 3, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

African Americans did not benefit immensely from serving in the war despite its supposed democratic ideals, but they found ways to participate in and enjoy the new consumer culture, even if senior corporate leaders basically disregarded them. Radio broadcasts exposed blacks to new products and to white society generally. President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends argued that the radio did not discriminate by race or class. Pointing to segregation, the Committee noted, "The negro who cannot enter the white man's church, college, or theater can hear on his radio the white man's sermons, lectures, and entertainment with complete equality; social isolation is to this extent broken." Thanks to national advertising and the diffusion of technologies, "Geographical isolation and its cultural concomitants are similarly modified."⁵³⁸ Thus, while neither the state nor the private sector had set out to Americanize blacks using perception management, African Americans often found ways to participate in postwar consumer culture.

Marketers and advertisers wanted Americans to think that products made them more sexually attractive as part of a systematic strategy of exploiting people's primitive emotions. During the war, the CPI, PVOs and NGOs used gender-based themes to influence Americans' behavior, a strategy that the private sector continued and expanded upon in the 1920s. If, as Paula Fass argues, historians have sometimes misleadingly portrayed the 1920s as anti-Victorian in sexuality and morals, more than ever marketers and advertisers appealed to people's basic sex drives to influence their decisions to buy specific products.⁵³⁹ Early on, Edward Bernays

⁵³⁸ "Trends in Communication," June 15, 1931, 108, Presidential Subject File—Research Committee on Social Trends—Communication, Herbert Hoover Papers, Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch.

⁵³⁹ In *Only Yesterday* Frederick Lewis Allen argued "there was an unmistakable and rapid trend away from the old American code toward a philosophy of sex relations . . . that the virtues of chastity and fidelity had been rated too highly, that there was something to be said for what

advocated "using attractive girls in ads because they `appealed to the sex drive.'" According to Nathan Miller, Bernays had learned from his war work "to make use of basic human impulses to sell products."⁵⁴⁰ In *Fables of Abundance* (1994), historian T.J. Jackson Lears writes that "the allure of exotic goods lay less in the things themselves than in the fantastic possibilities they represented."⁵⁴¹ James Webb Young made sex the centerpiece for J. Walter Thompson

Figure 6.2 Advertisement for Palmolive in *Forecast*, 1922.
Palmolive could make women the envy and desire of others. John W. Hartman center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

THE FORECAST

The Girl Women Envy and Men Admire

Have girls never to have all the good times which others have and wonder how they do it. Yet they are getting their share of fun and excitement and are happy. Why do they inspire so much wonder and admiration?

The principal secret is in their skin. They have that smooth, soft, and glowing complexion which all men admire. Did you ever see a girl with a more complete and secure skin condition than theirs?

Be the envied girl yourself!

There is no reason why you should be content with anything less than a perfect skin. You can make your complexion smooth and soft and one that all men admire. You can keep it that in summer and winter by using Palmolive.

How necessary it is to wash your face is proved by the thousands of bathing, skin specialists. Use Palmolive. It cleanses, soothes, and keeps your skin in the best of shape.

Satisfy the world!

If you had a good skin of any kind, because you have had every the world kind. You will see how many women envy you for Palmolive. The benefits have been proved to give the women the world, but the world can't see it in your skin. Palmolive is the only soap that can give you a perfect skin.

Washed from the palm and olive oils, Chlorophyll and other natural elements, Palmolive cleanses without the slightest loss of tenderness.

What Palmolive does

Softly removes dirt from skin with your own hands, the fragrant, lathered suds every day keep the skin soft, keeping the complexion clear of all impurities and preventing white spots, pimples and other skin troubles. (When this dirt settles, wrinkles come.)

This thorough cleansing keeps your skin clear and free to receive the beneficial properties of our exclusive glycerine and lanolin, which makes your skin soft, smooth and beautiful.

After thorough cleansing apply a touch of our cream. If your skin is normally dry, rub in until cream before washing.

10 cents—and the reason

While there will also come the day when you will have to pay for the price of Palmolive, the reason is that it is the only soap that can give you a perfect skin. This soap does not harm the Palmolive because it is the only soap that can give you a perfect skin. It is the only soap that can give you a perfect skin.

THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY, Milwaukee, U. S. A.

The National Company of America, Inc., New York, N. Y.

Valley and delivery products of good quality for

10c

TRIAL CAKE FREE

Fill out and mail to: THE PALMOLIVE COMPANY, Dept. No. 10, Milwaukee, U. S. A.

Name _____

Address _____

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Mrs. Bertrand Russell defined as "the right, equally shared by men and women, to free participation in sex experience." Allen further argued sex "was the central and pervasive force which moved mankind. Almost every human emotion was attributable to it: if you were patriotic or liked the violin, you were in the grip of sex—in a sublimated form." Claiming a universal sexualizing of American society, Allen pointed to the rise of sex and confession magazines and "lurid motion pictures." If Allen exaggerated the influence of risqué magazines, he correctly argued that their readership had grown substantially; *True-Story* had 300,000 readers in 1923, and nearly two million in 1926. According to one of JWTC's executives, sex was one of "three primary instincts," alongside self-preservation and nutrition. See Staff Meeting (April 10, 1929), Folder "1/7," Box 1, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Cutlip, *The Unseen Power*, 164-166; Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 85, 87-88, 94.

⁵⁴⁰ Miller, *New World Coming*, 151.
⁵⁴¹ Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 49.

Company's client Odorono, a deodorant manufacturer. In 1919, he devised the famous "Within the Curve of a Woman's Arm" campaign for Odorono, consequences of which were that 200 readers cancelled their subscriptions to *Ladies Home Journal* but Odorono's sales rose 112 percent in one year.⁵⁴² Young later claimed to have invented "The saxophone appeal."

According to Young, "Others have written sex copy, but none has succeeded in blending with it, as I have, the emotional tug of the saxophone."⁵⁴³ Sex was integral to marketers' and advertisers' strategy of controlling Americans' economic decisions. Lynn Dumenil notes "the fusion of sexuality with consumption," including "women's sexual objectification" by marketers and advertisers as they encouraged "women to measure their self-worth by the goods that adorned their bodies."⁵⁴⁴ They treated people as beings driven by primitive impulses, using sexual themes to sway Americans' choices and going beyond the milder gender-based themes used by executors of PM during World War I.

The orchestrators of the federal government's wartime PM strategy believed that young men were gullible and easily persuaded (or taunted) into taking certain actions. After the war, corporate leaders similarly regarded young people as easily swayed and, when trying to live their own lives, excessively concerned with the opinions of others. In a radio broadcast in New York in March 1924, Bruce Barton, on behalf of the Alexander Hamilton Institute, said:

⁵⁴² Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Silvulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 158.

⁵⁴³ "My Life in Advertising, by Fraud Hopkins," Folder "Howard Henderson," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁴⁴ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 144.

There have been born into this country several thousand lusty boys and girls to whom advertised products mean no more than the Einstein theory. They do not know the difference between the Mazda Lamp and a stick of Wrigley's chewing gum. Nobody has ever told them that Ivory Soap floats or that children cry for Castoria, or what sort of soap you ought to use if you want to have a skin that people would like to touch. The whole job of giving them the information they are going to need in order to form an intelligent human opinion and to exercise an intelligent influence in the community has to be started from the beginning and done over again.⁵⁴⁵

Barton and others believed that young adults cared too much about fitting in and hence were far more susceptible to corporate perception management. They believed that children, teenagers, and young adults had the same shallow, materialistic tendencies as their parents. Barton said, "The children of Chicago and the children of the littlest town in Texas wear the same clothes and are surrounded by the same comforts," proving that "Americans are one people, not merely because they talk alike, but because they buy alike."⁵⁴⁶ In *The Damned and the Beautiful*, Paula Fass notes how young people, especially in secondary and post-secondary settings, eagerly followed fads, both an intent and a consequence of corporate perception management. Youth "had become a mode of identification, and college students were fashion and fad pacesetters whose behavior, interests, and amusements, caught the national imagination and were emulated by other youths. This was made possible by movies, magazines, and advertising, which in turn spread the influence of college fashions and styles and turned the idea of youth into an eminently salable community." According to Fass, "'Modern youth' [was] a by-product of the means of long-range communication and large-scale distribution of goods as well as the more intimate

⁵⁴⁵ "Human Nature in Advertising," radio broadcast, March 4, 1924, Box 75, Alexander Hamilton Institute, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

⁵⁴⁶ Bruce Barton, "The Man Behind the Counter at the Crossroads," September 21, 1927, Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

associations of youth groups."⁵⁴⁷ Corporate leaders, especially marketers and advertisers, used PM to get Americans of all ages to think of themselves as defined by what they bought and owned. To them, the predilections of the nation's youth seemed to prove the effectiveness of that strategy.

Corporate executives also sold the idea of youthfulness to help set the tone of the modern U.S. Lynn Dumenil argues that advertisers "used the appeal of youthfulness." For example, the American Laundry Machinery Company advertised: "[The] woman of America stays young because she keeps her mind young." Using better laundering methods allowed her time for "the many things which bring happier days and longer youth."⁵⁴⁸ Fass similarly argues, "Youth had come to represent all the chaotic newness of the culture that was best expressed in consumer habits, and nothing was more eagerly consumed than youth."⁵⁴⁹ Marketers and advertisers encouraged conformity among the youth. Moreover, they sold "youth" as a product in order to set a new national tone in which Americans were defined by their economic choices.

The promotion of paranoia, anxiety, and fear partially characterized the government's perception management strategy during World War I. The state informed Americans of the looming threats, and it prescribed the actions that they should take. In a different context, marketers and advertisers also fostered the sense of paranoia, anxiety, and fear, and advised potential customers on what they should buy in order to prevent or resolve their problem(s). Corporate executives especially wanted to heighten Americans' fears of humiliation and social

⁵⁴⁷ Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, 126-128. See also Cross, *An All-Consuming Century*, 40.

⁵⁴⁸ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 141.

⁵⁴⁹ Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*, 125-129, 234.

rejection. In 1936, Dale Carnegie argued that, "if salespeople can show us how their services or merchandise will help us solve our problems, they won't need to sell us. We'll buy. And customers like to feel that they are buying—not being sold."⁵⁵⁰ Frederick Lewis Allen argues that marketers and advertisers exaggerated problems in order to sell solutions. He wrote:

The four out of five who, failing to use Forhan's, succumbed to pyorrhea, each of them with a white mask mercifully concealing his unhappy mouth The pathetic figure of a man, once a golf champion, "now only a wistful onlooker" creeping about after the star players, his shattered health due to tooth neglect The woman who would undoubtedly do something about B.O. if people only said to her what they really thought The poor couple who faced one another in humiliation after their guests were gone, the wife still holding the door knob and struggling against her tears, the husband biting his nails with shame (When Your Guests Are Gone—Are You Sorry You Ever Invited Them? . . . Be Free From All Embarrassment! Let the famous *Book of Etiquette* Tell You Exactly What to Do, Say, Write, or Wear on Every Occasion).⁵⁵¹

Advertisements contained phrases like "The Most Humiliating Moment of My Life," and "the unforgiveable social offense." Luckily, the products advertised could solve victims' dilemmas, but only if they bought them. According to Lynn Dumenil, an advertisement for Post Bran Flakes depicted a "harassed businessman" who, because of his hectic schedule, risked poor health and constipation. Post Bran Flakes could solve his nagging health issues. Allen concluded, "These men and women of the advertising pages, suffering or triumphant, became a part of the folklore of the day."⁵⁵² Much as the state (with support from PVOs and NGOs) had done during WWI, marketers and advertisers played upon people's fears and anxieties to induce them to take specific actions.

⁵⁵⁰ Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, 44.

⁵⁵¹ Allen, *Only Yesterday*, 149-150.

⁵⁵² *Ibid*; Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 90-91.

The exploitation of people's emotions was deliberate and calculated. John Watson used his knowledge of human psychology to program hopes and fears into potential consumers.⁵⁵³

Despite the appearance that Watson had deserted "science for advertising," he proposed to "apply his scientific knowledge to the sale of commercial products." Olivier Zunz argues that Watson's

Figure 6.3 Advertisement for Kotex in the *New York Times*, 1925.
The prospective buyer's fears of "lost daintiness" can be avoided by purchasing Kotex deodorant. John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

Your Fear
of lost daintiness . . . at times

This new way, that scientifically solves a real hygienic problem, will end it

THERE is now a way in personal hygiene that is safe and sure. That warrants immaculacy under any and all conditions.

The old-time method has been supplanted . . . scientifically.

Wear your lightest silks, your daintiest frocks without a second thought. Dance, motor, accept social invitations, any day, every day. Live, your life unhandicapped.

The name is Kotex. It's made of cellucotton.

It deodorizes, is easily disposed of, ending all embarrassment.

It's at every drug store, every department store. You ask for it, without hesitancy, under its trade name—"Kotex."

8 in 10 women of the better classes have adopted it. Doctors urge it. Hygienic authorities employ it.

It will mean much to you . . . will make a great difference in your life. Going on with old ways is a folly.

KOTEX
PROTECTS—DEODORIZES

1 Protection: 5 times as absorbent as cotton pads—and scientifically deodorized.
2 No laundry. Discard as easily as a piece of tissue.

3 Easy to buy, anywhere. You ask for them by name. Many stores keep them ready-wrapped—help yourself, pay the clerk, that is all.

4 No laundry—discard easily

⁵⁵³ "The Adventure of the Behaviorist," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; *Daily Mirror*, March 7, 1928; "Scientific Orphans," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Dawkins Chronological Research Notes," Box 11, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Folder "Firsts and Innovations," Box 12, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 146.

campaigns "became at least on the surface textbook cases of manipulative strategies."⁵⁵⁴ He "used images that prompted fear, rage, or love to stimulate emotional reactions favorable to the products he wanted to sell in competitive fields where there was little difference in usefulness or reliability among many products." For example, he urged women to smoke to increase their sex appeal, but "only if they used Pebesco toothpaste to counter smoker's breath." Inventing fears to influence people's actions, Watson exclaimed that "it can be as thrilling to watch the growth of a sales curve of a new product as to watch the learning curve of animals or men." Stanley Resor encouraged Watson to continue in the field of behavioral psychology "in order to 'codify the laws of human reactions,'" laws which Resor "firmly believed were analogous to the laws of inanimate nature."⁵⁵⁵ The exploitation of people's emotions (including fear, paranoia, and anxiety) characterized leaders' deliberate strategy of perception management both inside and outside times of national emergency.

Marketers and advertisers consciously decided to continue the use PM after the war, though they hardly ever admitted it publicly. They claimed to selflessly inform and serve people while actively "guiding" Americans' behavior. In an appeal to Winchester Repeating Arms Company in 1919, J. Walter Thompson Company claimed, "In planning and preparing these advertisements—as in the campaigns to many other clients—[we have] cooperated with the

⁵⁵⁴ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 58-59.

⁵⁵⁵ "The Adventure of the Behaviorist," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University; Cedric Larson, "Highlights of Dr. John B. Watson's Career in Advertising," Folder "John B. Watson," Box 5, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

manufacturer in guiding the decisions of the buying public."⁵⁵⁶ To the public, marketers and advertisers claimed to inform and serve Americans; to each other, they resolved to "guide" the public's decisions. Stanley Resor confirmed: "You should never create an advertisement that does not ask your audience to do something in response to it. And you must know exactly what you want the response to be."⁵⁵⁷ Resor later said that the "economic justification for advertising, it seems to me, is the service it performs to the consumer on the one hand directly, and to the industry on the other."⁵⁵⁸ Senior corporate leaders claimed to serve the public by improving conditions for Americans, which they believed would follow from the nation's embracing what Warren Susman calls the "culture of abundance."⁵⁵⁹ It was part of their deliberate strategy of promoting typical American behavior after WWI.

Corporate leaders publicly claimed to selflessly serve the American people, just as Creel and his subordinates had claimed during the state's PM campaign in 1917 and 1918. Characteristic of the professed selflessness of their work, one contemporary wrote, "Speed—pressure—complexity—they epitomize American life today [American] people are *busy!*"

⁵⁵⁶ Folder "Sam Meek Ad Work," Box 2, Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁵⁷ Folder "Helen and Stanley Resor," Box 3, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁵⁸ Staff Meeting (April 9, 1928), Folder "1/4," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁵⁹ Susman, *Culture as History*, xx.

They're not interested in [the advertiser] or his product."⁵⁶⁰ The 4 A's Committee on Agricultural Press articulated the supposedly straightforward goal of the industry: "The issue in this industry of ours is SELLING."⁵⁶¹ However, marketers and advertisers in the 1920s publicly stated that their work had deeper implications than merely selling products; they claimed to "serve" the American people. In 1922, Earnest Elmo Calkins, a successful advertiser since the 1890s, said that the "desire to educate the public to be better customers has brought large groups of competitors together . . . manufacturers have learned that it is better to teach more people . . . than to fight each other for the smaller trade that already exists."⁵⁶² Olivier Zunz points out that while marketers and social commentators, for example, may have had vastly different opinions, beliefs, and values, most agreed (at least publicly) with Walter Lippmann's statement that education "was more important in shaping opinion than manipulation."⁵⁶³ In 1924, Louis Pedlar of Marshall Field and Company wrote, "Service is the thing that symbolizes the name of Marshall Field. A great and fine service has been rendered the public." He believed that other companies should look at Marshall Field "not as a competing business but rather as one who is

⁵⁶⁰ "They Don't Want to Read It," J. Walter Thompson News Bulletin (November 1922), Folder "Paul Cherington," Box 1, Colin Dawkins Papers, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁶¹ Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Board of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, July 12-13, 1921, Folder "Minutes (1921-1924)," Box AF2, Records of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke University.

⁵⁶² Article by Earnest Elmo Calkins, excerpted in *Reader's Digest* (April 1922), Box 1, Advertising—Miscellaneous, Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison. For more background on Calkins' advertising philosophy, see Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 101-104.

⁵⁶³ Zunz, *Why the American Century?*, 62.

sharing the common national responsibility of teaching consumers to know quality."⁵⁶⁴ Lynn Dumenil describes marketers' and advertisers' desire to serve the public: "A widely used term, in the business community [service] meant a devotion to public welfare that gave social responsibility at least an equal role with profits as the *raison d'être* for private enterprise." Dumenil notes also that "[service] appeared extensively in advertising: meatpacker Armour and Company, for example, announced that it 'seeks public goodwill. Its business is to serve.'"⁵⁶⁵ On behalf of the free market, marketers and advertisers claimed to educate, inform, and serve the public, even though they had clearly decided to actively guide its economic activity. Not resigning to merely showcasing products for sale, they used PM to convince the public that consumerism defined modern life in the U.S. by associating it unequivocally to typical American behavior. According to Warren Susman, "Americans were made constantly and fully aware that they lived in a new era."⁵⁶⁶

Marketers and advertisers believed that they could define a new normal, as well as typical or loyal American behavior, in the United States, proving that perception management extended beyond the national crisis of World War I. Sometimes they were quite flippant about their role in postwar America. In 1927, William Day of the J. Walter Thompson Company said that "this is not an age of crusades, [it] is an age of vogues, and we [can] not sell the moral responsibility of the age very easily, but we might sell the vogue very easily."⁵⁶⁷ Still, corporate leaders

⁵⁶⁴ Pedlar to G.R. Schaeffer, November 5, 1924, Box 77, Marshall Fields and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

⁵⁶⁵ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 32.

⁵⁶⁶ Susman, *Culture as History*, 108.

⁵⁶⁷ Staff Meeting (July 26, 1927), Folder "1/2," Box 1, RG2, J. Walter Thompson Collection, John W. Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising, and Marketing History, Duke

believed they could influence the perceptions and behavior of the nation, and hence guide it into the modern era. Corporate leaders used advertising to sell products but they used perception management to sell modernity and promote typical behavior in the United States. Perception management was not merely an unfortunate feature of a nation at war, but a way in which individuals in positions of political and economic power imposed upon the American people a vision of how things ought to be.

University. In a similar vein, James Simpson, President of the Marshall Field and Company, wrote, "The influence of the modern store upon the standards of living can scarcely be overestimated. It affords the public a very wide contact with the world's achievements in design and manufacture." See "Art as Related to Commerce and Industry" by James Simpson, Box 77, Marshall Field and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison. Not in small part because Marshall Field was one of Barton's clients, Barton praised the company, "Alone in the van of modern advertising [Marshall Field] towered over the retail trade of America as the Eiffel Tower rears its metal fretwork far above Paris." See Barton to G. Ray Schaeffer, November 5, 1924, Box 77, Marshall Fields and Company (1924-1936), Bruce Barton Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Conclusion

This study has argued that between 1917 and 1929, political and corporate leaders used perception management to indoctrinate the American people and to induce them to take specific actions that were favorable to the originators' objectives. It has purposely blurred the distinction between when PM was used for political and military purposes in WWI and when it was used for economic purposes in the 1920s. In both wartime and peacetime, leaders used PM to achieve pre-determined objectives; to induce Americans to take specific actions (more than simply urging them to believe a certain way or have a favorable attitude toward something); to highlight and promote "typical" American behavior; and safeguard their own status and institutional and professional positions.

Governmental and corporate leaders may have had different opinions about the intelligence and the rationality of the American people, but they generally believed that their efforts were in the interest of the public and the nation (or at least justified their actions that way). They embodied a spirit of elitism in which they, the self-appointed leaders of American society, would determine the nation's course in their respective eras using perception management. Whether during a war to "make the world safe for democracy" or in a time which there supposedly emerged a powerful "consumer democracy," there were centralized, institutional forces actively trying to control the perceptions and behavior of the American people, bringing into question the democratic façade of the era.

If wartime perception management did not overhaul all existing conventions of advertising and managing public opinion, it did demonstrate exactly how effective a concerted, aggressive national campaign to unify the American public could be. Many professional marketers, advertisers, and public relations consultants including Edward Bernays, Carl Byoir,

Ivy Lee, John Price Jones, John Watson, Orlando Clinton Harn, and James Webb Young had either directly assisted the government with its PM strategy or had worked within certain voluntary and non-governmental organizations that actively supported the war effort. The state's use of all media and technologies to further its aims and promote a model of loyal American behavior made a lasting impression on many of these individuals who, far from denouncing wartime PM, applied many of those lessons in the commercial realm in the 1920s. In promoting consumption as an American virtue in the postwar decade, corporate leaders had an extremely valuable point of reference in the state's PM strategy of 1917 and 1918, even if only because it had, in many respects, exposed the limits of the public's tolerance.

This study contributes to the historiography of the early twentieth century not because it confirms two things which are already known about the period: that the state aggressively sought to rouse nationalism in WWI and that the 1920s witnessed a new dawn of commercial marketing and advertising. It has, instead, bridged the arbitrarily placed divide between the wartime and postwar years by arguing that common features characterized perception management throughout the entire period. For example, both the state in WWI and the corporate sector in the 1920s targeted *the* American public, a single, anonymous mass comprised of millions of individuals who supposedly possessed the same intellectual and psychological qualities. In addition, planners and executors of PM appreciated that in order to reduce people's ability to perceive alternate courses of action the flow of information to the public must be controlled. While claiming to educate, inform, and sometimes to serve the American public, institutions conducting PM sought support from the industries of print, wireless, and visual media in order to repeat the same ideas constantly and to drown out competing ones. Campaigns designed to control Americans' choices stressed emotion more than—or, in many cases, instead of—reason.

Governmental and corporate leaders wanted Americans to take specific, impulsive actions, not rationalized, deliberate ones. For these reasons and others, this study has demonstrated the significant similarities in principles, tactics, and motivations driving PM during and after WWI, and that differences in emphases (e.g., political versus commercial) appear less stark (and less important) in that light.

Between 1917 and 1929, perception management had proved to be a powerful and effective way of controlling people's decision in the public *and* private spheres. During World War I, no one had to volunteer for service in the military (though males had to register for the draft); buy Liberty Bonds; plant Liberty Gardens; ration their servings of food; donate to the American Red Cross; send a book or a "Smoke Cheer" to a "trench buddy"; report or impose extrajudicial punishment on slackers and "seditious" individuals; or do many of the other things prescribed by the state's PM strategy. Yet millions of people did one or more of those things.

Likewise, in the 1920s, millions of Americans increased their spending on superfluous goods and personified the spirit of consumption, a phenomenon in part which must be attributed to corporate PM. As Juliann Sivulka argues, Americans in the early twentieth century "claimed that they could get along well without most of the new inventions, thereby saving the money, time, and emergency needed to acquire them. But the reality was, they didn't. Rather, they purchased [new consumer goods] just as fast as they could."⁵⁶⁸ Democracy is not fully realized when the choices that individuals make have been provided entirely by others. The goal of PM, whether in times of national crisis or peace and prosperity, is the reduction or elimination of the sense of choice in one's actions. This study has proven that leaders in the political and

⁵⁶⁸ Sivulka, *Soap, Sex, and Cigarettes*, 172.

commercial realms between 1917 and 1929 took deliberate measures to reduce people's choice and to prescribe specific models of acceptable behavior in their respective eras.

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