

Five years ago, the freelance historian Frances Stonor Saunders caused a flurry of press comment with the publication of her *Who Paid the Piper?*, published in the US under the more prosaic title *The CIA and the Cultural Cold War*. Edward Said proclaimed, “The energy and determination of her research, to say nothing of the scepticism that nurtured it, are important signs of stirring intellectual restlessness and even of a kind of incitement, which is what is needed most of all.”^[i]

Saunders moved on to a much different project, the study of the 14th-century mercenary Sir John Hawkwood,^[ii] but beyond narrating a new Cold War for the general reader, she had made a unique contribution to scholarship. She had carried out a dual recovery of the “missing dimensions” of post-1945 history. The conflict was no longer defined through the manoeuvres of Presidents, State Departments, and the military but also through the strategies and operations of their covert colleagues. Those strategies and operations in turn were concerned with the ever-present but little-noted battleground contested by the “West” and its Soviet enemy: the global campaign to prove the superiority of a “total” system which offered much more than geopolitical influence, economic strength, and military dominance, a system which in the words of NSC 68 embodied “the idea of freedom...the most contagious idea in history, more contagious than the idea of submission to authority”.^[iii]

When *Who Paid the Piper?* came out, the bellwethers of Cold War history in the United States --- the leading professors defining the analytic terrain, the most prominent journals, the most prominent associations --- were caught up in the effort to define, less than a decade after the break-up of the Soviet Union, what

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the US had “won”. The most egregious claims of historical objectivity were of the We Now Know variety, books which soon left behind any nuanced analysis, indeed omitted much of the world outside the United States, to assert “objectively”, “Many people then saw the Cold War as a contest of good and evil, even if historians have rarely done so,” leaving the unstated but clear conclusion that this was American good and Soviet evil and no position (and no country) in between.^[iv] Other monographs looked for a more definitive history of the American “national security state” and an assessment of power transcending geopolitics and economics but, after hundreds of pages, fell into arbitrary divisions such as the “wise men” who had fashioned the policy confronting the Soviet challenge in the early Cold War versus the “foolish men” who somehow took the United States into the failure of Vietnam.^[v] The Groundhog Day battle of “orthodox” versus “revisionist” explanations of US foreign policy --- had Washington secured the Free World or was it driven by a quest for economic dominance? --- was played out again and again.

To be fair, there was an ongoing invocation by some historians of the need for a “cultural turn” in Cold War history. That challenge was met in part by studies which examined the promotion of “America” by State bodies such as the US Information Agency, which considered groups, outside but interacting with formal Government structures, such as African-Americans and women, and which critiqued official discourses through their construction and use of race, sexuality and pathology.^[vi] Too often, however, the “cultural turn” became a cultural annex. Narratives of the USIA or of international exhibitions buttressed the established conceptions of “official” strategy.^[vii] The non-Governmental groups remained uncertainly in the wings, useful for an expanded title such as “The Cold War And....” but threatening trouble if they raised fundamental questions about the tensions within American political culture, the points where



the Cold War's quest for "freedom" became problematic at home and abroad. Theorists such as Gramsci and Said were kept at a safe distance.

The risk was that, as some scholars highlighted the place of "culture" in the Cold War, they also sought to contain it. Examinations in *Diplomatic History*, issued just before and after Saunders' book was published, set up a target of alleged theories of "cultural imperialism" fostered by "supporters and descendants of the New Left [who] often settled in university towns" and reassured the reader that "we will discover that we needn't be afraid of Steven Spielberg after all".^[viii] However culture was incorporated into the Cold War, the notion of a successful "End of History" must not be threatened: "if democratic government is the only unchallenged form of state legitimacy virtually everywhere in the world, if social questions such as the rights of women and minorities are so widespread on almost everyone's political agenda, if economic questions concerning the relative roles of state and society everywhere have common themes, then sure it is because of the worldwide impact of a philosophical --- some might prefer to say an ideological --- conviction that mobilized American resolve to win the struggles against Fascism and communism".^[ix]

The Cultural Cold War is thus part of a continuing response to a Cold War history which presents itself as the official, the triumphal, or the definitive. Even before 1999, scholars (most of them based outside the US, some of them represented in this volume) were examining aspects of the American State-private network through the study of subjects from New York intellectuals to women's groups to the NAACP to the American Federation of Labour to abstract expressionists. *Who Paid the Piper?*, accompanied by other significant but less controversial monographs and articles, built upon this foundation by placing the



State-private network at the heart of a general American campaign for hearts and minds in the early Cold War.

This is only the start of the challenge posed by *The Cultural Cold War*, however, for we are five years in real time and a generation in both scholarship and context beyond *Who Paid the Piper?* The book was never intended to be a comprehensive analysis of the organisation and dynamics of American “political culture”, of which the Government’s Crusade for Freedom was only a part. As Saunders has freely admitted, she was only concerned with the covert dimension of the network (and, within this, only those areas of the covert campaign focusing on “high culture”) and her emphasis was on documentation, rather than critique, of that network.

The obvious injunction is that filling in “missing dimensions” should not end in a two-dimensional depiction of the cultural Cold War. Tensions and contradictions between the actors in the State-private network, in the ideology and interests of that network, in its “cultural production”, and in the reception of that production must be examined. They should be examined not in a search for an easy resolution of freedom versus its totalitarian foe but with the recognition that the creation and projection of “America”, and thus the construction of the Cold War (and, beyond this volume, of later conflicts such as the “War on Terror”), was always in flux.

Some criticism of this process can be easily met. One scholar, introducing a collection of essays on the cultural Cold War in Western Europe, framed it as “presentation...from which one side (the Russians, their satellites and their friends in the West) have strangely vanished. No sight or sound of them. It is America vs. Amerika.” Another review of work on ideology, culture, and US Foreign Policy asserted, “To deal only with the United States and leave out the

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Soviet Union in discussing the role of Cold War political warfare has about as much resonance as one hand clapping.” [x] The implication, that scholars raising the notion of the State-private network are ignorant of or unwilling to examine any nefarious Soviet counterpart, is a diversion. The well-documented existence of Soviet cultural campaigns has not been ignored by the authors in this volume; rather, they have examined how the perception of those campaigns helped shape the US State-private network and its initiatives. At the same time, recognition of efforts of “the Other” can only be part of the story; the direction of the American crusade for freedom, and the issues that it raised, went far beyond a simple confrontation with Moscow. Making this argument in no way reduces these authors to proponents of “We have met the enemy, and he is us”.

A similar response can be made to the charge that this scholarship is “anti-American”. The rights or wrongs of strategy or operations can be debated, but the purpose of these essays is not to derogate the US Government or the private groups and individuals who worked with the Government in the development of cultural campaigns. The consideration of the “America” promoted by the network, far from constituting a condemnation of the concept, is a recognition of the power and the appeal of the ideals and practices of that “America” to both producers and recipients.

The interrogations in these essays should and do start from other premises. One of the central issues raised by *Who Paid the Piper?* was of the relationship between the hegemony of the State and the autonomy of private groups. Saunders, in the telling of her tale, usually worked from the basis of CIA control of its private allies. Hugh Wilford, extending his research on American intellectuals, offered the memorable corrective, “It might well have been the case that the CIA tried to call a particular tune, but the piper did not always play nor the audience dance to it,” while Giles Scott-Smith applied and extended

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Gramscian theory in his book on the Congress for Cultural Freedom.^[xi] Both continue their critiques in this volume, Wilford through his attention to an ideological negotiation beyond “neo-conservatism” and “liberal anti-communism”, Scott-Smith with the essential injunction that the relationship between the State, private sector, and “political culture” needs to be considered before 1945 and even before the outbreak of World War II.

Yet, even as these essays confirm that evaluation of the State-private network has gone beyond the simple notion of “control”, they raise further challenges. There is always the danger that the State recedes once more before the autonomy of private groups and prominent intellectuals and political culture remains the undifferentiated output of a simple connection between official programme and private actor. Tony Shaw offers one response with the notion of a shared “ideological worldview”, a concept re-presented by Inderjeet Parmar as a Gramscian “state spirit” projected through corporatism, parastates, and epistemic communities.

An alternative, possible complementary, approach is to critique the homogeneity of shared ideals, structures, or operations, Helen Laville offers a triple shift with her identification of a voluntarism predating but reconfigured in the Cold War, her transcendence of traditional “elite” approaches with her case of women’s organisations, and her establishment of a co-operative model marrying American exceptionalism to internationalism. Far from bringing cohesion, however, the ideological/voluntarist impulse to maintain a “private” sphere caused tension in the State-private network. As Laville notes cogently, the basic fact of covert support by the State undermined any conception of the “private”.

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Laville's constant but never-resolved relationship between co-operation and co-optation should be juxtaposed with Ali Fisher's consideration of the negotiations of the State-private network. Fisher's previous work on the formation of American Studies in Britain moved beyond the dichotomy of the State and private by positing a triangular relationship between the State, the foundation providing funds, and "local" academics.^[xii] In this volume, Fisher develops this critique of a systematic bloc, suggesting a "double production" of political culture. The first transmission is the State's construction of an ideal cultural framework and operations to project "America"; the second is the negotiation of that constitution with another cultural producer such as a foundation. This double transmission in turn is re-shaped by the reception and negotiation of structure and operations by the local "private" organisation --- in Fisher's cases, academic communities but just as easily a labour union, a women's group, a student association, or a media outlet --- in its own consideration and projection of America.

Other essays in this volume can be read as evaluations of this more complex approach to the State-private network. Andrew Johnstone and Karen Paget, like Scott-Smith, take scholarship beyond the Cold War and beyond a simple assertion of US-led "internationalism". Johnstone re-introduces the catalyst of an influential individual, in this case Clark Eichelberger, moving between the base of his private organisations and his discussions with State officials to project and, arguably, limit the internationalist vision during World War II. Like Laville in her study of women's organisations, Johnstone suggests that, in the interaction between Eichelberger's personal interests and the objectives of the State the internationalist vision gave way to a more "nationalist" construction of the world. Paget, breaking the bind of studies of the National Student Association limited to its post-1950 collaboration with the CIA, considers



the development of individual and group interests within the NSA's forerunners. From 1942, well before the formation of the "national security state" that would shape policies and networks in the Cold War, there was a complex, often shadowy, interaction between student representatives, private sponsors, and the Government. Paget's conclusion, linking the pre- and post-Cold War periods, is a telling extension of Laville's co-operation/co-optation argument: beyond the struggle for control and any debate of hegemony v. autonomy, what was essential in American political warfare was the "appearance of independence".

Elke Cassel's examination of the interchanges behind the pages of the *Reporter* magazine, centring on its editor Max Ascoli, critiques this appearance of independence. Once again, there is a narrative of internationalism, in this case "world federalism", giving way to an aggressive promotion of "America" against the Communist menace. At one level, Cassel's research offers the possibility that the journal was established with covert Government backing (intriguing, before the establishment of the CIA and the post-1948 State orchestration of support for the "private" sphere). At another, equally important, she establishes that this formal covert connection may not have been necessary. Instead, the *New Leader* was established, promoted, and subsidised through a web of informal negotiations. For example, Cassel identifies the relationship between Ascoli and C.D. Jackson, who would move between Time-Life, Inc., the military, State-supported "private" initiatives such as the National Committee for Free Europe, and high-level service in the Eisenhower Administration.^[xiii]

It is important that these essays, many of which are propelled by the recovery of a "missing dimension" of strategy, foreign policy, and operations, do not presume to replace a previous narrative of the overt organisation of American public diplomacy. Rather, Nick Cull's essay on the United States Information Agency places this "open" dimension within a broader, evolving,

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dynamic psychological strategy/political warfare which tried to incorporate overt and covert networks. Likewise, these essays do not claim that strategy replaces a “liberal consensus”. Julia Angster’s study of the State-private network and international labour operations establishes that this consensus could take in Government officials and labour activists from across the American political spectrum. Instead, this consensus deserves a much more thorough analysis. Many public and private figures who were far from “liberal”, at least in the terminology of American political culture, were linked in the pursuit of anti-Communism and the liberation of countries in the Soviet bloc. There was never a sharp division, as the 1952 Presidential campaign of Dwight Eisenhower alleged, between the “immoral containment” of the Democratic Truman Administration and the “rollback” advocated by its Republican successor. Instead, as Axel Schafer demonstrates, “religion” from the Catholicism of Cardinal Spellman to the Protestantism of Reinhold Neibuhr to the growing evangelical movement could be mobilised and supported by the State in the cause of freedom for “captive peoples”.

In May 1948 George Kennan, long regarded as the father of an American Cold War doctrine of containment through his Long Telegram and the “Mr X” article, set out an even more ambitious strategy. He proposed to the newly-formed National Security Council “The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare”, including “liberation committees”, “underground activities behind the Iron Curtain”, and “support of indigenous anti-Communist elements in threatened countries of the Free World”. Victory would come not only through official diplomatic, economic, and military activity but also through the battle for hearts and minds waged by a State-private network:

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What is proposed here is an operation in the traditional American form: organized public support of resistance to tyranny in foreign countries. Throughout our history, private American citizens have banded together to champion the cause of freedom for people suffering under oppression.... Our proposal is that this tradition be revived specifically to further American national interests in the present crisis.[xiv]

The problem was that the ideological campaign was never separate from the State's quest for a "preponderance of power". Even as he was promoting his valiant network for political warfare, Kennan was assessing:

We have about 50 percent of the world's wealth but only 6.3 percent of its population....In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives. We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford today the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction.[xv]

There would be a perpetual tension between power and liberation in the development and implementation of US foreign policy. A seminal document such as NSC 68 might try to reconcile the tension, spending its first pages proclaiming that "the fundamental purpose [of the United States] is to assure the integrity and vitality of our free society, which is founded upon the dignity and



worth of the individual," before turning to substantive matters such as authorisation of the hydrogen bomb and support of colonial and anti-democratic regimes as long as they were also anti-Communist. That purported reconciliation turned upon the construction of a "private" sphere in support of the ideology, if not the explicit or covert policies, of the State: "The prosecution of the program will require of us all the ingenuity, sacrifice, and unity demanded by the vital importance of the issue and the tenacity to persevere until our national objectives have been attained."[xvi]

The double production of the State-private network always rested on a double, linked elision. The constructions of the network rested on the assumption that they were the output of independent, private actors; asserted autonomy could negate the fundamental that these constructions rested upon some degree of State strategy, development, and support. In turn, that State strategy not only promoted "freedom" but used that projection to elide "realist" policies and operations which did not uphold that ideal. As the Doolittle Report, assessing the covert dimension of US foreign policy, concluded in 1954:

If the United States is to survive, long-standing American concepts of "fair play" must be reconsidered. We must develop effective espionage and counterespionage services and must learn to subvert, sabotage and destroy our enemies by more clever, more sophisticated and more effective methods than those used against us. It may become necessary that the American people be made acquainted with, understand and support this fundamentally repugnant philosophy.[xvii]

Whether or not this strategy constituted a State "betrayal" of private allies, particularly those who were unaware of the involvement of agencies like the

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CIA, returns us to simple assumptions about control and autonomy. Instead the exposure of the secret network, particularly in press revelations in 1967 in the context of the Vietnam War, highlighted the tensions and even contradictions between the promotion of ideals and the extension of power. As a member of the Committee of Correspondence, the woman's group highlighted in Helen Laville's essay, said with dismay, "We say we are an example and this is a democracy. You can have enough voluntary interests to carry the load....Now we discover that individual organizations just don't seem to be able to exist without government help." [xviii] Natasha Spender, whose husband Stephen co-edited the CIA-funded literary journal *Encounter*, wrote Michael Josselson, the Agency operative who "handled" *Encounter* and its parent organization, the Congress for Cultural Freedom:

I can see, looking back in the light of present knowledge that everybody has been a prisoner of this situation in different degrees and ways. It must have been awful for you to have to deceive your friends to whom you have always been so benevolent. But I am sure it was wrong for the CIA to expect it, for the repercussions in personal honour and relationships are endless, and if one minds intensely, as one does, then one grieves over trusts broken which cannot be retrieved. [xix]

Those tensions are in the present as well as the past. The 1967 crisis did not bring the demise of the State-private network but its reconstruction. The overt dimension benefited from adversity, with key operations such as Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty brought out of the shadows into the open State structure, while other covertly-supported initiatives were put under deeper cover. Transformation and regeneration continued in the 1980s, with



“autonomous” but State-funded organisations including the National Endowment for Democracy, and beyond the vanquishing of the Soviet Union. The US Information Agency may have expired in 1999, but its demise, far from signalling the end of Kennan’s concept of political warfare, opened the way to a more diverse and more aggressive system with ventures based in the White House (the Office of Global Communications) to the Pentagon (the Office of Special Plans) sometimes complementing, sometimes challenging those emanating from the State Department or the CIA.[xx]

If these recent episodes await examination in a future volume, the essays in this one lay the foundation for analysis linking the historical with the contemporary. The relationship between the US State and the private sphere --- sometimes one of co-operation, sometimes one of co-optation, often one of tension, always one of negotiation --- did not fundamentally change on 11 September 2001, just as it did not begin at the outset of the Cold War in 1947. The production of “America” may have been set amidst the rhetoric and ideology of good v. evil, but it did not rest on such a Manichaeian basis. Government officials who drafted plans for the extension of US political, economic, military, and cultural influence were able to hold visions of power and profits alongside beliefs in an American exemplar of freedom. And private individuals and groups could work with those Government officials, not necessarily because they shared that same vision of power and ideology but because their own complex conceptions and interests were furthered by the relationship. Through such relationships, freedom’s war was and is a never-ending one, not just through the activities of past and present State-private networks but also in the question, put by Edward Said in his review of *Who Paid the Piper?*, eight years after the fall Soviet enemy, two years before the enemy that emerged on 9/11, “Is there any

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role, or any possibility of a role in the post-Cold War era of globalisation for...intellectual resistance and even freedom?"[\[xxi\]](#)

Scott Lucas



* Conclusion to *State-Private Networks and the Cultural Cold War* (Laville, Helen London: Frank Cass, 2005)

[i] Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper?: The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999); Edward

Said, "Hey, Mister, You Want Dirty Book?", *London Review of Books* (30 September 1999), p. 56

[ii] Frances Stonor Saunders, *Hawkwood: The Diabolical Englishman* (London: Faber and Faber, 2004)

[iii] NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security", 14 April 1950, reprinted at

<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsc-hst/nsc-68-4.htm>

[iv] John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), p. 286

[v] Melvyn Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, The Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Palo

Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993)

[vi] See, for example, Frank Costigliola, "'Unceasing Pressure for Penetration': Gender, Pathology, and Emotion in George

Kennan's Formation of the Cold War", *The Journal of American History* (March 1997), pp. 1309-39, and "I Had Come

as a Friend': Emotion, Culture, and Ambiguity in the Formation of the Cold War," *Cold War History* (August 2000),

pp. 103-28; Penny Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY:

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1945-1960", in J. Gienow-Hecht and F. Schumacher, *Culture and International Relations* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2003),

pp. 79-93.

[vii] See, for example, Walter Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New

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[viii] Jessica Gienow-Hecht, "Shame on US? Academics, Cultural Transfer, and the Cold War --- A Critical Review,"

Diplomatic History (Summer 2000), pp. 477-8; Richard Pells, "Who's Afraid of Steven Spielberg?", *Diplomatic*

History (Summer 2000), p. 502

[ix] Tony Smith, "Making the World Safe for Democracy in the American Century," *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1999),

174-88

[x] David Caute, "Foreword", in G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam, *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe 1945-*

1960 (London: Frank Cass, 2003); Steven Rearden, "The Cold War: How the Winner Won", *Diplomatic History*

(October 2001), pp. 707-712

[xi] Hugh Wilford, "The CIA, The British Left and the Cold War", in G. Scott-Smith and H. Krabbendam, *The Cultural*

Cold War in Western Europe 1945-1960 (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 49; Giles Scott-Smith, *The Politics of*

Apolitical Culture: The Congress for Cultural Freedom, the CIA and post-war American hegemony (London:



Routledge, 2002)

[xii] See Ali Fisher, "The Role of the US Government and the Rockefeller Foundation in the Development of American

Studies in Britain through the Creation and Initial Financial Support of the British Association for American Studies"

(M.Phil., University of Birmingham, 2001).

[xiii] For more on Jackson, see H.W. Brands, *Cold Warriors: Eisenhower's Generation and American Foreign Policy* (New

York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The US Crusade against the Soviet Union,*

1945-1956 (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1999).

[xiv] Policy Planning Staff memorandum, "The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare", 4 May 1948, reprinted at

http://www.state.gov/www/about_state/history/intel/260_269.html

[xv] Policy Planning Staff memorandum, PPS-23, "Review of Current Trends in U.S. Foreign Policy", 24 February 1948,

reprinted at http://www.j-bradford-delong.net/movable_type/archives/000567.html

[xvi] NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security", 14 April 1950, reprinted at

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[xvii] The Report on the Covert Activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, 30 September 1954, pp. 6-7, reprinted at

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[xviii] Note on Special Board Meeting, 24 July 67, Committee of Correspondence Papers, Sophia Smith Library,

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[xix] Natasha Spender to Michael Josselson, 1967, Michael Josselson Papers, Ransom Center, Austin, Texas, Box 25, File 6,

Spender 1965-1975

[xx] See Liam Kennedy and Scott Lucas, "Enduring Freedom: Public Diplomacy and U.S. Foreign Policy", *American*

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[xxi] Edward Said, "Hey, Mister, You Want Dirty Book?", *London Review of Books* (30 September 1999), p. 56

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