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“Good War” on the Cool Medium: The Cold War's Influence on the Portrayal of World War II on American Television

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Sabino, and their daughter, Michelina, as well as my beloved partner Melinda Maconi without whose love and care I could not have completed this incredible journey.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a cultural history of the Cold War's influence on the portrayal of World War II on American television. In it, I chronicle the production, reception, and presentation of the war of three prominent American-produced documentary series from three periods of the Cold War – *Victory at Sea* (1952-1953), *The Twentieth Century* (1957-1966), and *The Unknown War* (1978). The dissertation posits that from the 1940s-1960s, the television portrayal of World War II was an embodiment of the values- that the United Sates was "fighting" for through a "triumphalist" narrative of a "just war" which recast the role of each Allied and Axis power to fit the needs of the Cold War. This was achieved through a developing series of mediators on the presentation of the war dictated by the Department of Defense, the show's sponsors, the networks, and the perceptions of the series creators who were veterans. By the 1970s, the dynamics of relations between the East and West, coupled with the fallout of the Vietnam War, led to a move away from the triumphalist narrative to one which stressed the need to avoid future conflict, as seen in The Unknown War. However, as Cold War animosities heightened in the 1980s, a renewed emphasis was placed on the valor and morality of the wartime generation, which led to a renewed veneration by the end of the Cold War conflict, albeit one complicated by matters of the United States injustices towards its racial and ethnic minorities as well as its use of the atomic bomb. Collectively, this work adds to the understanding of the Cold War's influence on representations of World War II, the distinct image of the war propagated by television, and how the image evolved with developments in the Cold War.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: 'THE GREAT CRUSADE'

At 9:00 P.M., Thursday, May 5, 1949, the first of twenty-six episodes of *Crusade in Europe* was broadcast on American Broadcasting Company and its affiliate stations in the United States. Made by the same team which produced the *March of Time* news programs (a subsidiary of Time-Life), the series adaption General Dwight D. Eisenhower's best-selling memoir of the same name, which was a play on Eisenhower's famous D-Day speech. The series was the first ever documentary program made exclusively for television and showcased the capabilities the nascent medium possessed.[1] Composed of roughly 165 million feet of film sourced from U.S. government as well as British and French archives, the series told the history of the European Theatre of World War II from the perspective of the general many credited for the liberation of Europe. Its ability to capture not only the essence of Eisenhower's work but its design specifically for television won it a Peabody Award, an Emmy Award, and the praise of many commentators as an advance in the medium even soliciting a sequel in 1950 *Crusade in the Pacific* on the Pacific Theater of the War.[2]

At the time of *Crusade in Europe*'s premiere television was just beginning to establish itself as a medium. NBC, CBS, ABC, and the DuMont network had begun regularly scheduled broadcasts in 1947 while RCA placed a full-page ad in the country's major newspapers under the headline "1948 Television's Year" which touted: "Nineteen forty-seven marked the end of

[1] Andrew J. Salvati, "Dwight D. Eisenhower's Television Crusade," iamhist.net (The International Association for Media and History, June 6, 2018), http://iamhist.net/2018/06/dwight-d-eisenhowers-television-crusade/.
[2] Fred Hif, "'Crusade in Europe': Editors Sifted Miles of Film for Series," *New York Times*, May 8, 1949, p. X9.

television's interim period. Nineteen forty-eight marks TV's appearance as a major force."[3] Now *Crusade in Europe* appeared a sign that television could be more than a hub of what media historian James L. Baughman cited as "alternatively laughable or dreary" largely composed of live sessions of the United Nations, public announcements from government officials, sporting matches, and lots of vaudeville acts.[4] In 1948 pioneer television critic for the *New York Times* Jack Gould reflected how "instead of going overboard financially on vaudeville, television might consider whether a sounder investment would not be to widen its artistic base. Music, art, the dance, and education, to name only a few fields literally cry out for imaginative exploration."[5] A year later, he would hold *Crusade in Europe* as a fulfillment of that imaginative exploration, writing: "Here for the first time, is a film not only of genuine historical interest, but, more importantly, a film which illustrates the vast potentialities of television in the field of visual education."[6]

The series was something of a dramatic achievement in its nine-hour sequential history of what was still a very recent conflict. While largely sticking to the story presented in the memoir the documentary wowed viewers with a sharp collection of footage newly edited to visually tell the history of the European conflict as opposed to the newsreel snippets viewed during the war. Certain *March of Time* hallmarks including the use of dramatizations and re-enactments were used on occasion to establish continuity and capitalize on themes, especially in the first two episodes detailing the prelude to American involvement in the war, where Eisenhower was

[3] NBC Press Release quoted in Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 30.
[4] James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941*, (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 41.
[5] Jack Gould, "TELVISION'S ROLE: It Must Chart Its Own Artistic Course and Not Become Merely a Medium," *New York Times*, February 20, 1949, p. X11.
[6] Jack Gould, "TELEVISION IN REVIEW: 'Crusade in Europe' and 'Stop the Music'," *New York Times*, May 15, 1949, p. X9.

largely uninvolved. The series, however, makes it known that they are only extoling the sentiments of Eisenhower through its more novel framing device of opening and closing each episode with a shot of Eisenhower's book, which opened and closed on a relevant passage read by Maurice Joyce doing an imitation of Eisenhower's voice and reading several such passages throughout the episode as Westbrook Van Voorhis, the stentorian "voice" of the *March of Time*, providing background details. Its ability to thus intersperse the larger history of the war with the intimate reflections of Eisenhower made it a poignant, engaging work for a television audience who were used to live dramas in which they could often see the microphone boom and actors tended to flub their lines.

Crusade in Europe proved so effective thanks to its design, but also due to its rather timely message. Made during the Berlin Blockade and airing in the same year that the Soviet Union's successfully detonated an atomic bomb and China came under a communist government, the series spoke to the mounting tensions of the Cold War. Its presentation of World War II as a rude awakening for the United States, but one in which the nation quickly rose to the occasion, seemed especially timely. Additionally, two of its later episodes "American Military Government" and "Russia" both directly addressed the intransigence of the Soviet officials in stoking the flames of future conflict and Eisenhower's observations on the possibility of another war. In concept, the film is not just a documentary telling how we fought in the last war," Gould remarks, "it constitutes a visual treatise explaining why the Allies were forced into such a titanic struggle and detailing the price which they had to pay for the mistakes made in a time of peace. In reviewing the past, the film as it unfold will carry its own lesson for the future."[7] *Crusade in*

[7] Jack Gould, "TELEVISION IN REVIEW: 'Crusade in Europe' and 'Stop the Music'," *New York Times*, May 15, 1949, p. X9.

Europe in its retelling of World War II effectively composes its narrative to address the needs of the Cold War for the American public.[8]

Crusade in Europe would be the first of numerous television series on the war which were shaped to reflect the prerogatives of the Cold War struggle. During the Cold War, which spanned from the late-1940s up to the early-1990s, the depiction of World War II in American media became a tool for this ideological struggle that dominated the latter half of the twentieth century. World War II became an embodiment of the values the United States was "fighting" for and a point of pride to rally the support of the American public. Especially during the early Cold War of the late-1940s through the mid-1960s, World War II media helped define the dimensions of a just war, the attributes of valor and villainy of the combatants, and the role of Americans in the world as leaders and liberators.

The depiction of World War II in television documentary series from the late-1940s through the 1970s represents a distillation of the perceptions and imperatives of the Cold War. Born alongside of the Cold War, television would be a prominent shaper of public opinion within roughly a decade of its expansion in the early-1950s. Considered a luxury item largely found in gathering places like bars and hotels in urban areas during the late-1940s. Americans' income increased with the expansion of television production and broadcast stations to the point where a television was a fixture in over 90% of American households by the early-1960s. Throughout the decade it expanded from live-performance and variety shows to filmed, original productions and sequential dramatic programming along with a surplus of entertainment and educational programming. As its contours expanded and its influence amongst the nation grew, television

[8] Its sequel *Crusade in the Pacific* from 1951 would do the same, going so far as to have its final episode centered on the newly erupted war in Korea thus connecting the two conflicts through an ideology of liberation.

served as a mouthpiece for promotion and later criticism of the machinations of Cold War policy and consensus.

Largely confined to documentary series for well over a decade on the air, these series enforced the traditional view of the war which highlighted the strength and moral mission of the Western Allies and promoted the need for continued intervention in the world to curb a resurgence in authoritarianism. Yet, just as television was born alongside the Cold War and would grow and evolve over the course of its history so too would its depictions of World War II as the mediators began to lose sway and the sentiment towards the Cold War shifted.

This dissertation argues that the rendition of World War II presented on television in the United States crafted an image of the war that enforced ideological precepts and rhetoric of the Cold War. It chronicles how the portrayal of World War II developed with Cold War propaganda and would shift with developments in Cold War relations. With the onset of Cold War hostilities with the declaration of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, the Berlin Blockade of that same year, and the start of the Korean War in 1950, World War II returned to prominence in the popular media as a means of reinforcing the strength and purpose of the United States. Early documentary series like *Crusade in Europe* (1949) and *Victory at Sea* (1952-53) played into this sentiment by showcasing the war as a crusade to liberate the world from fascist oppression and the American forces as being anointed to the task by a higher power. Despite casualties there was a sense of infallibility amongst the Allied leaders and a definite moral superiority to its troops who were ordinary people capable of extraordinary deeds in service to their nation and the cause of liberation. Such depictions coincided with popular rhetoric on the mission of the United States in international affairs to halt the spread of communism and ensure the future of free peoples around the world. However, as the sentiment of the nation changed with growing distrust

towards the American federal government in the late-1960s coupled with a new direction of Cold War policy under Détente in the 1970s, the depiction of the war shifted as well to reflect the grisly realities of the conflict and the fallibility of Allied military leaders as seen in *The World at War* (1975). However, by the 1980s, the depiction of the war on television would be focused almost solely on commemorations of those who fought it and reverence for their fight closer to the sentiment of the depictions of the 1950s, yet also with a more objective outlook on the realities of the war and its legacy.

As a part of television's role in propagating the war narrative, this work shows how the Cold War's influence is clearly seen in the presentation of the former wartime ally and Cold War adversary, the Soviet Union. In the United States, some of the first popular programs to populate the TV screens were programs on the war which touted a nation-centric narrative of the conflict which erased or villainized their former ally. The Soviet Union is largely ignored in television programming on the war or given minimal mention and depiction to undercut the memory of the wartime alliance. When shown the Soviets tend to be drawn in the model of the communist foe espoused in Cold War propaganda either deceitful and power-hungry or as a populace oppressed by their communist government. These depictions also adopted the technique of imparting greater empathy to the German and Japanese through either showing their leaders and forces as mere pawns in the designs of evil leaders and their forces as capable as the Americans. In the presentation of the Eastern Front this meant a glossing over of the atrocities done to the Soviet peoples or an emphasis on the role of Hitler and his closest aides in such actions. As relations shifted between the United States and the Soviet Union so too did the depiction of the Soviets. By the 1970s, as relations between the two superpowers began a new initiative of "peaceful co-existence" under a policy of structured diplomacy known as Détente leading to increased cultural

exchanges as well as attempts to promote agendas like nuclear pacification and basic human rights. Due to this atmosphere depictions of Soviet Union, particularly its people, became a less propagandistic and more balanced in American popular media. This atmosphere of co-existence and cultural understanding ultimately culminating in the first American-Soviet television co-production *The Unknown War* (1978), a documentary series devoted solely to the role of the Soviet Union in the war which reflected many of the hopes of Détente.

It also notes the role of several factors in guiding television's presentation of the war to ensure a positive image of the military, government, and legacy of the war in televisions first decade. World War II programs on television were largely beholden to three "mediators" throughout the 1950s and 1960s: the networks, sponsors and the Department of Defense. Owing to the Second Red Scare that permeated the film and television industry in the 1950s and into the 1960s, any content deemed too liberal or controversial was stricken from the airwaves whilst anyone with left-leaning sympathies was cast out of the industry through the blacklist. This produced a disposition that any presentation of the war that criticized or questioned the righteousness of the American war effort or the knowledge of its leaders was avoided for fear of attracting controversy by the networks and sponsors alike. This sentiment was furthered by the interests of the Department of Defense which television programs, like their film counterparts, were heavily dependent on. The Department of Defense became a critical resource for television due to its large inventory of archival footage from the war needed to create documentary programming, and ability to provide equipment and advisors for later drama series. This support rested on the Department of Defense's approval, which tended to be based on how it would further the image of the branch of service depicted. Thus, the need for military approval could influence the presentation of the military and the war as much as the financial interests of the

networks and sponsors. However, theses mediators began to lose their grip on television by the mid-1960s as the specter of the Red Scare rescinded and networks became less reliant on military institutions for materials.

This work's focus on documentary films stems from the audience perception of documentary as an honest depiction of history. Unlike fictional shows on the war which may effectively depict the stress of combat and moral conundrums of warfare like *Combat*! (1962-1967) or *Twelve O'Clock High* (1964-1967), the viewer knows these are fictional tales set within the war context. Likewise, few would look to the numerous service comedies like *Hogan's Heroes* (1965-1970) for their history on the experience of prisoners of war in World War II. Documentaries thus did and continue to hold a privileged position amongst viewers as accurate depictions of history. In this conception, my work draws from the scholarship of Robert Rosenstone on the public perception of historical documentary as objective "windows into history" because the audience feels as though they "can see (and, presumably, feel) what people in the past saw and felt."[9] Thus, the documentary was an important vehicle for shaping the conception of the war with television being the primary outlet to view such works by the mid-twentieth century.

The examinations offered here on the Cold War parallels propagated in World War II media adds to the scholarship on Cold War culture. While the role of television as tool of the Cold War is an emerging field with such scholarship as Lori McGuire's C*old War Entertainment Television* (2016) and *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain* (2017), edited by Kirsten Bönker, Julia Obertreis, and Sven Grampp, there has been little study on its importance in shaping and promoting the war narrative for the benefit of Cold War initiatives. Research into

[9] Robert Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Longman, 2006), 52.

the effect of the Cold War on television depictions of the Second World War has been established by Tom Engelhardt, Thomas Dougherty, and Peter C. Rollins, but their studies are largely singular with a focus on the landmark series *Victory at Sea* and not an encompassing look at the evolution of the depiction of the war on television over the course of the Cold War. Fred MacDonald's *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam* (1985) and a chapter on the relation between the military and television in Nancy E Bernhard's *U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda* (1999) detail how television programs encompassed Cold War ideology but again lack detail of development. As such this work will provide greater context to the influence and effect of the Cold War on TV programs of the war and their resulting influence.

It sheds light upon the skewed presentation of the Soviet Union's role in World War II. Despite scholarship on the propangadistic portrayal of the Soviet Union in American media during the Cold War, including Cyndy Hendershot's *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America* (2003), there has been no substantial analysis of the presentation of the contours in the depiction of Soviet Union in television portrayals of the war. In revealing the paradigms behind framing the Soviet Union, this work utilizes the theses of Hendershot in showing the separation of the Soviet peoples from the ruling authority as well as the linkage of Soviet Communism to Nazi Fascism first illustrated by Les K. Adler and Thomas Paterson in their article "Red Fascism." It also draws on the conclusions of Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davis' *The Myth on the Eastern Front* (2017) on the removal of the Soviet Union from the war narrative in American popular culture, while expanding upon this claim to illustrate how the few representations which did reach the public were skewed to mirror other depictions of the Soviet Union prevalent in the Cold War.

Furthermore, this dissertation showcases the influence of television's depiction on the public as well as the institutions that carried and couched its depictions of the war. It supports the claims of Debra Ramsay's *American Media and The Memory of World War II* (2017) which argues that the memory of World War II as a continually evolving, intricate mediated structure that operates as part of a system involving individuals, media industries, and their products. It further follows the conclusions of John Bodnar's *The "Good War" in American Memory* (2012) in locating various shapers or "mediators" in crafting the American narrative of World War II and how, at times, narratives conflicted with one another. It adds to the pervasive influence of Cold War imperatives on television as detailed in such works as Thomas Doherty's *Cold War, Cool Medium* (2003) and Michael Curtin's *The Vast Wasteland* (1995) by showing how the Red Scare's influence affected televisions depiction of the war and the mediators that guaranteed a patriotic rendition. It also borrows insights on the role of the Department of Defense in the production of films espoused in Lawrence H. Suid's *Guts and Glory: The Making of the American Military Image* (2002), expanding its argument into the medium of television which was only touched upon by Suid. It also details the role of opinions of the programs' creators, many having been veterans of the war, in the portrait of the war displayed.

The dissertation is divided into three sections, each focusing on one or two programs that embody the state of the Cold War in the period of its release and their place within the wider media of the time. The first chapter examines the seminal series *Victory at Sea* and the conditions which led to its creation. It details the rising tensions in Cold War relations which led to a rebirth of the World War II media as part of the larger war against communism. It examines the birth of television as a medium in the United States, its emergence as a commercial outlet, and its role in helping to establish the popular narrative of World War II as seen *Victory at Sea.*

The series was the first offering of television on the war to achieve widespread popular and critical acclaim. It shows how the series depiction was a product of close collaboration with the Department of Defense and the bias of its creator Henry Salomon. Salomon, an upper-class, blue-blooded member of the liberal intelligentsia of the nation, served in the U.S. Navy during the war as aid to Samuel Eliot Morrison who wrote the highly influential *History of U.S. Naval Operations during World War II* series. It shows the level of control held by Salomon in shaping the series and how it was made as a defense of American valor and the strength of the figures being persecuted under the Red and Lavender Scares. It shows how the series appeal stems from its themes of liberation, American virtue, and strength amidst the backdrop of the ongoing Korean War and several high-profile cases of communist infiltration of government as much as it does from a thriller style pacing, and a rousing original. Its appeal would lead to a slew of proposed series on the war, most of which were not made due to reservations by the Department of Defense illustrating its power in controlling the presentation of the war narrative. It becomes clear when examining these factors that there was a clear agenda of creating a laudatory, if salutatory, narrative of the war that showed it was the Untied States that was main force in victory and its ingenuity throughout was marveled. This section heavily utilizing personal papers and correspondence of Henry Salomon housed in Henry Salomon Collection of the University of Wisconsin Library as well as news articles and reviews from the period to provide a clear understanding of the perception of the creator and the perception of the viewer. It also draws from the findings of Peter C. Rollins and Gary Edgerton's seminal article "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic" and Sean Harvey's Master's Thesis "The NBC-TV Navy Project" for background history of the series production and analytical precedents of the series as well as historian Robert Dean's *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy,* Arthur M.

Schlesinger's *A Life in the 20th Century, Innocent Beginnings, 1917–1950,* and Evan Thomas and Walter Isaacson's *The Wisemen: Six Friends and the World They Made* to inform the dynamics of social class.

The second chapter examines the documentary anthology series *The Twentieth Century* (1957-1966) and how it acts as a kind of bridge between the popular Cold War consensus and the subsequent questioning of Cold War prerogatives in the 1960s. The series, an anthology style show depicting a different subject from the twentieth century each episode best encapsulates the factors that dominated television's conscious from the late-1950s and into the 1960s. Now a popular medium with massive reach it was under increasing pressure to air more programming to educate as well as entertain and promote the ideals Americans held most dearly. This amidst the rising tensions of the Cold War in the late-1950s and early-1960s with the launch of the space race, the Berlin Wall and Cuban Missile Crisis, as well as the escalating involvement in Vietnam. Although not primarily about World War II, a number of its episodes would showcase the various areas of the war and in doing show espouse a pointed interpretation of events or figures. Episodes on the Munich Accords of 1938, the D-Day Invasion, and the war on the Eastern Front all display hallmarks of Cold War ideology and served to promulgate such notions of the need for strong resilience against aggressions abroad, the superiority of American forces, and the evils of the Soviet communist regime. Its portrayal of the war was again aided by the Department of Defense and the network, but also affected to a greater extent by the role of the sponsor as seen in the producers' relationship with Prudential Insurance. However, it would alter its portrayals of some aspects of the American military's infallibility and the portrayal of the Soviet peoples by the end of its run as a greater contemplation of Cold War logic was afoot in the nation. This chapter owes a large debt to Richard C. Bartone's doctoral dissertation study on the production

and presentation of the series, his interviews with those involved in it, and the sources he utilized from the CBS archives now incommunicado. It also utilizes contemporary interviews from various newspapers, episode scripts and research reports on their topic as well as press releases and write-ups by CBS housed in the University of Wisconsin Library's Burton Benjamin and Isaac Kleinerman Collections.

The third chapter examines the documentary series *The Unknown War*, the first American-Soviet television co-production made to address the lack of the Soviet contribution in the American war narrative. It showcases the changing dynamics of the Cold War with the fallout from the Vietnam War and the Détente dynamic of international relations relations between the West and the East in the 1970s. This produced a wariness of previous depictions of the war in the popular media and amidst the end of American infallibility, and disillusionment with the objectives of the Cold War. The previous mediators of the depictions of war from patriotism to the Department of Defense and sponsors all had less sway by this point due to a myriad of factors. While the 1970s saw a decrease in the portrayal of the war in the U.S. media, some film renditions became more cynical with examples like *Catch-22* (1970) and *Tora, Tora, Tora* (1970). However, the new Cold War dynamic would show itself front and center with the *The Unknown War*. The documentary series was made thanks to the opening of the American television industry to independent producers at the beginning of the 1970s as well as a wider international trade of television programming which emerged between Eastern and Western Europe as well as North America by the end of the 1960s. Trying to imitate the style of *Victory at Sea* with big names like musician Rod McKuen as the composer and actor Burt Lancaster as host and narrator, *The Unknown War* was made to appeal to an American audience whilst also working to promote the war established war narrative of the Soviet Union where the "Cult of the

Great Patriotic War" had taken hold. It posits the themes of détente in its rendition of history, advocating for co-existence in its telling of the history of the Eastern Front. The series made as a remedy to the gap in knowledge produced by the Cold War in the presentation of World War II would be the victim of the re-ignition of hostility between the United States and Soviet Union following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of 1979, roughly a year after the series initial airing. This chapter utilizes series write-ups from both American and Soviet publications at the time of its production as well as interviews conducted with the participants and materials from the Isaac Kleinerman Collection of the University of Wisconsin and his Oral History at the Columbia University Library.

It concludes with an examination of the rehabilitation of American "victory culture" in the 1980s under Reagan but a drought in representations of World War II. It will further note how the rise of cable television channels and the re-examination of the legacy of the World War II generation and the actions of the war led to a dilution of a potent World War II television product for the people to take hold of. The end of the Cold War in 1991 would, however, not end the Cold War's influence on the presentation of the war as products made during the Cold War as well as themes highlighted at the time became an indistinguishable part of the war's image to the American public.

My hope is to show how the Cold War influenced the portrayal of World War II Americans viewed on their televisions. Understanding the means and varieties in which the war was presented and how it was affected by the pressures of the Cold War give a greater understanding of how it was shaped to re-enforce the "Good War" archetype engineered in the aftermath of the conflict with the rising Cold War tensions. It also shows the influence of these representations on the public perception of the war and how it can still be felt today.

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Television Series
Crusade in Europe

CHAPTER 2 *VICTORY AT SEA*: A COLD WARRIOR'S TALE OF AMERICAN TRIUMPHALISM

No other television documentary had the impact on the popular perception of World War II upon its premiere as NBC's *Victory at Sea*. Over twenty-six weeks from the fall of 1952 until the spring of 1953, the series made in cooperation with the United States Navy showed its audience, most of whom had lived through the war, the integral role of the Allied naval forces. Created by Henry Salomon who co-wrote the entire series with Richard Hanser, narrated by actor Leonard Graves, directed by M. Clay Adams, edited by Isaac Kleinerman, with a score composed by Broadway legend Richard Rodgers and Robert Russell Bennett the series took viewers from the Battle of the Atlantic and the Attack on Pearl Harbor to the Liberation of Europe and Atomic Bombing of Japan, the series showcased the incredible struggle of the Allied cause from the jaws of defeat to the greatest victory in history of mankind.

The series instantly garnered a devoted audience who made an event out of planning each episode of the series' twenty-six week run into their schedules. Publicity director of NBC Charles A. Hanson recalled how the show engendered collectivity with communities forming "Victory at Sea clubs" to gather and watch the show. "Audience of about 300 gets together every Sunday afternoon [3:00P.M.] at the Metropolitan Club in Washington to watch the show," claimed Hanson, "I have a letter from a bartender in Camden N.J. who says there's a crowd that comes into his place every week to see it." Enthusiasm for the series was so great that when NBC took over *Victory at Sea*'s timeslot one week to show the opera "Trouble in Tahiti," their

regional offices were flooded with angry phone calls, Their New York office recorded 2,700 calls, Detroit nearly 500 in one hour, and Chicago and Washington, D.C. 600 and 525 calls respectively.[10]

The series immediate popularity may have stemmed from its novelty. Being one of the first documentary series designed specifically for the medium of television, its format was unprecedented for its time. In production for roughly three years with roughly a years' worth of negotiations to garner the cooperation of the U.S. Navy, over six million feet of film culled from twelve countries was crafted into twenty-six half hour episodes at a cost of $500,000. Its matching of unseen footage of the war to a rousing original score with many scenes playing for minutes without any narration gave episodes an unprecedented cinematic effect which enraptured the viewer. Furthermore, it premiered at a time when television was just beginning to find its groove as a medium. As cultural historian Phillip D. Beidler notes, "TV, already familiar as a commercial medium having achieved popular success, but at the same time [was] still trying to carve out a distinct intellectual niche."[11] That is that outside of entertainments like *I Love Lucy* (1952-1956), *Dragnet* (1951-1959), and various live-action showcases, educational programming in the documentary vein was barely in its infancy with public affairs series like *See It Now* (1951-1958), just emerging on the tube. In light of this *Victory at Sea* seemed even more novel to the medium, contributing to its rapturous acclaim and outstanding audiences.

In addition to the public interest, *Victory at Sea* was showered with laurels by an array of groups and organizations. It earned 10 awards after its initial NBC run, including Sylvania's Grand Award for TV, the Freedom Foundation George Washington Medal, a George Foster

[10] Gordon Allison, "TV: 'Victory at Sea' Strikes Close to Home: Veterans See Themselves, Many People Re-Live Emotional War Experiences," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 15, 1953.
[11] Philip D. Beidler, "Making a Production Out of It: Victory at Sea and American Remembering," *Prospects* 22, Oct. 1997, 523-524.

Peabody Special Award, Christopher Award for "outstanding achievement," and an Emmy from the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for "Best Public Affairs Program."[12] Additionally, the U.S. Navy bestowed its Distinguished Public Service Award, its highest civilian honor, to NBC's Robert Sarnoff, creator Henry Salomon, and composer Richard Rodgers for having, "portrayed life and combat on the seas, under the seas and in the air, bring to millions a better understanding of the role of sea power in World War II."[13]

When the series entered syndication at the end of 1953 it was immediately purchased by numerous markets. Within five years it was sold in 125 markets,[14] and 205 markets ten years after its entering syndication. By its tenth year in syndication, it had been re-run continuously in numerous areas; running 14 times in Oklahoma City, 13 times New York and Los Angeles, and 10 times in the Bay area not including its initial airing on NBC[15] and still run on public television in various regions into the 1970s.[16] Additionally, having premiered simultaneously in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, and Cuba, the series was sold throughout the world including, ironically, Japan where it experienced an incredible run until the late-1960s.[17]

If this was not enough, the series had a second life in 1954 as a feature film. Created from the same material as the original but containing some new edits, scenes, and narrator [Alexander Scourby] the 13-hour series was compressed to an hour and thirty-eight minutes for the big screen. Released by United Artists, it earned respectable if less enthusiastic reviews and

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[12] "Victory at Sea' Still Going Strong," *Broadcasting*, January 13, 1958, p. 54.
[13] Press Department of the National Broadcasting Company, "U.S. Navy Presents Its Distinguished Public Service Award, Highest Honor for Civilians, to Robert W. Sarnoff, Henry Salomon, and Richard Rodgers for 'Victory at Sea' Series on NBC," Print, January 14, 1953.
[14] "Victory at Sea' Still Going Strong," *Broadcasting*, January 13, 1958, p. 54.
[15] J. Fred MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1985), 113.
[16] "'Victory at Sea' Naval Story to be Televised Locally*," Beckley Post-Herald The Raleigh Register* (Beckley, West Virginia), April 20, 1976, p. 32.
[17] Philip D. Beidler, "Making a Production Out of It: Victory at Sea and American Remembering," *Prospects* 22, Oct. 1997, 527.

unimpressive box office returns.[18] This version was later broadcast on NBC on December 30, 1960, as a part of their *Project XX* series, also created by Salomon.[19] The series would also be adapted as a picture book by Doubleday&Co. in 1959. Also titled *Victory at Sea*, it used narration from the series as a bridge for the collection of shot enlargements from various episodes, providing a visual reference guide that fans could keep on their bookshelves in the days before home video.

Victory at Sea's impressive success and its lasting power on television can be attributed to several factors including the novelty and craftsmanship in its presentation of the history of the war in a documentary format. Such was noted in several reviews during its initial broadcast. Arthur Knight of *The Saturday Review*, found the series "a stirring and dramatic demonstration of the power of the film medium to mold raw fact into artistic, meaningful, even memorable statement."[20] *TV Guide,* naming *Victory at Sea* its "Program of the Week" commented: "Much of the show's success is due to the way Salomon and his crew have edited the film for TV, rather than using TV merely to screen it."[21] *Harper's Magazine*'s review of the series in their October 1952 issue provides a deeper analysis of the series impact by explaining the issues of presenting documentary effectively on television:

> When one edits film for a screen which is a foot-by-a-foot instead or fifteen-by-fifteen, one loses first of all detail, both visual and psychological. The effect has to be bold and brutal in order to communicate at all. The music is quite frankly more obvious (and meant, unfortunately, to be played louder) than it would ordinarily be in a movie theater or on the stage.… The spoken narrative has to pursue simplicity with a single-minded

[18] Isaac Kleinerman, the editor and credited director of the film version, contends the film failed due to a poor distribution model, opening in the wrong theaters for its intended audience. Nonetheless, he notes that in Paris it ran for roughly a year and a half in one cinema on the Champs-Elysees, and was revived three years later at the same cinema.
[19] John P. Shanley, "TV: War Documentary: 90-Minute Condensation of 'Victory at Sea series presented by NBC," *New York Times*, December 30, 1960.
[20] Arthur Knight, "Victory at Sea," *Saturday Review*, 10 July 1954, p. 26.
[21] "Program of the Week" *TV Guide*. April 17-23, 1953, pg. 13.

> devotion. There can be no irony or offhand informality, relying on the interest inherent in the visual image to bridge the gap. [22]

The reviewer contends that *Victory at Sea*'s strength lies in its acknowledgement of these issues and crafting its programs accordingly. "What 'Victory at Sea' can show," the review notes, "is a growing comprehension of television's peculiar ground rules and an increasing ability to do this kind of thing as a matter of course." Ultimately, the reviewer found the series so exemplary in its ability to "tell a story with a moral" as another sign of television's capabilities, "as a means of conveying ideas, it is forbiddingly potent."

The series unanimous praise further attributed its success to its creator, Henry Salmon and his novel approach to history. Salomon, the thirty-five-year-old Ivy League educated writer, being a complete novice to the field of television seemed nothing less than a *wunderkind* to those reviewing the series. Having served in the Navy for roughly six years, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Commander, Salomon was routinely cited for his service as an aide to Rear Admiral Samuel Eliot Morison in his fifteen-volume, quasi-official *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II.* Such pedigree gave the series an added zeal of authenticity that few reviewers seemed to question as Salomon seemingly had an intimate understanding of the history he was presenting.

Yet, it was not for the series ability to convey the history of the war that it was praised, it was its ability to present the history as a drama. Bernard DeVoto, an influential historian and columnist who won a Pulitzer Prize (1948) for his trilogy of histories on the American West, was one of the few who noted the series distinction between history and drama as he praised Salomon not as a historian but as a dramatist. "He is, in critical terminology, the dramatist," claims

[22] "V for Video," *Harper's Magazine*, October 1952, p. 99.

DeVoto in his "Easy Chair" column of *Harper's Magazine,* "For it is a drama, a work of the imagination, art of a high order." As such, DeVoto admits it is not a wholly faithful display of the history of the war, even stating that the term "documentary" should not be applied to the series in which: "Documentary material was transformed into the drama on exalted themes."[23]

DeVoto also keenly highlighted the series for its importance as a Cold War morality tale. Salomon's strength, DeVoto notes, was his ability to uses the history like "historical novelists and dramatists" to craft an emotional, harrowing, horrific, yet hopeful tale around the theme of liberation. "The word 'liberation' has lost the force it had ten years ago but gets it back when you look at 'Victory at Sea,'" heralded DeVoto, "Each of the ty-six programs in the great war serial evokes the most powerful and most profound emotions, but the sight of deliverance moves the beholder more deeply than anything else." In short, the series as a drama using the history of the war to impart an important, timely message to the viewer on the precociousness of liberty and a reminder of America's purpose to promote and uphold the freedom of the world in the face of totalitarian forces so prescient in the ongoing Cold War. DeVoto even states that Americans "forget too easily" their role as defenders of liberty and recommended that everyone watch the series once a year as a reminder, for members of Congress twice a year.[24]

As DeVoto elicits *Victory at Sea* worked to advance the themes brandished by American officials in defense of the Cold War. It utilized World War II to press Cold War themes such as liberation, democratic victory over totalitarianism, the supremacy of American resourcefulness, the virtue of the Western Alliance and more. The series was, according to contemporary film theorist William A. Bluem, designed to create "worlds of imagination" - to design and create larger statements reflecting universal truths inherent within the images themselves, yet organized

[23] Bernard DeVoto, "The Easy Chair: Victory at Sea," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1954.
[24] Bernard DeVoto, "The Easy Chair: Victory at Sea," *Harper's Magazine*, June 1954.

to reflect truths the documentarist wishes to emphasize.[25] It did this through its use of moralist language to describe the happenings of the war, its use of a musical score, and its construction of episodes to highlight "action" to better draw the viewer into its representation of history. Indeed, the episodes were designed in such a way to provide only essential information on a campaign, event, or combatant to restrict any nuance in its narrative. Such includes its presentation of the Allies and Axis Powers in distinct categories of "good" and "evil" ignoring historical evidence which could question this, excising the role of the Soviet Union, and its emphasis on dramatics in its presentation of history.

Such themes advanced by *Victory at Sea,* were closely aligned with the personal beliefs and values held by the series creator Henry Salmon. Salomon, called "Pete" by his friends, was the son of an old-stock, upper-class Rhode Island family, whose privileged upbringing at preparatory schools and Harvard University instilled him with a sense of duty and American superiority. Such an upbringing was common amongst many men of Solomon's social standing, many of whom would create the Cold War policy which dominated international affairs for the next half-century, what historian Robert Dean dubbed the "Imperial Brotherhood." His experiences during the war, his contact various officers and officials, and participation in writing the naval history of World War II endowed Salomon with a certain outlook on the war which flowed into the orthodox view of the United States' role in waging the Cold War as seen in the series of Cold War maxims. Indeed, in bringing the series to life Salomon's vision was remarkably uncorrupted by the influence of the television network or Navy who agreed with his vision and equally reaped the fruits of its success. As such his vision of Cold War prerogatives is what comes through on screen.

[25] William A. Bluem, *Documentary in American Television: Form, Function, Method*, (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1965), 141.

The ideals heralded by the series were nonetheless greatly appealing to an American public caught in a seemingly endless quagmire of the Korean War coupled with domestic tumult stemming from the uncovering of communist infiltration posited by figures like Senator Joseph McCarthy. At a time when many thought America was on the ropes, the series offered a grand display of attaining victory from the grips of defeat against a seemingly unstoppable opponent. *Victory at Sea* helped ease American concerns and validate any fears they may have had concerning the righteousness of their plight and, for veterans, the importance of their service in the war.

Victory at Sea's enormous success had far-reaching effects on the presentation of the war on television. The series was also a foundational work for the future historical documentary programming, beginning with creator Henry Salomon's follow-up series *Project XX* (1955-1970) which reunited the development team of *Victory at Sea*. Furthermore, its continued popularity helped to reinforce the "traditional" war narrative which was heavily promoted in many works of media at this time as seen in the boom World War II films throughout the 1950s. At the same time, numerous proposals for similar documentary series materialized, but the success of *Victory at Sea* spurred the creation of divisions within the Department of Defense to handle the medium's presentation of the military as it did with films. This meant scrupulous vetting by the Department of Defense limited the amount of World War II programming for a time. Since *Victory at Sea* had covered most of the war and the Department of Defense was adamant about not covering the same ground again for fear that it would diminish its appeal and thus not aid its agenda. The eventual successor to *Victory at Sea* came on another network, CBS's *Air Power* (1956-1957) which utilized a similar style yet managed to differentiate itself by extending the historical purvey past the war to the importance of aircraft in the contemporary Cold War.

Henry Salomon

Henry Salomon's background is an overlooked aspect in the creation of *Victory at Sea*'s point of view on the war. Yet his biography helps explain both the success of the series and its cold war themes. Born on March 17, 1917, in Providence, Rhode Island, he was the first of three children to Lucia Agnell (Cathwell) Salomon and Henry Salomon Sr. Born into an upper-class family with a home in Little Compton, Newport, Salomon received an education befitting one of his social standing aimed at endowing him with a sense of duty and social standing. His upbringing mirrored many of the creators and practitioners of Cold War domestic and foreign policy.

The Salomon family were a prominent family in the Rhode Island upper-class. His father had graduated from Brown University and Harvard Law School and held a number of prominent positions including director and member of the executive board of the American Wringer Company of Woonsocket, vice president of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, vice president of the Title Guarantee Company, director of the Providence Boys' Club, and a member of the Rhode Island School of Design and the Rhode Island Historical Society.[26] His mother was an active socialite from New York and an active member of several progressive women's groups including the Independent Coalition of American Women[27] and the Rhode Island Birth Control League.[28] Coming from such a family, Henry Salomon Jr. had an insulated upbringing amongst members of his class. Isaac Kleinerman described Salomon as, a "professional dilettante" and recounted one occasion when Salomon came to his modest, middle-class home for dinner. After

[26] "Obituary: Deaths 1943," *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine*, Nov. 1943, pg. 35. November 1943 | Dartmouth Alumni Magazine.
[27] "Addressing Gathering at Mrs. K.S. Safe's Home: National Head of Independent Coalition of American Women Speaks on Organization," *Newport Mercury*, Aug. 28, 1936, pg. 5.
[28] "Birth Control League Election," *Newport Mercury*, Nov 9, 1934, pg. 8.

an evening with Kleinerman, his wife, and two daughters, Salomon thanked Kleinerman profusely for the evening and told Kleinerman it was the first time he had ever been to a home like Kleinerman's as he never associated with people of his class. "Really, the way I was raised," Salomon explained, "is that even the dentist was like the cobbler and the mailman, you didn't associate with him socially."[29]

Salomon received an education befitting a boy of his standing, composed of private preparatory schools, Ivy League universities, and metropolitan social clubs; in Salomon's case the Phillips Academy Andover, Harvard University, and the Harvard Club amongst others.[30] Such schools were where the sons of the nation's monied elite would be indoctrinated in a masculine code of strength, loyalty, stoicism, service, and active engagement in the struggles of the nation. On a deeper level they were the first site in a larger model of social relations and ideological cultivation of an imperial stoic masculinity. In his book *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*, historian Robert Dean notes how these were sites of a specific kind of imperial masculine socialization tied to patterns of class and education, "Boarding schools taught an ideology of 'manly character' and patrician service and sacrifice" Dean maintains, "University fraternal secret societies were important to the construction of a sense of upper-class masculine privilege and power. Metropolitan men's clubs, evidence suggests, served to maintain elite male solidarity both socially and professionally."[31] These cultural milieus formed between the late-nineteenth century and the First World War amidst imperial expansion and shifting domestic politics, which retained its core through the

[29] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[30] William H. Keogh, "The Navy, TV, and Salomon," *Providence (RI) Evening Bulletin*, 1951.
[31] Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy.* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 17.

onset of the following world war, produced generations of a patrician class (by birth or assimilation of values) of civilian national security managers who populated the federal government after 1940.[32]

Beginning at Philips Andover Salomon was brought up by a model of education, largely inspired by the British public school, which taught the "the stoic virtues of manliness and service to the state."[33] Instructors using lofty rhetoric and high ideals drawn from Protestant Christian tradition and Manifest Destiny, imparted a sense of responsibility to take up the struggle of advancing not only their minds and bodies, but doing so in the service of the state. This environment emphasized conformity and pride in a certain notion of masculinity in which the muscular male body stood for, according to Dean, "the aggressive defense of boundaries; for the patricians, it stood for a resurgent defense of class, race, empire, and Christianity.[34] The code of masculinity instilled in these young men a rigid character stressing conformity and strength when facing conflict that would serve as guiding principles for the rest of their lives.

Salomon would follow through on this model of social progression, entering Harvard in the fall of 1935, the same class as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. who would be a key advisor in the Kennedy White House. Theodore F. White, in his memoir *A Life in the Twentieth Century* divided his class into three categories – "white shoe boys," "gray men" and "meatball." "White shoe boys" were those from upper-class families who had attended private preparatory schools like Groton, Andover, and St Paul's before their matriculation. "Gray men" were the middle-class, public-school boys, not of the most prominent families, but still well-to-do. Finally, the "meatballs," which White counted himself among, were those Harvard day students attending the

[32] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 13.
[33] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood,* 18.
[34] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 29.

university on scholarship from largely lower-class Irish, Jewish or Italian families."[35] Salomon was a "white shoe boy" in the Harvard student body which also included John Roosevelt, son of the president, Benjamin Welles, whose father Sumner was Roosevelt's undersecretary of state, and future president John F. Kennedy. Despite its growing inclusion, Harvard remained a bastion of blue-blood legacies and traditions with Schlesinger noting in his memoirs how despite the Great Depression, "Harvard House had table service with printed menus. Students wore jackets and neckties."[36]

Although, Salomon claimed that he took more interest in his drama writing courses than in the classes for his history major, one professor who made an indelible impression on Salomon was historian Samuel Eliot Morison. Morison was both an embodiment of the Ivy-League intellectual, upper-class, and great proponent of the university's tradition. Born into the Eliot family of Boston which had amassed a fortune in the shipping trade by the late eighteenth century and held a reputation as a primary contributor to the city's cultural institutions, Morison attended the prestigious St. Pauls preparatory school before beginning his studies at Harvard in 1904 when his relative Charles William Elliot was president of the university. Having received his doctorate studying under luminaries of the then nascent profession including Albert Hart, Edward Channing, and the Frederick Jackson Turner, Morison was endowed with a desire to broaden the horizons of the profession thanks to Turner's tutelage while at the same time holding a strong tie to the historical regalia of the great men and history understanding. After having spent much of the twenties in Europe, Morison's return to Harvard in the 1930s was inaugurated with his history of the university for its three-hundred-year anniversary, *Three Centuries of*

[35] Arthur M. Schlesinger, *A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917-1950* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), 114.
[36] Schlesinger, *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, 113.

Harvard (1936) which heralded the university's role in the development of the United States and praised its approach to education. In Morison's estimation, the objective of a Harvard education was not to provide proper training to practice a specific trade, but instead training for entrance into "a society of scholars" and an appreciation for the principles of "*veritas*," or "divine truth," of accuracy and fidelity in all fields.[37]

While Salomon's schooling shaped his sense of morality and duty in the world, his experiences in the war would provide both the material with which he would construct the series as well as a validation of the principles under which he was raised. According to Dean military service in a time of war was a natural extension of the code of masculinity imparted to upper-class boys in their schooling as "the boarding-school model of masculine virtue and heroic sacrifice could receive its most significant and visible test in battle."[38] Joseph Alsop, influential journalist and Washington insider for over thirty years and similar member of the upper-class preparatory school system, believed military service was the culmination of lifelong sequence of character-building exercises, begun in childhood when he was "unceremoniously packed off to Groton."[39] As such, when the United States entered the war, "Networks of elite men in positions of power in the wartime 'establishment' promoted the pattern of upper-class voluntarism, just as the statesmen/investment banker/clubmen had done during World War I."[40] Young men like Salomon was one of many young men who enlisted out of a service to his nation as well as his class which used wartime service as validation of their fitness to govern, many serving in top positions in the Kennedy and Johnson national security bureaucracy.

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[37] Gregory M. Pfitzer, *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World: In Quest of a New Parkman*. Boston, (MA: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 124.
[38] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, 35.
[39] Joseph W. Alsop, *I've Sen the Best of It: The Memoirs of Joseph W. Alsop* (New York: Norton, 1992), 316-322.
[40] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood,* 40.

Salomon decided to enlist in the Navy in March 1942, beginning his lifelong association with the Armed Services. Taken in with the rank of yeoman, Salomon was assigned stateside to the office of the Secretary of the Navy in Washington, D.C. before being made an ensign that Fall. As an ensign Salomon initially worked for the Office of Public Relations, producing, and writing scripts for the Navy-sponsored radio network series "The Victory Hour."[41] It was around this time that he re-connected with his old professor Samuel Eliot Morison who was in the early stages of constructing his magnum opus.

Salomon's time in the war would likely have been unremarkable had it not been for Morison's intervention. Morison, an early proponent of American involvement in the war and avid sailor who had personally resailed Christopher Columbus' routes to the America's for the biography *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* (1942), was commissioned as a lieutenant commander in the Naval Reserve as the Navy's wartime historian to record the history of the war as it was happening. His work began in the Summer of 1942 on the destroyer U.S.S. *Guinevere* escorting a supply convoy from New York to England and back. Morison was back in Washington, D.C. that fall after having taken part in the Allied invasion of North Africa - Operation TORCH.[42] Encamped at the headquarters of Admiral Hewitt's Amphibious Force Atlantic Fleet at the Hotel Nansemond, Norfolk to write his volume on the campaign in the Atlantic, Morison and Salomon would meet from time to time for meals and social gatherings.[43] It was during one such dinner in late September that Morison asked Salomon if he, "would like to go to sea with him as his aide."[44]

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[41] "R.I. Native Directs Navy TV Film," *The Providence Sunday Journal*, July 20, 1952.
[42] Pfitzer, *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World*, 171-179.
[43] Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service* (Annapolis, MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 222.
[44] Henry Peter Salomon, Letter to Mother, (University of Wisconsin Archives, Madison, WI, Sept. 24, 1942), 1.

As a part of Morison's staff, Salomon would spend the next five years helping him write his history of U.S. Naval Operations during the war. Morison's wartime staff, almost all handpicked by Morison himself, was largely composed of Morison's former students and members of the "Imperial Brotherhood" who would go on to have careers in government or business after the war. Amongst them was Lt. George M. Elsey, USNR, a Princeton graduate who had also studied under Morison in the Harvard Graduate School, who after serving as a Naval advisor to Roosevelt would serve as Assistant to Clark Clifford, the Special Counsel to the President, 1947–49; an Administrative Assistant to President Truman, 1949–51; and in multiple positions in the Mutual Security Agency, 1951-61.[45]

Abiding by Morison's belief that "if one is to write history, one must relive it (as he did on the Harvard Columbus Expedition) or, still better, live it, as in this war" Salomon and the other members of Morison's staff utilized a system of living the history they were writing.[46] As Morison had literally sailed Columbus's routes to the Americas in a replica Spanish Galleon, he now tasked himself and his underlings with experiencing the war as it happened on the ships in the thick of the action. Their method for this "living history" entailed shipping off to participate in an Allied naval operation then return to a naval base, largely "Cincpac-Cincpoa" at Makalapa, Oahu, Hawaii, to read through the action reports from the operation and write a preliminary draft before going onto the next operation.[47]

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[45] An exception was Donald R. Martin of Troy, NY who only had a high school education when joining the Navy but distinguished himself, according to Salomon, as the only yeoman in Norfolk who could read Morison's handwriting.

[46] Henry Salomon Jr., "Historian at War: Chronicling American Naval Operations in World War II" (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1947), quoted in Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service*. Annapolis, (MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 221.

[47] Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service*. Annapolis, (MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 214-215.

Salomon spent most of the war in the Pacific Theater. From 1943 to 1944, he covered the work of naval convoys from New York to Rio Di Janeiro, participated in the landings at Kwajalein and then Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands as well as Bougainville, the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, and Australia, 'breaking the Bismarcks barrier.' In 1945 he participated in both the Battle of Leyte Gulf, and the Battle of Okinawa.[48] Interspersed between these voyages he would return to "Cincpac-Cincpoa" to deliver his notes and respective battle reports, help Morison with his present draft of one of the volumes, or interview various American officers returning from a campaign to garner their perspective on what they witnessed, minus a few stints in a military hospital for a tumor amongst other ailments. For his service he was awarded the American Area Campaign Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with (4) bronze stars, the Philippine Liberation Ribbon with (2) stars, and the World War II Victory Medal.[49]

Salomon found validation of the "imperial brotherhood" virtues of masculinity he was raised with in the Navy. The service's emphasis on attributes like honor, tradition, and comradery echoed those Salomon had been raised to respect. As such, Solomon held a great admiration for the Navy, later remarking, "Like Harvard, the Navy becomes a small place if you stay around long enough."[50] He clearly expressed a deep admiration for the naval officers he met and sailed under, especially Vice-Admiral Theodore Stark Williamson whose flagship *Mount Olympus* Salomon sailed on during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, calling it a "high privilege" to have

[48] Henry Salomon Jr., "Historian at War: Chronicling American Naval Operations in World War II" (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1947), quoted in Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service*. Annapolis, (MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 222-227.
[49] W.C. Palmer, Letter to V.R. Murphy, Director of Naval History, "Campaign Medals and Operation-Engagement Stars to Captain S.E. Morison, USNR, Lieutenant Commander H.D. Reck, USNR, Lieutenant Commander H. Salomon, Jr., USNR Award of.," Henry Salomon Collection, University of Wisconsin Archives, Madison, WI, March 13, 1946.
[50]Henry Salomon Jr., "Historian at War: Chronicling American Naval Operations in World War II" (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1947), quoted in Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service*. Annapolis, (MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 227.

personal contact with Admiral Wilkinson and "the other great military and naval leaders responsible for liberating the Philippines.[51] A number of those he met in the service were of a similar background to himself and Morison's naval history staff of former Harvard pupils, including Wilkinson, who was a schoolmate of Morison's at St. Paul's, and Lt. Commander Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. On another level the war also provided Salomon with a better understanding of the men outside of his social and economic status. Isaac Kleinerman, reminisced about a story Salomon had told him about his first time out to sea in the Navy:

One day he went down to the wardroom for coffee, and there were some other officers there, and none of them had their jackets on, so the insignia wasn't showing so not knowing the insignia, but the branch of service, he could tell what the person did. He sat and talked to this other guy at the table. Very intelligent, very bright guy. And I finally said to him 'Sir, what do you do aboard ship?' And he said, 'I am the ship's dentist.' And he said he, 'I was horrified.'"[52] What horrified Salomon was the fact that this man, a dentist, was such an intelligent man. In Solomon's upbringing a dentist was akin to a mechanic.

After the war's end, Salomon would remain in the Navy for a few more years assisting Morison with writing his *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*. From February to May 1946, Salomon was sent to Japan as a personal representative of the Secretary of the Navy and the director of Naval Intelligence to interview Japanese officers and collect documents to gain an understanding of the Japanese perspective of the war. There he saw firsthand the destruction of the Allied bombing raids and the squalor in which the people now

[51] Henry Salomon Jr., "Historian at War: Chronicling American Naval Operations in World War II" (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1947), quoted in Robert Shenk, *Authors at Sea: Modern American Writers Remember Their Naval Service*. Annapolis, (MY: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 226-227.
[52] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

lived, which gave Salomon a mixed sense of pity and respect for the Japanese people. It was also in Japan that he learned much more on the Axis side of the conflict in his interviews with various officers, including the former German Naval attaché to Japan. "I had Japanese naval officers reconstruct various battles," he later explained, "I found out, for instance, that the talk about an invasion of Australia and New Zealand was mainly a dream on the part of the Japanese…We also discovered that their pilot training program was their Achilles heel; once the first line of pilots was gone, they had no good replacements, as we had in our Navy."[53]

Upon his return, he and the rest of Morison's staff were stationed at the Naval War College in his hometown of Newport, Rhode Island. Salomon remained an indispensable aide in Morison's research and writing as Morison's personal secretary. Morison's regular operating procedure was to draft each volume in a rough outline by hand, on yellow legal pads, carefully noting all gaps in his information, and then assign one of his research assistants to fill in said gaps. Some staff members were encouraged to help craft chapters, which Morison would carefully proofread and rewrite for his own purposes. These rewrites were then typed up by yeoman Don Martin and afterwards sent to the Naval Command for proofreading and finally to the publishers [Little, Brown, and Company].[54] Salomon remained a member of Morison's staff until February 8, 1948, leaving with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.[55]

Salomon took much from his tenure under Morison. In crafting a narrative, he adopted Morison's preference for incorporating literary and journalistic devices in the presentation of history to make the medium more accessible to the public and maintaining their interest. He also took from Morison a belief in upholding a reverence for the leaders and traditions of a nation's

[53] "R.I. Native Directs Navy TV Film," *The Providence Sunday Journal,* July, 20, 1952.
[54] Pfitzer, *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World,* 184-185.
[55] Salomon made substantial contributions to the *History of the United Sates Naval Operations in World War II,* Volumes I, III, IV, VI, VII, XII, XIII, and XIV.

history as a vanguard against ideological attacks in its institutions. By the end of the decade, Morison moved toward the consensus school of history. Developed from the patriotic discourse of Americans to present a united image of the country to a world divided between the ideologies of capitalism and communism it, like the "end of ideology" philosophy, appealed to "homogeneity, continuity, and national character." As such leaders like Dwight Eisenhower and Chester Nimitz were given heroic treatments by the middle volumes of Morison's histories and in Salomon's television work which removed nearly all scruples of the wartime leaders.

On another level Morison imparted on his aides much of his worldview for the nation which centered on remaining involved in world affairs and prepared to act. According to Pfitzer the theme of continuous preparedness for conflict is a "leitmotif" in all volumes of the series.[56] While pointing out the unpreparedness of the Navy for war and its deficiencies early in the war from unskilled sailors to amateurish landings, poor reconnaissance and lack of communication and in-fighting between the military branches and allied forces, he uses these as evidence for the essentiality of a strong standing Navy.

Morison's amplification of the principles and mores Salomon was raised under can be seen in a letter he wrote to the editor of the *New York Times* in 1948 to advocate a statue of Winston Churchill be erected in appreciation for the British statue of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in Grosvenor Square. In this letter Salomon begins with a thesis on his patrician understanding of aid when noting Roosevelt's Lend Lease: "aid of any sort is of little value unless the recipient is worthy and has the ability to use external help in a manner which not only allows him to obtain his objectives but at the same time allows him to mold his actions and decisions in accordance

[56] Pfitzer, *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World,* 186.

with society's highest moral aspirations."[57] As such, it was time for Americans to perpetuate their "comradeship and gratitude" with a monument to Winston Churchill whom he viewed as the embodiment of the virtues of masculinity and toughness Salomon was brought up to believe. "It was he who flinched not once when the hour of battle came" heralded Salomon, "With courage and determination he took up the fight with the inadequate weapons thrust on him by bewildered vassals of appeasement." Furthermore, erecting such a monument in Churchill's lifetime would affirm that, "true greatness is recognized in this life and that by diligence, tenacity of purpose, and adherence to high ideals each [young American] has a similar opportunity for unselfish public service and leadership in a free society."[58] Here the "Imperial Brotherhood," notion of American strength in service to country and upholding bravery and resolve in the face of conflict are on clear display.[59]

After leaving the Navy, Salomon took his savings and embarked upon a tour of Western Europe in from late-February to early-April of 1948. Planned in the model of the "Grand Tours" of the 19th century, Salomon also saw the trip as, "an opportunity to reflect on the world and try and get a certain amount of objectivity."[60] It would indeed be a learning experience for Salomon who got to witness firsthand the rising tensions of the Cold War. Salomon had been a New Deal Democrat for much of his adult life, noting to a colleague in late 1946 how the falling out of Henry Wallace with President Truman was, "the chief topic of conversation everywhere but few

[57] Salomon, P. Henry, Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1948, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 2, pg. 1.
[58] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, pg. 3
[59] Salomon received an invitation from the English-Speaking Union of the United States about the starting of "Churchill Fund" to build the said monument, however no monument to Churchill would be erected in the United States until statue of Churchill by William M. McVey was unveiled installed outside of the British Embassy in Washington, D.C. on April 6, 1966. *The New York Times*, never printed his letter.
[60] Salomon, Henry P. Letter to Philip H. Bethune, January 12, 1948, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 2, Folder 1.

of the intelligent people adhere to Mr. Wallace's point of view. At the moment one is inclined to believe that what was left of the New Deal dies with Mr. Wallace's ouster from the cabinet."[61] Although never privy to the philosophy of communism, the threat it seemed to pose to world order seemed bloated to him for a time as he and many held out hope for some type of accommodation with the Soviet Union. But by the time of his trip to Europe he could not dismiss the rising concerns over the specter of communism and his interactions with those throughout his travels seemed to inform his perspective.

After sojourns in England and France, Salomon traveled to Rome in the last week of March, less than three weeks before the 1948 Italian general elections of April 18, a pivotal battleground of the early Cold War. Following the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia of February 1948, the Truman administration feared if the leftist coalition of the Popular Democratic Front (*Fronte Democratico Popolare per la libertà, la pace, il lavoro*, FDP), composed of the Italian Communist Party (*Partito Comunista Italiano*, PCI) and the Italian Socialist Party (*Partito Socialista Italiano*, PSI) won a majority of seats in Parliament, it would bring Italy under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. By March a compendium of forces including the Rome embassy, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), American labor unions, and private interests launched a propaganda campaign against the FDP and in favor of the center-right Christian Democracy Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*) "Everything here concerns the elections. I have never seen anything like it" Salomon noted in a postcard to his mother upon arrival in Rome; "Hope to God the Communists don't [win] but don't think they will."[62]

[61] Salomon, Henry P. Letter to Phillip H. Bethune, October 8, 1946, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 2, Folder 1.
[62] Salomon, Henry Peter. Postcard to Lucia Agnell Salomon. "Dear Mother." Rome: Italy, March 30, 1948, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 4.

During his stay in Rome, Salomon attended several functions at the American Embassy, which historian Kaeten Mistry dubbed the "heart of covert efforts in Rome" under ambassador James Clement Dunn. "While Dunn was anxious not to entangle the Embassy in covert operations," notes Mistry of the embassy's role in the elections, "he nevertheless made concerted efforts to facilitate avenues for the State Department to send secret funds.[63] Dunn also personally delivered forty speeches in the lead-up to the election, of which one correspondent of the *New York Times* noted, "a few of them also contained indirect, but unmistakable, warnings that American aid would cease if Italy were to go Communist."[64] Speaking with numerous figures at the embassy illustrated the prescience the threat of Soviet domination of Europe had on those Americans, seemingly on the frontlines.[65] Salomon also had a private audience with Pope Pius XII, who played an active role in the 1948 elections in campaigning against the PCI and issuing the Catholic Church's Decree Against Communism the following year.

His experiences in Rome amidst the tumult of the elections and apprehensions regarding communist expansion were important to solidifying communism as a threat in Solomon's mind. The atmosphere and abundance of propaganda materials throughout Italy on the threat of communism, likely brought to mind similar propaganda he had seen during the war with the fascists and Nazis now replaced with communists but the message remaining the same. It is not surprising then that it was on Via Veneto one afternoon that the thought of a television history on the Allied victory over fascism came to him.[66]

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[63] Kaeten Mistry, "The Case for Political Warfare: Strategy, Organization and US Involvement in the 1948 Italian Election," *Cold War History* 6, no. 3 (2006): pp. 301-329, https://doi.org/10.1080/14682740600795451, 314.
[64] Arnold Cortesi, "Report from Italy," cited in Mistry, "The Case for Political Warfare: Strategy, Organization and US Involvement in the 1948 Italian Election," *Cold War History* 6, no. 3 (2006): 320–21.
[65] Mistry claims that Prime Minister Alcide De Gaspari and others largely stoked fears of communist takeover as a bargaining tool to extract more aid from the Americans to better his and Christian Democracy's domestic position over fear of international domination.
[66] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Salomon then proceeded to Greece where he spent nearly a month in a country engaged in a civil war between its Monarchist government (supported by the United Kingdom and the United States) and the People's Republic of the Provisional Democratic Government (supported by Albania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia), under the Communist Party of Greece and its military branch, the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). This conflict was the precipice upon which the United States launched its policy of containment with President Truman's address to a joint session of Congress on March 12, 1947, in which he espoused what was later dubbed the "Truman Doctrine." His appeal to Congress for an allocation of economic aid for Greece and Turkey amidst their struggles with communist subversion inaugurated the "containment" of communism within the immediate Soviet sphere of influence as the primary foundation of American foreign policy in the Cold War. Truman succinctly divided the world into two opposing camps, one in which freedom was predicated upon the "will of the majority" and "free institutions" and the other "the will of the minority forcibly imposed upon the majority" through terror and oppression. Truman declared that it must be the United States' policy to "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.[67] By the time of Salomon's visit the financial aid to the Greek state had arrived and was being implemented, showcasing the validity of containment.

Salomon would later write on his experiences in Greece and his belief in containment and the Truman administration in a letter to the editor of the *Boston Daily Globe*. In rebuttal to an article of the paper which claimed the communist forces in the country had grown and were occupying more territory since the declaration of the Truman Doctrine in 1947, Salomon argued that the Truman Doctrine was in fact "beginning to pay dividends." He cites how the Greek

[67] Harry S. Truman, "Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey, March 12, 1947" (1947), in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Harry S. Truman, 1947 (Washington D.C., 1963), 180.

Army was now properly equipped to combat the insurgents while American military advisors, "have been able to give the Greeks the necessary leadership, and adequate plans, and have taught them how best to execute a calculated risk." Salomon also posited that most of the people he talked to in Greece claimed the rebels were "not even sympathetic with that cause" but impressed into service by fear of reprisals against their families by the communists.[68] In this defense, Salomon's commitment to the tenets of containment as outlined in Truman Doctrine is at the forefront, while his opinion that the communist forces were motivated by fear and not ideology, a sentiment easily applied to any totalitarian ideology.

Salomon's defense of containment is another sense a defense of the "Imperial Brotherhood." The Truman administration was made up of upholders of the "Imperial Brotherhood" including the architect of containment George Kennan, Robert A. Lovett who served Truman's Assistant Secretary of State (1947-1949) and Secretary of Defense (1951-1953), and Dean Acheson, Truman's main foreign policy advisor and Secretary of State (1949-1953). Such men, dubbed the "Wise Men" of American foreign policy and architects of the Cold War were "gentlemen" who believed in a certain style of leadership steeped in what John Kenneth Galbraith termed the "Groton ethic," the understanding of duty to nation and self and honor amongst men that was instilled in them by those like Groton dean Endicott Peabody.[69] The policy of containment was a preservation of ideals such as freedom and security but also an adherence of loyalty to allies and strength in the face of adversity as advocated in these men's upbringing. Salomon's commitment to the ideals of containment mirrored many in his social class and which would inform many works later in his television career.

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[68] Salomon, Henry P. Letter to the Editor of the Boston Daily Globe, May 8, 1948, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 2.
[69] Walter Isaacson and Evan Thomas, *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made: Acheson, Bohlen, Harriman, Kennan, Lovett, Mccloy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 30.

Salomon's travels thus cultivated a better grasp of the Cold War struggle and the need for a vigilant, involved United States to counter the machinations of the Soviet Union. As he wrote a friend after returning from his tour of Western Europe, "On the whole I am quite optimistic about the turn of events. But of course, the final outcome will depend entirely on what uncle Joe cooks up in the Kremlin."[70] It was shortly after his return from Europe that he began working on his idea of showing World War II through images to convey the needs of a strong military and national unity to meet the threats he saw in Europe.

Production of *Victory at Sea*

Through the nascent medium of television, Salomon appeared to have found a means through which to extol the subject with its ability to combine image and sound in an intimate way. While Salomon had contemplated writing about the war for some time, he was convinced the written word was not enough to convey the enormity of the war.[71] "We turned out millions of words about it [World War II], and they were as accurate as we could make them, but they never really came across" Salomon later told a reporter of working on Morison's histories, "We told about an event, but never captured the essence of it. We were living history, and writing it, but somehow it just wasn't emerging alive."[72]

It is unclear how television first came to Salomon's attention, but he did have a connection in the industry in the form of Robert Sarnoff. Robert, the son of Radio Corporation of America (RCA) chairman David Sarnoff, was a good friend of Salomon's having been his

[70] Salomon, Henry P. Letter to Phillip H. Bethume, May 28, 1948, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 2.
[71] Salomon had written Harvard University Press Director Roger L. Scalfe in late-1946 about the possibility of publishing "something with the literature of World War II." Scalfe replied that it depended on "your subject matter, treatment, accuracy, readability and whether you can present a new or at least an individual point of view which will make the book distinctive."
[72] Chester Whitehorn, "Victory at Sea," *SAGA: True Adventures for Men*, July 1953, pp. 24-67, 25.

roommate at Philips Andover and a classmate at Harvard. Having also served in the Pacific with the U.S. Navy during the war, Sarnoff had worked a number of jobs after leaving the service including assistant to Gardner Cowles Jr., publisher of the *Des Moines Register and Tribune* and a member of the staff of the Cowles-owned *Look* magazine. In January of 1948, he returned to the "family business" and took a job as an account executive at NBC, which was owned by RCA.[73]

It was around September of that year when Salomon discussed his idea for a television series on the Naval Operations of the war with Sarnoff. Over lunch Salomon regaled his friend for three hours on his ambitions for the series. "There will have to be pictures from every country in the war – not only the Allies, but the Axis as well," he said, "Each sequence will have to be selected and edited to capture the emotions of the men who lived it." Within fifteen minutes he had Sarnoff's interest and after an hour Sarnoff was contributing ideas. After lunch, Sarnoff told his friend, "I can't promise you anything, Henry, but I will say this. You prove the idea is possible, and I'll do everything in my power to get you a budget."[74]

1949, was a watershed year in new media products on World War II. That year Americans were turning the page on any number of books on the war from Norman Mailer's debut novel *The Naked and the Dead* to Dwight Eisenhower's memoir of his war experiences *Crusade in Europe.* On stage the plays *South Pacific* and *Mr. Roberts* were massive hits on Broadway, while in cinemas big-budget, World War II set films were making a comeback with the critically acclaimed films *Battleground*, *Twelve O'Clock High*, and *Sands of Iwo Jima* all doing good business.

[73] "Our Respects to Robert William Sarnoff," *Broadcasting*, July 13, 1953, pp. 26.
[74] Chester Whitehorn, "Victory at Sea," *SAGA: True Adventures for Men*, July 1953, pp. 24-67, 27.

Salomon's idea was not entirely novel, as that same year the first made-for-television documentary series broadcast on the "tube" was a history on the war, an adaptation of the Eisenhower memoir *Crusade in Europe* which premiered May 5th on ABC. But the *Crusade in Europe* was hampered by limitations at the time of their premiere. By May 1949 there were only 61 television stations and 1,382,625 television receivers operating in the United States.[75] ABC distributed film copies to its national affiliates to facilitate a simultaneous airing and planned to re-air it three consecutive television, the number of screens available to Americans was not large enough to garner a sizable audience to make a marked impact. This was further hampered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) placing a freeze on processing applications for new television stations on Sept. 30, 1948, meaning no new broadcasting stations aside from the 37 in operation and 86 previously approved until the freeze was lifted three and a half years later.[76]

While the *Crusade in Europe* and its sequel *Crusade in the Pacific* (1951) would be running in syndication for years, they would be largely forgotten and deemed outdated in short order as television's style began to develop. Theses series was still tied to the *March of Time* newsreel style that had once captivated audiences but was beginning to with by the time of the series' premiere. *Victory at Sea* editor Isaac Kleinerman later remarked that the *Crusade* series deserved credit for getting the story to the airwaves, but on its own the series were "dull, stodgy, and never was terribly interesting."[77] It is unlikely Salomon had seen the series before developing his idea and unknown if he saw it, regardless, it did not deter his vision. World War II was the hot item of the moment and Salomon's proposal was a good investment.

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[75] *Television Magazine*, May 1949, pp. 16.
[76] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 37.
[77] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Salomon subsequently succeeded in acquiring permission from Morison to use his *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II* as a basis for the history presented in the series so long as Salomon present the Navy with care and consideration.[78] Salomon wrote Sarnoff in November, "I am very pleased with this generous gesture on his part. I now feel as though my six years work was not entirely in vain."[79] In December the two took the proposal to Sarnoff's father David for consideration. "The General," as Sarnoff liked to be called, reportedly looked favorably on the proposal; but he had some conditions.[80] The most important of which was that Salomon had to get the Navy to sign a contract with NBC to make the production a joint venture and stipulate that "the only way for the Navy to alter any portion of the material would be on the basis of military security and not on taste.[81]

From 1949 through 1950 and into 1951 Salomon worked to satisfy Gen. Sarnoff's conditions with the Navy, rewriting his initial conceptual outline for the series several times as his concept of the series evolved and refined. While Salomon had hoped the validation of Morison would ease negotiations with the Navy, the then Secretary of the Navy Francis P. Matthews was uninterested in the project. It took months and numerous applications for Salomon to gain access to the Naval Photographic Center in Anacostia, Maryland. While this process dragged on Salomon's finances dwindled as he was forced to solicit loans from family and

[78] Daniel Jones claims Salomon told him Morison gifted the rights to Salomon at a testimonial dinner held in honor of the Naval History Unit. However, Donald Hyatt, later claimed the matter of the rights to Morison's work remained unclear during and after the production. Morison later demanded an honorarium payment and credit in the series opening titles. He was paid $5,000 but he is not named in the credits for *Victory at Sea* nor do they name Morison's text as a source.
[79] Henry Salomon to Robert Sarnoff, 20 November 1949, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 2.
[80] David Sarnoff ascended to the rank of Brigadier General in the Army Reserves during World War II for his work on Eisenhower's communications staff and overseeing construction of a radio transmitter strong enough to reach all Allied forces in Europe, dubbed Radio Free Europe. He frequently wore his Brigadier General's star at the office.
[81] Duncan S. Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" (1974), 10.

friends. “Another few weeks,” he later admitted, “another month perhaps, and I would have to have given up.”[82]

Thankfully, the subsequent Secretary of the Navy, Dan A. Kimball, was enthused by series’ proposal. The Armed Forces were undergoing a shift from conventional means of war to focus on developing a stockpile of atomic weapons and adequate delivery system, making the Navy seem obsolete. This series would hopefully remind the American people of the importance of the Navy in the Allied victory to advocate for its continued presence and perhaps a higher level of funding from Congress. Thus, in mid-1951, Kimball officially signed off on the project. and placed six enlisted and civil service personnel at Salomon's disposal at Anacostia. Furthermore, Captain Walter E. Karig, author of the *Battle Report* series of histories on the U.S. Navy in World War II, was appointed to serve as the liaison officer to provide technical advice and aid when needed.[83]

By the time then Navy granted their cooperation Sarnoff had moved up the corporate ladder at NBC, being named director of television productions in January 1951. After the Navy had granted their cooperation Sarnoff called Salomon into his office at Rockefeller Center. After some brief small talk, Sarnoff sheepishly handed Salomon an inter-office memorandum. The memo was short and direct, informing Salomon that NBC had greenlit the “NBC-TV Navy Project” with a budget of $500,000. The project was officially underway.[84]

Despite the length of time, it took to get the project approved Salomon’s initial plan for the series had remained intact. NBC had essentially given him a free hand to make the series with little oversight from them thanks to his close relation with Robert Sarnoff who always had

[82] Chester Whitehorn, “Victory at Sea,” *SAGA: True Adventures for Men*, July 1953, pp. 24-67, 66.
[83] Harvey, “The ‘NBC-TV Navy Project,’” 10.
[84] Chester Whitehorn, “Victory at Sea,” *SAGA: True Adventures for Men*, July 1953, pp. 24-67, 66.

faith in his friend. The same was true for the U.S. Navy, once his proposal was approved the service proved very accommodating in meeting any of Salomon's requests for additional aid. Although Salomon consciously worked to avoid any issues which could threaten the production's relationship with the Navy, the service never exercised any demands over changes in content. Thus, with both the network and the Navy satisfied, Salomon had few barriers in bringing his interpretation of the war to life.

Nonetheless, Salomon could not make the show by himself, he needed a team of peoples to help bring his vision to life. As the head writer and producer of the series Salomon had almost complete control over the project and full discretion in creating his production team which he staffed largely with former Navy men and film professionals with a skill for handling war footage. Although Salomon did not begin to actively seek out people to work on the project or conduct interviews until the spring of 1951, he knew early on who he wanted to write the scripts for the series - C.S. Forrester. [85] The English novelist was at the time the most widely author of tales set at sea thanks to his wildly popular "Admiral Hornblower" novels. Forester's biographer Sanford Sternlicht likened the appeal of Admiral Hornblower in the 1940s to that of James Bond in the 1950s as "the indomitable Midshipman, Lieutenant, Captain, Commodore, Lord, Admiral Horatio Hornblower, Royal Navy," was, "was a hero for the World War II generation and Bond is a hero for the Cold War generation."[86] Forrester's ability to craft rousing sea-set stories made him the perfect writer for the task of delivering the drama and emotion of the war at sea, while his popularity would help the series garner a sponsor.

Having no technical experience with the contours or specificities of filmmaking, Salomon also needed veterans of the field to produce a well-crafted product. For this aspect he relied on

[85] Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" 11-12.
[86] Sanford Sternlicht, *C.S. Forester and the Hornblower Saga* (Syracuse, NY: New York University Press, 1999), 9.

the input of Stanton Osgood, an NBC operations director and former naval officer in the Navy Film Training Unit, on selecting candidates for the critical positions of film editor and film director. Osgood recommended two individuals he knew while working at RKO-Pathe, the newsreel arm of RKO Picture, Isaac Kleinerman and M. Clay Adams.[87]

Isaac Kleinerman had a long, extensive history with the film business. The son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, he began his career as a teenager working for his uncle Morris booking films for showing in theaters. While enrolled in the City College of New York in the mid-1930s while also working for a small production company. Here he became a jack of all trades, working as a cameraman, sound man, and film editor. However, it was during the war when he was brought into Frank Capra's unit of the Army Signal Corps that he decided on field of film editing, learning from many of the Hollywood men who came out East to work for Capra on his "Why We Fight" series. After the war he joined RKO-Pathe where he worked as an editor on several projects including Stanley Kubrick's early documentary *The Flying Padre* (1951). When he sat down with Salomon for a cocktail at Toots Shore in late-1951 to discuss joining the project, he was enthralled. "We liked each other right away, and I really had made my mind before the interview was over," Kleinerman later remarked, "I told him I would call him in a day or two and called him the very next morning and said I would like to come on board."[88]

M. [Michael] Clay Adams, had worked with Kleinerman at RKO-Pathe and had a long, diverse career up to that time. After graduating from Notre Dame University in 1932, Adams started a career in the film business as an executive assistant to producer Sol M. Wurtzel at 20th Century Fox. After graduating from bringing coffee and buying cigarettes for Wurtzel to story

[87] Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" 12.
[88] Isaac Kleinerman, "tape recorded interview" (New York, Sept. 1973), quoted in Duncan S. Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project" (Thesis: Texas Christian University, 1974), 12.

editor, film editor, and screenwriter, Adams moved to RKO-Pathe Inc. in 1939 where he made a series of short subjects called "Picture People," which presented the off-screen lives of the stars.[89] During World War II Adams rose to the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve making films to aid the war effort including *My Japan* (1943), a theatrical short released by the Treasury Department to promote the sale of War Bonds and *How to Be a Civilian* (1945), a comedy short on veterans returning to civilian life starring Robert Benchly. After the war he returned to RKO-Pathe with the end of the war, he produced and directed several films for various large corporations, rising to the position of Director of Commercial Services, before going leaving to work for Salomon as the series operations director.[90]

On the technical level both Kleinerman and Adams were skilled professionals in their respective fields with years of experience behind them, but also uniquely fit for this project. For one, they were familiar with working with the military in producing films thanks to their war experience and previous work. As veterans who worked crafting films for the war effort, each knew how to craft a film to sell a certain message as well as appease the sympathies of the Armed Forces. Additionally, they had experience working in the Armed Forces film archives and classified film from their previous work on a series of documentaries for the Strategic Air Command of the U.S. Air Force which sought to familiarize the public with atomic weaponry and the importance of air power in the emerging Cold War. This ability to create a riveting work from pre-existing footage was important, but equally so was their history of appeasing the military brass in presenting a friendly if not benevolent picture of the role of the Armed Forces

[89] Eric Butterman, "M. Clay Adams: An Old-Fashioned Success Story," *Notre Dame Magazine*, 2006, https://magazine.nd.edu/stories/m-clay-adams-an-old-fashioned-success-story/.
[90] Duncan S. Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" (1974), 12.

which was critical sustaining the series and positing the importance of the US Navy for Salomon.[91]

Salomon also hired several individuals from similar backgrounds to his own, including some personal friends. Salomon's longtime friend from Providence and recent Harvard graduate Daniel Jones became the series film librarian, researcher, and "detail man" in charge of cataloging and organizing all film resources and corresponding with their respective archives. Douglas Wood, another old friend from Harvard, was installed as the production's main film researcher at the Naval Photographic Center and other Washington sources. Donald A. Hyatt, Salomon's personal assistant and later producer on the subsequent series *Project XX*, was a recent Dartmouth College from an old-stock New England family.[92]

Salomon's preference for such similarly minded and raised men likely worked to reinforce his perspective of the war. As most had been in the military if not the Navy they saw the importance of creating a positive, valorous image for American viewers. Additionally, coming from similar backgrounds with similar worldviews meant that he could more easily posit the "imperial brotherhood" ideals of strength in toughness and service he and others on his team had been brough up with. It was more than preferential treatment in these latter hirings, but also the guarantee of a similar mindset amongst those in the production, indeed the first task for Kleinerman, Adams and others was reading the existing volumes of Morison's naval history.[93]

With the team assembled the task came of collecting the footage from which to craft the series. Despite some initial investigation and planning by Salomon in the interim between his pitch and approval, the collection of film was a tumultuous endeavor for the first six months.

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[91] M. Clay Adams, "M. Clay Adams Filmography," *Notre Dame Magazine*, 2006, https://magazine.nd.edu/stories/m-clay-adams-an-old-fashioned-success-story/.
[92] Duncan S. Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" (1974), 13.
[93] Harvey, "The 'NBC-TV Navy Project,'" 16.

From May into August of 1951, Wood, Jones, and Kleinerman focused most of their efforts at Anacostia and Washington, searching through the film catalogues published by the Navy, War Department, Army, and Marine Corps; then examined the Navy's film library index cards and began screening the archival footage. The team first viewed all previously edited footage of naval operations then other edited films before examining any unedited footage.[94] Jones recalled how this method of research stemmed from a piece of advice given to him by a naval archivist:

> You can go through this whole library if you wish but it will take you months and months and be a back-breaking job. However, all the really good footage -- 99.9 percent of the insignificant shots that no two editors would disagree on--probably has been used somewhere by someone in one of the edited films. So you should first go through the edited films and then finish out with the native rolls from which these films were derived.[95]

While the team did take a good deal of film from these pre-edited sources, they also screened a great deal of un-edited film to find the shots they needed with Jones card catalog system for organizing the footage eclipsing 60,000 entries. The Navy initially placed six enlisted and civil service personnel at Salomon's disposal at the Naval Film Archives Photographic Center, but as work progressed slowly Salomon requested and received additional services and personnel for the search, screening, and processing of film. Captain Karig also proved a valuable aid in attaining classified footage wanted by Salomon's team. Kleinerman claimed he would spend four days a week reviewing film at Anacostia and on weekends meet Salomon in New York where they would discuss his impressions of the footage.

Outside of the U.S. capital, the team acquired footage from several foreign governments. As “The NBC-TV Navy Project” was granted an official status by the government, the Secretary of the Navy issued requests for cooperation to foreign governments that Salomon believed could

[94] The team largely ignored training films at this time. They would be viewed and incorporated as the editing stage began and the time to find more materials diminished in 1952.
[95] Harvey, “The NBC-TV Navy Project,” 23-24.

furnish necessary footage to the project, which resulted in relatively fluid acquisition of foreign footage. Adams traveled to Canada to view the film available from the National Film Board of Canada while Salomon and Hyatt traveled to Great Britain to examine footage held by the British Admiralty in July.[96] Salomon described the difficulties sometimes associated with obtaining footage from foreign government when discussing the acquisition of "717 feet of 35mm fine grain film from the Indian Navy." First, he contacted the Indian government, instructing them to send 16mm prints by air from New Delhi to the Indian embassy in Washington. The Indian embassy then sent the film to New York City for a screening. From the several thousand feet sent, the production selected the essential 717 feet. The 16mm film was then returned to DC and sent via diplomatic pouch to Bombay where a representative of BCA, coordinating the activities of NBC with the Indian Government located the 35mm negative, "part of which was at Simla in the Himalayas, and the rest in Bombay."[97]

One source that remained off limits was American and English newsreel companies which refused to sell to their quickly rising rival of television. M. Clay Adams recalled how Daniel Jones managed to wrangle a meeting with Barney Ballabin, Chairman of the Board at Paramount Pictures, using his and Adams' background as former naval officers. Balabin, whose son was in the Navy during the war, and was keen to support the service was initially cordial and gracious in the two men's request to utilize the Paramount Newsreel stock footage library for their series, until Balabin realized this was a production for NBC and not a production for the U.S. Navy upon which he showed Adams and Jones the door.[98]

[96] Harvey, "the NBC-TV Navy Project," 22.
[97] Henry Salomon, "From 1939 to Korea," *Variety*, (July 16, 1952).
[98] Adams quoted in Harvey, pg 29-39.

Overall, roughly fifty million feet of film was screened for consideration. Out of the millions of feet of film collected, Kleinerman narrowed this down to the best 61,815 feet or one-tenth of one per cent of the film they had at hand.[99] Harvey estimates that over 95% of the film material used in the series came from the Naval Photographic Center's Archives in Anacostia. A sizable amount was also provided the United States Army Signal Corps, the U.S. Marine Corps, and ten foreign governments including Canada, Britain, Italy, France, West Germany, Japan, and India.

Media historian Richard C. Bartone faults the production's reliance upon the U.S. Navy's film as its almost sole source of material, particularly that culled from Navy training and documentary films. "By using these edited films, and not considering all unedited and/or unindexed naval footage," Bartone claims, "the production unit automatically accepted the Navy's perspective and attitude on the actions and reactions of men at war."[100] However, just using this film does not constitute an acceptance of the naval perspective. As mentioned above, after his proposal's approval Salomon maintained autonomy over the presentation of history and footage was edited in accordance with his desires. Additionally, the footage taken from these films was recut and refashioned to suit the needs of the series, undercutting its initial purpose. Furthermore, the prospect of considering all the unedited and/or unindexed film at Anacostia was simply not practical, if possible, at all. The archives house millions of feet of film and the time taken to select, process, and screen each cannister would have taken years for the three men to screen all available footage in the archives and vastly exceed their budget.

[99] Henry Salomon, "From 1939 to Korea," *Variety*, (July 16, 1952).
[100] Richard C. Bartone, "*Victory at Se*a: A Case Study in "Official" Telehistory," *Film & History*, 21:4 (1992), 123.

After collecting the necessary material came the monumental task of whittling it down and editing it into an appropriate program. Editing was conducted by Kleinerman with the help of a few assistant editors whom he identified as "librarians" as their work was primarily classifying and organizing the footage. Following the outlines created by Salomon and Adams, Salomon matched the appropriate footage to the described scenes going by whichever episode he seemed to have the proper material for. "I had them get a huge table for me… it was about 12 feet long by 5 feet wide, and what I would do was go about building each episode the way you would make a mosaic," as Kleinerman later described his working method for the series, "I would lay out all the little scenes on this table which were identified that I thought would be useful for this particular episode. And then I'd start playing with it."[101] If he was missing a particular shot, he would call down to Washington and they would invariably send him the needed material or something similar. At times when there was no archival film of the battle or incident, he would draw from [102]In this task Harvey notes Salomon gave Kleinerman near total creative freedom, "stepping in only when he felt history was not accurately being recorded; he also allowed his editor the freedom to utilize reconstruction footage." One infamous case was with the Battle of Leyte Gulf of which there was very little usable footage since the battle took place at night. To remedy this situation Kleinerman took what was needed to present the battle and using bits of footage of other battles to reconstruct the Battle of Leyte Gulf.[103]

The use of footage unrelated to the events or battles presented onscreen as well as the use of reconstruction footage may seem dubious today, but such was not the case at this time.

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[101] Isaac Kleinerman, "tape recorded interview" (New York, Sept. 1973), quoted in Duncan S. Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project" (Thesis: Texas Christian University, 1974), 12.
[102] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 67.
[103] Kleinerman claimed that for roughly twenty years the U.S. Navy used his reconstructed Battle of Leyte Gulf as a classic example of a night engagement fought between major forces.

Hollywood films and even documentaries by such luminaries as Robert Flaherty utilized reconstruction footage amongst other techniques to create a sense of reality in their work. As Kleinerman himself later explained: "In those days there were no restrictions, nor did we purport at any time that each and every frame of every scene we were using was an actual thing. What it was, was an attempt to re-create the mood, the atmosphere of World War II."[104] According to the general logic of the time, if it gave the proper impression, it did not matter if the footage was from the battle or even actuality footage. However, that it such a reconstruction would go on to be used by the U.S. Navy as an example of a nighttime naval engagement, is a reprehensible matter as it was likely not stated that this was not really footage of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

After Kleinerman completed editing an episode and his work reviewed by Salomon and Adams, the next phase of production was writing the narration script. Forester had been hired to give meaning to the series of images combined by Kleinerman with a script, but problems soon emerged. According to Kleinerman after he had finished his first episode, although not the first in the series, Forester came to New York from London with a British naval adviser the British Navy had supplied. Forester viewed the assembled footage and then returned to England to write script. "What came back! Just horrible" Kleinerman claimed, "It would have made a great short history of that particular engagement, but it had nothing to do with what we were saying on the screen."[105] A sentiment shared by Adams who noted, "Forrester never really understood that all we could put on the screen in terms of pictures was what had been filmed by some cameraman somewhere during the war, and that was it. We couldn't go back and reshoot it."[106]

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[104] Isaac Kleinerman, "tape recorded interview" (New York, Sept. 1973), quoted in Duncan S. Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project" (Thesis: Texas Christian University, 1974), 40.
[105] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[106] Clay Adams, "tape recorded statement from written questions" (Sea Girt, NJ, October 1973) quoted in Duncan S. Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project" (Thesis: Texas Christian University, 1974), 44.

Adams recommended hiring another writer more familiar with the medium to guide Forester's writing to fix this impasse, recommending his former colleague at RKO-Pathe Richard Hanser. Initially a journalist, during World War II Hanser obtained a position with the Office of War Information (OWI) where he learned the contours of effective propaganda, penning "strategic" leaflets to undermine German morale. After the invasion of Normandy, he was recruited into the Psychological Warfare Unit of the 12th Army Group where he worked with members of the "Ritchie Boys" under Captain, later Major, Hans Habe producing programs for Radio Luxemberg and more leaflets. One program he was closely involved with was "Frontpost," a radio adaptation of a leaflet newspaper printed by the unit to report accurate news of the war for the Germans since, according to Hanser, "the news itself was the best propaganda because we were advancing, we were winning, our power was undeniably superior to the German power and by stressing this we hoped that a gradual feeling of frustration and despair would develop among the German troops." On "Frontpost" Hanser learned how to produce impactful radio and voiced the character Corporal Tom Jones of Green Bay, WI an aide to an intelligence officer who regularly went to the front and collected information on German positions. After the war he found a job with RKO-Pathe as a script writer for their documentary series *This is America*, a *March of Time* style news program that presented news items to theatre goers before the start of the feature-length film.[107]

While Hanser had the prerequisite skillset needed to script the series, he also brought a style and outlook which complimented the goals Salomon had for the series. Hanser's work in writing propaganda during the war, gave his writing a punchy immediacy that imparted messages in the fewest number of words. Additionally, Hanser also had a keen knowledge of Germany

[107] Robert Herald, "The Best of All TV Writers," *The Lamp*, September 1961.

having written several programs on it for the *This is America* series including one on the Allied occupation ["This is Germany" and "Killroy Returns"] and the Berlin Airlift ["Berlin Powderkeg"]. Hanser thus possessed a good understanding of the lingering effects of the war and the threat to world stability posed by the Cold War.

Hanser's interview with Salomon went swimmingly and he joined the production on January 2, 1952, to coordinate story outlines for episodes and write the initial drafts of the narrative scripts for Forrester to polish.[108] However, within a few weeks Forester departed the production altogether unable to adapt to the format.[109] "There is no other kind of writing like it exactly," Hanser noted of writing for a documentary, "because the words have to be tailored to fit the film as it goes through the projector at 90 feet a minute, and the result is that you have to write film narration with a stop watch."[110] Salomon initially thought of assuming the role of head writer but his lack of experience with script writing and his time-consuming duties as executive producer quickly squashed this idea. Instead, he decided to retain Hanser as the head writer of the series and work with him on the scripts.

While the content of the series and breakdown of episodes had already been decided by the time Hanser began work, he had to compress the history for twenty-six half-hour television programs. Hanser would write the first draft of the script by himself, first researching the phase of the war depicted in the episode; then, after receiving a shot list from Kleinerman, write the first draft script, using the shot list as his guide. For research Hanser primarily utilized Morison's *History of the United States Naval Operations* and Capt. Walter Karig's *Battle Report* along with Life Magazine's History of World War II and a few other histories. While he claimed the

[108] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 45-46.
[109] Hanser recalled that it was Forester who came up with the title "Victory at Sea."
[110] Richard Hanser, Interview by Erik Barnouw, 1967, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY, pg. 29-30.

research varied depending on the subject and scale of the episode, he believed it was overall fairly extensive. Hanser then edited his writing to fit the length of the footage, reading his words aloud while using a stop watch to time himself. [111]

Upon completion of his draft, which normally took between seven and ten days, Hanser would meet with Salomon and work together in crafting the final draft of the script. Normally meeting at Salomon's apartment, the two would spend hours going through what Hanser had written line-by-line as Salomon picked out what he liked and what he wanted changed. "It would vary" Hanser said of the extent of changes Salomon would make, "sometimes the changes were extensive; on the other hand, sometimes the original script as I wrote it with hand-written word changes remained basically the same."[112] Although debates between them were numerous Salomon's view always won out being the executive producer. The draft he and Salomon produced in these meetings contained the facts, quotes, and themes for the episode. Another two or three days was normally needed for rewrites and edits to the script before it was finalized.

In shaping the script Hanser and Salomon decided on an approach which favored images over narration and explanation. "The rule Pete Salomon and I work by all the time is: ;the less narration the better" Hanser later commented, "In both pictures and narration our general idea, in all the programs all the time, our plan of procedure from start to finish, is expressed in the following quotation from Walt Whitman: 'I seek less to display any theme or thought and more to bring you into the atmosphere of the theme or thought -- there to pursue your own flight.'"[113] The "atmosphere of the theme or thought" was interpreted by Salomon and Hanser to mean imparting the viewer with "a mood, an emotion" through which they could identify with the

[111] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 47.
[112] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 47.
[113] Richard Hanser, For the Participants in the 1957 Seminar Workshop University of Denver, August 1957, University of Wisconsin Madison, Richard Hanser Papers, Box 1, Folder 3.

material presented to them. This was best achieved through pictures accompanied by music, letting the images present a story and the music provide a layer of meaning to impart an "emotion" to the viewer which narration could obstruct.

While some episodes did require more narration to help viewers understand why this island was of importance or why this method was used as in the case of "Guadalcanal" (Episode 6), but many episodes contain long passages where the footage and music play unobstructed for minutes. This is illustrated in the first episode "Submarine Warfare" in which there are long sequences of what Hanser described as "dumpy little freighters, plodding along," during which little seems to occur. But since the earlier narration established in the minds of the audience how important and dangerous the Atlantic convoys were, the viewer, in Hanser's words, "sense the tension of the situation, so that it was not an empty spectacle of nothing happening, and he [Salomon] would let that play, and he did that over and over in the series; namely, charging a situation with meaning and emotion, and then letting it play itself out."[114]

Such a method of presentation which de-emphasized narration and explanations, relied heavily on the impact of the images, and editing but also the music which accompanied them and gave "meaning" to what was being shown. While originally planning to use film library music as "background," Salomon decided to seek additional funding from NBC in the Spring of 1951 for a composer to draft original score for the series. Salomon wanted an all-musical soundtrack for the series over sounds of actual combat, only a few explosions and other diegetic battle noises are heard throughout the series. Salomon later explained that "there was something the pictures by themselves could not convey, a subtle, spiritual dimension needed to give them -- and the entire drama -- its ultimate meaning.[115] Music was the solution and *Victory at Sea* would make

[114] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 49.
[115] "Liner" for the Record Album of *Victory at Sea*: "The Song for All Seas, All Ships" by Henry Salomon

waves for not merely using stock period music or employing military and patriotic standards as "background" like its predecessor, but instead having an original score as a dramatic and thematic accompaniment to the footage.[116]

For this task Salomon wanted Richard Rodgers, one of the most popular and acclaimed composers in the country.[117] Rodgers, at the time, was luminary composer on Broadway who with his creative partner Oscar Hammerstein was behind recent smash hits *Oklahoma* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), and *The King and I* (1951). Even though Rodgers had never worked on a film project and had largely composed light, upbeat musical number, Rodgers possessed an undeniable wealth of talent and held certain qualities Salomon believed were needed for the job. "The naval war was perhaps the most powerful and stirring expression, in both human and physical terms, of the might and potential of contemporary America" Salomon explained: "Since Rodgers is America's foremost musical spokesman, it was of him I thought when I first grasped the full implications of VICTORY AT SEA."[118] Indeed, Rodgers had unique ability to transmute various episodes of great dramatic weight in American history into emphatic, entertaining musical affairs as seen in *Oklahoma* and in *South Pacific* which related dramatic stories of racial bigotry in wartime into jubilant musical fare. Initially Rodgers turned down the offer, but after what cultural historian Philip D. Beidler called "more New York power networking … coupled with some fast sales talk by a new participant in the project, NBC vice-president Pat Weaver" Rodgers came around to the idea.[119] Rodgers' two conditions before committing were that this be done pro-bono in the name of public service and that his previous

[116] Philip D. Beidler, "Making a Production Out of It: Victory at Sea and American Remembering," *Prospects* 22 (October 1997): pp. 521-534, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0361233300000211, 525.
[117] Kleinerman initially suggested Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, or Virgil Thompson for the job, but Salomon already had Rodgers in mind.
[118] "Liner" for the Record Album of *Victory at Sea*: "The Song for All Seas, All Ships" by Henry Salomon
[119] Philip D. Beidler, "Making a Production Out of It: Victory at Sea and American Remembering," *Prospects* 22 (October 1997): pp. 521-534, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0361233300000211, 525-526.

collaborator Richard Russell Bennett conduct the score, conditions which were dutifully accepted.[120]

In creating the score, Bennett recalled that he and Rodgers got together whenever Rodgers had a tune or two to play for Bennett; or Bennett, after watching a couple of Kleinerman's rough cuts or some raw footage, would call Rodgers and describe a specific part of an upcoming episode which he thought needed a particular theme.[121] In his autobiography, *Musical Stages*, Rodgers noted that he paid close attention to "written breakdowns - or logs - of all the action," how he: "took those logs everywhere ... Whenever I had some spare moments, I'd take them out and read, say, 'Airplane carrier. Planes landing on deck,' which would trigger the mental image I needed to write the music I thought appropriate to accompany the scene.... It was fragmented work, not like sitting down and composing a symphony, or even a score for a show." The result was a dozen musical themes, none longer than two minutes in length. Bennett then took these themes and, in his words, "I varied it a hundred ways, then took my variations and made variations on them, but I never tried to kick a tune around by lengthening it or shortening it or adding different notes to it."[122] It took Bennett 8 months to bring the music for *Victory at Sea*

[120] According to Rodgers autobiography, *Musical Stages* (New York: Random House, 1975), Weaver, identified as a "contact," initially explained *Victory at Sea* to him in rather broad terms as a "Navy" project, with the atmospherics of the pitch implying participation in a dire paramilitary enterprise. The cryptic initial "message," he remembered was such: "If you were approached to do some work for the United States Navy," said Weaver, "we'd like your assurance that you wouldn't refuse to consider it." "Well, of course," replied the somewhat puzzled composer, "I wouldn't refuse to consider any offer from the United States Navy." Rodgers went on: "His curiously negative question, it turned out, was simply a matter of protocol. The Navy had approached NBC with the idea of presenting a television documentary series about its exploits during World War II, but before a definite offer could be made I had to give my assurance in advance that I would at least consider composing the score. One simply does not say no to the United States Navy - not out of hand, anyway." (248)

[121] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 55.

[122] Robert Russell Bennett, "tape recorded interview" (New York, September 1973) quoted in Duncan S. Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project" (Thesis: Texas Christian University, 1974), 55.

from Rodger's initial sketches to the final orchestration of the thirteen-hour musical score which he conducted himself with the NBC Symphony Orchestra.[123]

The Rodgers/Bennett score proved to be one of the most heralded aspects of the series upon its release. George Rosen, writing for *Variety*, wonderfully summarized the general opinion of critics in his appraisal of the score. "On its own, independent of this filmed documentation of the Navy, it's a cinch to win critical kudos as Rodgers most serious effort to date and perhaps his most outstanding music contribution with at least half a dozen recurring melodies," Rosen wrote, also noting that as the score for the series, "it has been so brilliantly synchronized to the footage and arranged by Robert Russell Bennett, and so magnificently performed by the NBC Symphony Orchestra under Bennett's direction as to give the visual documentation a heightened tension and tempo."[124] Film and Television historian Peter C. Rollins later noted the deeper importance of the score, claiming it provided the "unifying emotion" of the series, making the disparate parts of scenes cohere for the participant-observer, "the music tells us that something larger than these individual lives [lost] is succeeding, indeed, living."[125] Salomon's dictum that the score be used instead of sound effects to imitate the sounds of combat also worked to provide a distance between the carnage of battle so the viewer, "begins to see its lights and shades as romantic and exciting."[126]

The score for *Victory at Sea* was as in many ways as influential as the series. Several of its themes would go on to be extremely popular on their own, including the lilting 'Guadalcanal March' and the sweeping 'Songs of the High Seas.' When the score was released on vinyl [in

[123] Michael Saffle, "Military Music for America's Peacetime: *Victory at Sea* and 1950s Post-War Television," *Journal of Musicological Research* 38, No. 1 (2019): 4-15, 12.
[124] George Rosen, "Salomon's Wisdom, Rodgers' Music Spark NBC-TV's 'Victory at Sea'" *Variety,* Oct. 29, 1952.
[125] Peter C. Rollins and Thomas J. McGah, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," 1972, pg. 53.
[126] Peter C. Rollins and Thomas J. McGah, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," 1972, pg. 54.

two volumes in 1959 and 1960] it proved a bestseller with Biedler dubbing the soundtrack release the "most visible, and commercially lucrative, by-product of the series."[127] Nonetheless, it remained indelibly tied to the cultural understanding of the war, becoming another cultural milestones in propagating the purported themes of liberation and strength.[128] Its influence was such that when CBS produced a star-studded television tribute to Rodgers and his work ["America Salutes Richard Rodgers: The Sound of His Music"] narration from the series to compliment the score was read by none other than the most widely recognized personification of American masculinity and military might – John Wayne.[129]

The final piece of the series was the narration, designed to be sparing yet essential for providing context and necessary information. Salomon initially sought a well-known name; someone who could lend prestige to the project. For this reason, the actor Robert Montgomery was hired to provide the narration for the series. Montgomery had been a star of the silver screen for nearly twenty years, earning two Academy Award nominations, before becoming one of the first stars to make the move to television as the host and sometimes star of the popular NBC anthology series *Robert Montgomery Presents* (1950-1957). Like Salomon, Montgomery had served in the Navy during World War II rising to the rank of Commander, serving as the Commanding Officer of PT-107.

While Montgomery seemed the ideal man for the job, his work was less than satisfactory. According to Adams, after Montgomery first viewed a preview screening of Episode One, the

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[127] Biedler notes that these albums were carefully designed to invoke the "cachet" of the series. For example, each record jacket had a war-art cover while the 3rd album had its own portfolio of combat photographs. In the arrangement of musical tracks, each, through dramatic sequencing and titles, recalled the original while also creating its own scenario with the last two aided by various sound effect features. Each album also contained a linear copy which reprised the series' history with writings from the original participants and early reviews.

[128] The tune "Beneath the Southern Cross" was later reworked by Rodgers into the song "No Other Love" for his musical *Me and Juliet*. This version sung by Perry Como reached No. 1 on both the *Billboard* and *Cash Box* charts in August 1953.

[129] Jack O'Brian, "The Voice of Broadway," *The Monroe News Star* (Monroe, LA), December 17. 1976, p. 38.

actor ripped into Salomon declaring him unfit to be a producer and that he would "never condescend to do the voice over for such a horrible piece of film making, and that the whole series should be abandoned or started over."[130] After lengthy discussions by Salomon, Hyatt, and Adams, Montgomery agreed to read the script as it was written; but issues persisted. Kleinerman later remembered the SNAFU of the script reading session:

> He [Montgomery] couldn't read that script and make it sound like anything of interest... We tried everything, we had three different narration sections, and at the end of the third one I said, 'Well, before we even listen to it,' after I had it in the tracks, I said, 'Pete, its no use, this guy just can't read it.' We listened to it of course.[131]

Despite reservations by Salomon over the blowback from relieving NBC staple Montgomery, he eventually departed the series.[132] The job of narrator filled by actor Leonard Graves, on recommendation of Rodgers for whom Graves was understudying in the Broadway production of *The King and I*. Production of the series ultimately wrapped in late May of 1952 with the delivery to the Pathe laboratories of Episode 26.[133]

The first episode premiered on October 26, 1952, to great acclaim and wide viewership aided by developments in the television industry and technology. On September 4, 1951, coast-to-coast network television became a reality with the completion of the AT&T co-axial cable. Before its completion only 45% of American homes with a television could be reached by live network TV. Afterward, 95% of the homes from Atlanta north to Boston, west to San Francisco, south to San Diego, could watch the same thing at the same time.[134] Then in April 1952, the FCC

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[130] Eric Butterman, "M. Clay Adams: An Old-Fashioned Success Story," *Notre Dame Magazine*, 2006, https://magazine.nd.edu/stories/m-clay-adams-an-old-fashioned-success-story/.
[131] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[132] Adams later said he believed Montgomery was attempting a "Hollywood hatchet job" on the series and that Salomon was frustrated with the actor's recalcitrance.
[133] Harvey, "The NBC-TV Navy Project," 61.
[134] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 63.

ended its freeze on processing stations applications and allowed for new ones to enter the market. Within a year of the thaw the number of TV stations had jumped from 108 to 200 and another 200 were in the process of construction.[135] This guaranteed *Victory at Sea* a wider audience than its predecessor *Crusade* series as well as the ability to continue to grow an audience with the expansion of television stations and sets in homes.

Furthermore, the series' acclaim catapulted Salomon to success as a luminary in the television industry. As noted by Harvey, throughout the production phase Salomon stayed away from technical matters, maintaining a policy of having his staff work out any such problems themselves. Yet, Salomon had a hands-on role in ensuring the creative direction of the series, writing the narrative scripts with Richard Hanser and stressing his vision throughout. While he encouraged his team to read any books or materials on the war which could provide a greater historical perspective on the subject, he controlled the master narrative and the manner of presentation. Those who worked with him on *Victory at Sea* all believed that Salomon considered himself to be more of a poet and dramatist rather than a historian.[136] Richard Hanser later remarked that "Salomon's approach to the theme," came from "his conception of himself not as a documentary film man but as a dramatist, an artist who was using facts and events instead of invented material"[137]

Style and Themes

Salomon created *Victory at Sea* with the goal of telling a powerful tale to deposit a theme rather than a detailed history, to entertain over educate. In his article "The Creative Producer,"

[135] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 71.
[136] Harvey, "NBC-TV Navy Project," 69.
[137] Richard Hanser, Interview by Erik Barnouw, 1967, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY, pg. 31.

Salomon explained the ideal role of a writer/producer and shed light on his logic for *Victory at Sea*. Despite its episodic nature, Salomon conceived the series as a whole to tell one overarching story: "one story of Allied sea power whose victory belongs to all who believe in the universal (although unfortunately, not universally practiced) ideas of democracy and respect for the individual." It was never designed to be a "visual textbook" of World War II, which "covered every action and development like a lecturer at blackboard." Instead, the goal was "to reproduce the war at sea in terms of its human drama, to reconstruct historic events with pictures, words and music in such a way that the result would be a stirring emotional experience … to capture the terror and beauty, the exaltation and despair, the disasters and achievements of the war at sea and of the men and ships who fought it." Salomon hoped that any viewer would "come away with a broader, richer understanding of what was involved in the extraordinary effort which resulted in the defeat of tyranny on the proverbial seven seas where the Allied nations fought side by side."[138] Salomon's aim was thus not to give a detailed depiction of the machinations of the war, but an emotion laden tale of the conflict which emphasized the drama of war while highlighting the courage of the victors in their triumph over tyranny.

To achieve these aims, the series utilizes several techniques which emphasize the emotion while limiting the historical details. The organization of history in the series is not always chronological, it moves back and forth between events and campaigns on the European and Pacific Front with few dates given throughout. It only gives the names of principle leaders like Eisenhower, Montgomery, and MacArthur while obscuring the role of the various other officers and the soldiers and sailors who did the fighting. The series lacks interviews or soldier's recollections, instead having the authoritative voice of narrator Leonard Graves describe events,

[138] Henry Salomon, "The Creative Producer," article found at Wisconsin Historical Society, Henry Salomon Papers, Box 3, Folder 2.

normally through broad generalizations. In the battles depicted, the series tends to get the technical information correct in their presentation, but the episode's construction preaches a conciseness to the Allied planning and conduct. The viewer sees the level of planning done in preparation by a group of experts working at their desks or (in dress uniform) around a large table before the attack order is sent to the ships at anchor or on station in the ocean. The audience then observes a closeup on the admiral or the general in command of the operation, giving the orders to his men providing a personalization to the chain of command before the battle.[139] The battles themselves are normally 2-4-minute-long affairs played with blasting musical accompaniment, one gets glimpses of the carnage of war with shots the wounded and dead, the narration and music are used to keep the viewer from becoming too involved in the human toll of war and more attuned to the excitement of the war machinery in action. Combined these techniques work to offer an exhilarating depiction of the planning, enactment, and emotional meaning to the major operations of the war, but only simple explanations of their rationale, conduct, and cost in the exciting depictions of battle on land and sea. As television historian Peter C. Rollins concludes: "*Victory at Sea* failed as a documentary because it succeeded as a massive spectacle. The makers were too absorbed in the experience for its own sake."[140]

The series presents the war as "crusade for freedom" with the Allied forces as liberators of the world from the cruel clutches of the despotic Axis Powers. The series presents the "Japs" as ravenous for the natural resources of the pacific and the German "hordes" as conquerors of defenseless nations striving to annex their resources and enslave the populations. The allies, on the other hand, have no "worldly interests"; they fight for ideals of liberty and provenance as

[139] Gary R. Edgerton, Peter C. Rollins, and Peter C. Rollins, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), pp. 103-122, 110.
[140] Rollins, 121.

"The allies are 'free men [who] have given free men a chance to be free."[141] Such is highlighted in the episode "Guadalcanal" wherein the narration describes that victory as "one of the greatest tales of heroism," and accords to the Allies the same laurels of victory as the "the Greeks at Thermopolae, the colonials at Valley Forge, the British at Waterloo, and now the Americans at Guadalcanal."[142] Each of the noted historical battle sites of a last stand against an incredible imperial force stopped in its tracks. As noted by Peter C. Rollins the series continually uses the narration not to provide historical details on a battle or naval vessel but to make "high flown ideological points, with the unfortunate effect of driving home into the consciousness of the audience precisely what George Kennan warned must be unlearned by Americans in the Fifties."[143] The United States and its allies only go to war to defend the principles for which it stands, a key idea pushed throughout the Cold War.

Victory at Sea posits a "consensus view" of the United States in its focus on "homogeneity, continuity, and national character," and developed from the patriotic discourse of the period to present a unified image of the country.[144] From the first episode onwards, the United States is a country of no internal divisions or strife, as things like bigotry and zealot worship are only seen amongst the Axis powers and never in a "free society" like the United States. There is never any mention of the desire for "normalcy" that drove the 1920s, the reaction to class and labor struggles of the 1930s, nor any of the vast racial discord ever-present in American society. Episode 1: "Battle of the Atlantic" for example, completely ignores the

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[141] "The Fate of Europe," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, March 29, 1953).
[142] "Guadalcanal," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, December 7, 1952).
[143] Gary R. Edgerton, Peter C. Rollins, and Peter C. Rollins, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), pp. 103-122, 114.
[144] Gregory M. Pfitzer, *Samuel Eliot Morison's Historical World: In Quest of a New Parkman* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1991), pp. 213.

staunch opposition to the United States involvement in the war in Europe as evidenced in the America First Committee, opting instead for shots of crowds listening to President Roosevelt's speech announcing the Lend-Lease program, seemingly enraptured by the words of the great leader, as the narration declares American public opinion is "slowly but surely forming" as the "issues become clear." The narration, however, never clarifies what those issues are, leaving it to the audience to determine. In this way the series promotes the consensus view of history by minimizing if not ultimately erasing the internal strife within the country to reflect the needs of the nation in the midst of the Cold War where dissent was equated with treason.

The United States is a benevolent powerhouse in the series, an idealist nation whose aims are the promotion of the free world and the democratic principles it embodies, nothing more. The series highlights the inexhaustible resources the nation has at its disposal which can fuel the war machines of several nations. Episode 6 where a montage of the United States indefatigable resources –fields of grain and cotton being harvested, machines transforming the raw materials into processed goods, dams and oil rigs producing energy, production plants and factories pumping out finished products – as the narration proclaims, "In the greatest mobilization of strength ever known to the world, America prepares to rescue the world and to the rescue America marches."[145] After showcasing this abundance of resources, the episode shifts to the men who will fight the conflict with a montage of vast numbers of men reporting for duty, getting their physical examination, and entering basic training. Such presentation ignores the manpower issues within the nation during the war, how nearly half the men reporting for duty were declared unfit for service and the length of time it took to fill the military's needs took

[145] "Guadalcanal," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, December 7, 1952).

years. Such inclusions would have diluted the overarching message that United States easily has the resources and manpower to meet any enemy and will win despite any initial setbacks.

Strength is another key theme of the series. The series highlights the machines of war as symbols of strength in war and in keeping the peace. While certainly helping the Navy to look good, the shows scrupulous glamor shots of the battleships, carriers, submarines, and other vessels of the war does give the viewer an awestruck impression of the power of the machines of war. As Rollins notes:

> It is fair to postulate that any visual presentation about war will deliver an implicitly pro-war message is it focuses its attention for too long on military hardware. If you show too many fighters making visually interesting rolls and dives and too many expensive fast-carriers racing through high seas, your audience will gradually begin to believe that these gadgets have some kind of purpose in this world... they will finally come to think that the machines actually serve a good end.[146]

This sentiment is also present to *Victory at Sea*'s depiction of the atomic bomb. In its very short discussion of the bomb, the series repeats the explanation shared after the war that dropping the bombs saved a million American lives. The narration explicitly mentions in the final episode that after the using the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "the Empire of Japan surrenders fully, completely. The Allies are spared one million casualties."[147] The propagation of the million casualties figure issued by President Truman, his Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and others in his administration, re-affirming the wisdom of the federal government.[148] Thus, by maintaining a nuclear arsenal as well as the latest military vessels and hardware the United States is strong enough to decimate any threat when provoked.

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[146] Peter C. Rollins and Thomas J. McGah, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," 1972, 40.
[147] "Design for Peace," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, April 26, 1953).
[148] J. Samuel Walker, "The Decision to Use the Bomb: A Historiographical Update," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 11-37, 23.

The presentation of the Allies in *Victory at Sea* is one of a unified fighting force, allied in their shared dedication to democracy and desire for a free world. [149] Here one can see elements of Salomon's salute to Winston Churchill from years previously in the portrayal of the inexhaustible will of the British people and the importance of the "special relationship" with the United States. The first episode emphasizes the British need for material aid describing their merchant marines' "pitifully few" vessels as "hopelessly inadequate" in supplying Great Britain, using "pitiful and feeble way of making war" in relying on the vastness of the sea to avoid onslaught of German U-Boats. But it praises British people's bravery and fortitude in standing up to the German war machine, as the narration describes the Battle of Britain: "By caring not how she expends her blood, sweat, and tears, England stands firm. Hitler does not force her to her knees." In "Mare Nostrum" illustrates the British effort to "fearlessly" transport supplies to Greece early in the war despite overwhelming difficulty the alliance between Greece and Britain would be honored "no matter what." When Greece falls to the Nazis somber footage wounded Allied soldiers presumably retreating are accompanied by an uplifting score as the narration proclaims: "In defeat there is no despair, an alliance is in the making. If the East looks dark, in the West Roosevelt and the Americans extend to the English sympathy, understanding, help, and hope."[150] Hence the series prizes the characteristics of honor and resilience embodied by the British and shared by the Americans, pushing the importance of the Anglo-American alliance and the strength of the virtues of the "imperial brotherhood."

The Soviet Union, now an enemy to the Allies, unlike the British is largely excised from the history of the war. The role of the Soviet Union in the war is only addressed in 3 of the series

[149] While most of the focus is on the role of the United States and Britain, token gestures are made to other allied nations with Canada enlisting in the call for "decency and survival" while "North America is the arsenal of democracy, but South America pours out her wealth to keep the arsenal stocked."
[150] "Mare Nostrum," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, December 21, 1952).

26 episodes and when addressed it is in a manner which makes them appear secondary to the other Allies. Such is gleaned in the episode "Sea and Sand" which begins with an incredible explosion followed by shots of Soviet troops marching in the snow. The narrator explains that the Soviet Union's "cry" for a second front and implies that Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill took the "bold, decisive action" to meet this cry with the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa - Operation Torch.[151] This presentation has the effect of making the Soviet Union seem dependent on the American and British forces in their fight against Nazi Germany, when they were the only ones fighting on the ground in Europe for almost three years. Additionally, it propagates the historical falsehood that Operation Torch alleviated the Soviet strain in Eastern Europe. The viewer gets the impression that the Americans and British were the pivotal saviors of the Soviet Union in the war.

There is never a hint of conflict shown between the Allied nations, even though disagreements and hostility amongst them during the conflict are well-documented. As noted in Mariah Voce's study of the changing portrayals of World War II throughout history, "The discord between the Allies does not change what they accomplished, but it could potentially muddy the unblemished picture that propaganda wishes to portray."[152] This extends as well to the series omission of Britain's empire and the territorial aftereffects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty. Thus, in the Cold War atmosphere, any antipathy between allies and elements which could be viewed negatively in the Cold War context was overlooked to meet the larger objective of presenting a unified front against the totalitarian foes.

[151] "Sea and Sand," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, December 28, 1952).
[152] Maiah Vorce, "Changing Representations of the Second World War: Why We Fight, Victory at Sea, and The World at War," 2021, 37.

The Axis powers are presented in a simplistic, propagandistic fashion as a unified force bent on world domination, an imposing existential threat that must be vanquished at any cost. It makes it clear that the Axis powers are a monolithic force driven by an inexhaustible hunger for more territory and resources as the narrator proclaims in the opening episode, "for fascism to survive it must kill."[153] Indeed, the series clearly identifies both Germany and Japan as fascist powers in episode "Beneath the Southern Cross" where it shows Japanese and German ships meeting in the South Atlantic as the narration notes that, "the Japanese empire sends its submarines through the South Atlantic to demonstrate to Germany its loyalty to the common cause … fascism."[154] This is a clear historical falsehood as Japan was not under a fascist government and on a deeper level the Axis alliance was largely hollow with each of the three powers – German, Italy, and Japan – having separate strategies and objectives. In ignoring such historical facts to instead push a representation of a fanatical monolith, *Victory at Sea* effectively perpetuates a deceitful image of the Axis Powers which echoed the deceptive threat of the communist monolith of Eastern Europe and Asia.

The series depiction of Japanese also contains some vestiges of the racism which enlivened the wartime propaganda, despite Japan becoming a close ally to the United States by the early-1950s. The second episode of the series "The Pacific Boils Over" showcases the Japanese capital of Tokyo before Pearl Harbor with its modern architecture, cars lining the streets, and the hustle and bustle of city streets with women in kimonos walking amongst men in suits as the narration explains that here two cultures exist side by side – "oriental and occidental." The narration continues, "Social, economic, and religious ideas from an isolated past survive with superimposed industrial methods and Western ways … a strange mixture of the

[153] "Design for War," Victory at Sea (NBC, October 26, 1952).
[154] "Beneath the Southern Cross," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, January 4, 1953).

ancient with the brand new." But one feature is a constant for the Japanese, as explained in the narration – "aggression." The action moves from civilians in the street to a montage of Japanese in military uniform, as shots of marching soldiers, superimposed over faces of the soldiers, the narrations proclaims: "*Aki Ichu*: Japan's divine mission to bring the eight corners of the world under one roof. *Bushido*: the sacred code of the warrior, the glory of conquest." Despite Western influence leading to the modernization of Japan into what the narrator dubs "the most thoroughly industrialized nation in the East" its ancient codes and principles dictate conquest and aggression.[155] This is furthered in later episodes, such as episode 25 the narrator explicitly uses the word fanaticism in describing the Japanese home front compared to the frontline: "At home, desperation, at the fronts, fanaticism."[156]

Richard C. Bartone contends that this latent prejudice in describing the Japanese is a leftover from Morison's history which he claims contains an "ethnocentric perspective." Bartone cites Volume 12 on the Battle of Leyte Gulf, in which Morison claims that Japanese traditions containing "no surrender psychology, and other factors in the national make-up" led to the "Japanese merchant navy [being] reduced to a mere skeleton" as an example of how Morison and his team reduce the nation to "suicidal human beings unnecessarily argues that for the people of one country life is less valuable than those of another country."[157] Although the Germans are also shown to be vicious, with sequences of German sailors sinking innocent cargo ships, neither they nor the Italians are presented to a similar extent in their fanaticism or aggression as the Japanese. The Japanese atrocities in China as well as the Bataan Death March are addressed in some detail throughout the series, the Holocaust – the pinnacle of German atrocity in the war – is

[155] "The Pacific Boils Over," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, November 2, 1952).
[156] "Suicide for Glory," *Victory at Sea* (NBC, April 19, 1953).
[157] Richard C. Bartone, "Victory at Sea: A Case Study in 'Official' Telehistory," *Film & History* 21, no. 4 (December 1991): pp. 115-129, 117.

only alluded to in the final episode with footage of survivors in striped uniforms as the camps are liberated.[158] The vestiges of World War II propaganda seemed to linger in the series, as Vorce notes, "*Victory at Sea*'s representation of Japan may be less outwardly hateful, but it is still influenced by the prejudices that ran rampant during the Second World War."[159] Perhaps too this portrayal was a timely reminder of the brutality of an Asian enemy as the United States was presently engaged in the Korean War against the Chinese.

Victory at Sea thus skews the history of the war to promote themes of strength, patriotism, and valor. It accomplishes this through limiting any ambiguity through its narration and editing, presenting the Allies as wholly good, moral in their goals, and cooperative in their conduct while drawing the Axis as bent on world domination and savage in their conduct. While the portrayal harkens back to the propaganda of the war it was crafted with the objectives of the Cold War in mind as Salomon tried to posit themes an audience would hold onto and find comfort in amidst the seeming unending disorder in the world and setbacks in the United States struggle against communism. Each episode gives a clear picture that the Allied Powers, at least the United States and Great Britain, were the heroes of the war, with almost all mistakes made glossed over or omitted. As Maiah Vorce summarizes in her Master's thesis analysis of the series V*ictory at Sea* "reflects this American vision and the need to overcome its new enemy.… Like *Why We Fight*, the series presents a black and white picture of the conflict while touting the righteousness of the American cause."[160]

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[158] Interestingly, this footage is presented in the last episode of the series which largely addresses the end of the war in Japan and the general aftermath of the war. In episode 22, "The Fate of Europe," depicting the end of the war in Europe; the Holocaust is not even hinted at.
[159] Maiah Vorce, "Changing Representations of the Second World War: Why We Fight, Victory at Sea, and The World at War," 2021, 33.
[160] Maiah Vorce, "Changing Representations of the Second World War: Why We Fight, Victory at Sea, and The World at War," 2021, 10.

The State of World Affairs

Victory at Sea proved such a hit with viewers because it provided an uplifting message of American purpose at a time when the country was at a low point in their sense of security and self-pride. Internationally, the nation was reeling from the anxiety and sense of losing ground in the Cold War. In Europe the battle lines between East and West had been drawn with the whole of Eastern Europe under communism and the rest fighting to maintain their democratic governments after numerous close calls in the countries of France, Italy, Greece, and Germany with the memory of the airlift still fresh. In Asia, Communism seemed to be spreading like wildfire with China falling to Mao Zedong's communist forces in 1949 and French Indochina in the throes of a communist backed rebellion. Furthermore, Americans had been committed to a seemingly endless war in the Korean Peninsula.

At home the specter of communist infiltration seemed to hide in every corner. Beginning with the trial of Alger Hiss in 1947, it seemed that the government which had led the nation through the Second World War was now infested with spies and "security risks" a veiled term which tended to indicate homosexuals.[161] Americans were taken by the line of Senator Joseph McCarthy who in 1950 claimed to have a list of card-carrying communists working in the State Department, shaping American foreign policy to the benefit of the communists. Seemingly vindicated by the onset of the Korean War and the subsequent onslaught of accusations into the Truman administration led to McCarthy being placed in charge of his own investigatory committee when the Republicans took control of Congress in 192. The press quickly seized on the threat of inversion within the government beyond those with communist sympathies. As noted by historian David K. Johnson, "Republican members of Congress began to express

[161] David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 6

concerns about homosexuals in the State Department in 1947, at the very onset of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. With the rise of McCarthy in 1950, their concerns became public and sparked a moral panic with both popular and political discourse."[162] The Hoey Committee Report of 1950, which reported on the matter of homosexuals within the State Department, gave credence to the accusations of the federal government being filled with "security risks." The Truman administration would eventually remove over 400 people working in the State Department on charges of real or imagined homosexuality, roughly twice as many as those fired or made to resign for communist sympathies.[163] But the larger effect was giving Americans the impression that their government was in fact a facile, impotent force not strong enough to address the international threats to the United States, much less internal ones.

The Red and Lavender Scares were overblown witch-hunting campaigns stoked by savvy conservative politicians to oust the genteel, upper-class liberals who had inhabited the federal government since the New Deal of the 1930s. While the liberals of the Truman Administration had stoked the fear of communism in their policy pitches, conservatives took this a step further by linking the need for strength to face communism with precepts of masculinity. As Dean notes the liberal establishment's use of "countersubversive rhetoric condemning 'perversion' created an apparent public consensus about sexuality and political manliness. It allowed the Right to exploit the apparently ambiguous sexuality of many within the patrician establishment and to purge the target victims."[164]

Salomon himself had several friends affected by the tumult over security embodied by the Red and Lavender Scares, one of which was Charles W. Thayer. Thayer, the son of a wealthy

[162] Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, pp. 4-5.
[163] Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), pp. 66.
[164] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, pp. 72.

Pennsylvania family and a graduate of the St. Paul's School, had a long career in foreign service as a Soviet and Eastern European specialist. He was a member of William C. Bullitt's first tenure as ambassador to the Soviet Union in 1934-1935, where Thayer worked alongside George Kennan and his future brother-in-law Charles E. Bohlen. During the war Thayer served with distinction in the U.S. Army and the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in Yugoslavia and Austria earning the Legion of Merit. In 1947 he was appointed the head of the State Department's Broadcasting Division (Voice of America), subsequently holding a series of consular positions in West Germany.

Ultimately, Thayer's career in the State Department was derailed by the concerted efforts of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover and Senator Joseph McCarthy whose investigators dubbed Thayer "a key figure in [the] State [Department] as of Feb. 1950."[165] McCarthy's gumshoes compiled a laundry list of charges against Thayer drawn from "hostile gossip and speculation by Thayer's enemies and premised on guilt by association" drawing him as a communist sympathizer, embezzler, and sexual deviant.[166] Amongst the claims compiled were that during Thayer service in the OSS he had two political advisors who were communists, made over a million dollars from the Yugoslav black market, and was attended to regularly by a young Yugoslavian waiter named Marko, who was a known homosexual.[167] Indeed, the sexual element of the investigation was the most scandalous, even contending that Thayer's first marriage to Maria Petrucci, the daughter of an Italian diplomat, fell apart due to homosexual affairs.[168] Despite the flimsy nature of the evidence against him and Thayer's own defense before Congress that he had "never performed a homosexual act" renewed aggression against him in 1952,

[165] Dean, Imperial Brotherhood, pp. 98.
[166] Dean, Imperial Brotherhood, pp. 105-106.
[167] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, pp. 99-101
[168] Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood*, pp. 106.

stemming from Republican gains in Congress emboldening McCarthy, and the precocious nature of his brother-in-law Charles Bohlen's appointment as ambassador to the Soviet Union, led Thayer to resign from government in 1953 leaving the United States altogether for Mallorca, Spain.

Salomon who befriended Thayer through his wife Cynthia, the daughter of ambassador James Dunn, was one of the few people in the Thayer's social circle who maintained their friendship after the fallout. As Cynthia Thayer wrote to Salomon upon their exile to Mallorca, "How nice… to know there are still some people who wonder what became of us." In her words, "Charlie ran afoul of that senator from Wisconsin and it didn't seem worth the dirt and the strain and the energy to prove the monster wrong… so with very heavy hearts, we decided it would be best to resign."[169] While she did not get into the specific charges against her husband, she bemoans the end of his nineteen years of public service and the depressed nature of the family over these political machinations. Salomon himself being a thirty-something bachelor of similar cosmopolitan background with a high-pitched voice, impeccable sense of style, and hobby of collecting antique furniture would likely have been another victim of the Lavender Scare had he been employed in government service.

The premiere of the series which reassured Americans of their strength and morality whilst highlighting the importance of the war to world history also coincided with the election of Dwight D. Eisenhower as president in November 1952. Eisenhower, the general who oversaw the Allied invasion of Europe and the fall of Nazi Germany, was one of the most esteemed people in the world by the time he announced his candidacy. As media scholar David Haven Blake noted, "Polls revealed him to be one of the most admired men in the nation, and for many

[169] Cynthia Thayer, Letter to Henry Salomon, January 11, 1954, Henry Salomon Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Box 1, Folder 4.

Americans, Ike was the public face of a military effort that had spanned every continent but Antarctica."[170] While Eisenhower tended not to emphasize his wartime exploits, he was for many Americans the embodiment of American victory. Yet, it was a certain manner of victorious character Eisenhower embodied which was key to his uproarious reception as a presidential candidate. Unlike his Republican opponent and fellow general Douglass MacArthur who combined the classic styling of military regalia and theatrically outsized props likes the sunglasses and smoking pipe to complement his idea of himself as a kind of American Caesar destined to lead the nation to glory on the back of his military accomplishments, Eisenhower projected the image of one who had successfully transitioned from the military back to civilian life. As noted by Beidler, "In contrast to the great captain, convinced of the infallibility of his leadership and charismatic genius for authority, Eisenhower was what we would now call the ultimate team player in American military and political history. He was a company man from start to finish, a "consensus builder" if there ever was one."[171] He, like so many other veterans, had taken his wartime experiences to heart, but would not dwell on them as some kind of example of glory but as a foundation from which to build the future - the "American Century" – as a civilian leader, not a military one. Eisenhower's election occurred simultaneously with the series, premiering two weeks before his victory in the 1952 presidential election and running though his inauguration and first month in office.

This atmosphere is in no small measure a good reason for series' success. It not only reminded Americans of a time when they were glorious, but showcased what the war was about, what it meant in the context of the present struggle. For veterans, the series was a justifier of

[170] David Haven Blake, *Liking Ike: Eisenhower, Advertising, and the Rise of Celebrity Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 63.
[171] Philip D. Beidler, *The Victory Album: Reflections on the Good Life after the Good War* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010), pp. 102.

their actions as it was transcended to the morality play of good vs. evil with themselves the heroes. As Rollins described, the veteran: "Even if he has once been a 'participant' in the battles portrayed by the series, he will most likely jettison what terror and distress have clung to his memories in favor of the more reassuring "top brass" perspective that *Victory at Sea* gives him as a 'participant-observer.'"[172] For those who were not there, did not live through the war, its presentation is certainly to be believed as its authoritative narration, backing of the U.S. Navy, and glowing response all seemed to justify that its presentation was valid. Such can be gleaned from a write-up for the series in the *New York Herald Tribune* which cites examples of the response to the series from those who served in the war and those who did not, both now viewing it on television. It shares the story of a young boy in New Jersey who asked NBC for a frame enlargement from one clip showing a group of sailors aboard a ship. He believed one of them was his uncle – "an almost legendary figure as far as the boy was concerned, because he'd heard a great deal about him, but had never seen him." His uncle died when his cruiser Juneau was sunk in 1942 off the Solomons, along with the five Sullivan brothers. It also shared the story of Frank Vicovari, a veteran who was watching the episode "Beneath the Southern Cross" when he suddenly saw himself being rescued from a lifeboat by a German submarine crew. Vicovari, an industrialist after the war, had been the head of a British-American Ambulance Corps unit enroute to Africa, aboard the steamer Zamzam when it was sunk by the Nazi raider *Atlantis* in 1941. "He was picked up by the Atlantis, which was sunk by the British" explains the article, "picked up by a German supply ship, also sunk by the British and finally picked up and taken prisoner aboard a German submarine, one of whose officers made the films seen on 'Victory at

[172] Gary R. Edgerton, Peter C. Rollins, and Peter C. Rollins, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), pp. 111.

Sea.'"[173] These stories highlight the heroism inherent in the war as shown in *Victory at Sea*, assuring the larger audience that the war was a heroic effort which represented the best of America.

On another level the series enforces the sanctity of the Roosevelt White House, and by extension those who were now the target of conservative machinations. The lack of any mention of mistakes made by American leaders during the war, and the prevailing idea that those which occurred were merely temporary setbacks worked to reinforce the foresight coming from those in Washington down to the battlefields. It gives the impression that those in government know what is best and are up to any challenge presented with the aid of the Armed Services. In this way, it offered a rebuttal to the Red and Lavender Scares – an affirmation of the strength and courage of the men and women castigated as "security risks."

Conclusion

The series ultimately outlived the tumult of the times in which it was made. It was regularly re-broadcast by independent stations up through the 1970s while also being reproduced as a film, photobook, record album, and even a novelization of its episodes on submarine warfare.[174] Its esteem as a work of television innovation continued to be heralded for decades, it was even included in a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in the early 1960s as an example of the development of the medium.[175] In the aftermath of the Vietnam War with the larger reassessment of the Cold War the series began to be analyzed critically for its

[173] Gordon Allison, "TV: 'Victory at Sea' Strikes Close to Home: Veterans See Themselves, Many People Re-Live Emotional War Experiences," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 15, 1953.
[174] The book was *Victory at Sea: The Submarine* adapted by Thomas D. Parrish for the Scholastic Book Services in 1959.
[175] *Television,* February 1963, pp. 45.

Cold War perception of history as noted in Peter C. Rollins article "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic" and other works as the decades progressed which faulted its representation of history.

Nevertheless, *Victory at Sea* created a new mode of storytelling for television and would be the standard from which future historical documentary series would be judged. Salomon himself would continue to be the progenitor of the format with his next venture *Project Twenty [XX]* (1954-1970). The series of hour-long historical compilation documentaries utilized the same crew of Hyatt, Hanser, Kleinerman, and Bennett as well as the same format as *Victory at Sea*, but instead examined different periods and events in the history of the twentieth to, in Solomon's words, "try to trace on the broad, confused map of contemporary history the routes taken by individual men and groups of men, by communities and by nations, hoping thereby to scan our present situation… We hope it will add up to a composite drama of our age, the visual story of man groping in a world rocked by change and convulsion."[176]

Unsurprisingly Salomon continued to present history along the same ideological perspective as *Victory at Sea.* Such is illustrated in the program "Nightmare in Red" (1955), an overtly anti-communist depiction of fall of Czars as a paradise lost while the rise of communism depicted through the machinations Lenin and Stalin is a hijacking of the peasants dream of a "truly liberal society" mutated into a regime that enslaved the people worse than the czars, with constant food shortages, forced labor, and political purges.[177] Another program, "The Twisted Cross" (1956), charts the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler gives special attention to the tools utilized by the Nazis in their brainwashing of the German populace in such a way as if inform the audience to look out against these aspects.[178] Salomon's anti-communism and drive to extend the

[176] Henry Salomon, "Of Jazz, Nightmares & Austria's Fidelio" (*Variety,* July 27, 1955), pp 39.
[177] "Nightmare in Red," *Project Twenty* (NBC, December 27, 1955).
[178] "The Twisted Cross," *Project Twenty* (NBC, March 14, 1956).

themes of freedom, liberty, and overcoming obstacles through resolve and strength would be a defining trait of his interpretation of history throughout his career which ended abruptly with his death in February 1958 at the age of only 40 from a cerebral hemorrhage.[179]

There were numerous plans from various producers to imitate the style and scope of *Victory at Sea* in the following years, but the only series to follow the style of *Victory at Sea* in telling the history of the war on television was CBS's *Air Power* (1956-1957). Produced by Perry Wolff and made as a co-production between the network and the U.S. Air Force, eager to strengthen their image and secure a greater monetary allotment from Congress as the Navy had, the series told the history of the aviation as a military weapon. It charted the evolution of military aviation from the invention of the airplane with the Wright Brothers at the beginning of the twentieth century through the development of supersonic aircraft and the intercontinental ballistic missiles of the 1950s, as well as individual stories of aerial exploits, the pioneering work in rocketry, and the perspective future of the field. Despite its broader subject matter, 18 of its 26 episodes concerned aerial happenings of World War II and is generally considered a successor to *Victory at Sea* but with its focus on the air war.

Like *Victory at Sea*, the series utilized much the same format as its predecessor, with 26, half-hour episodes drawn largely from the military's archives. Each episode focused on a battle or mission, with copious amounts of action footage, especially dog fights and bombing missions which emphasized action over historical education. Its subjects varied from specific engagements like the Battle of Britain and the Doolitte Raid as well as broader presentations of campaigns and the introduction of new aircraft like Episode 15: "Pacific Patterns" which chronicles the offensive of US aircraft carriers in the Pacific from 1943 to early 1944 and Episode 15:

[179] "Henry Salomon, TV Official, Dead," *New York Times*, February 2, 1958, pp. 86.

"Conquest of the Air" about the development and importance of the P-51 Mustang fighter plane. Like *Victory at Sea*, it pushes a glamorized image of the branch of service with numerous "glamor" shots of the machinery which defeated the Axis powers as well as those being developed in the ongoing war against the Communist threats. Also, like *Victory at Sea*, the series utilizes an omnipresent, off-screen narrator [Walter Cronkite], and an original score composed by Norman Dello Joio which highlight spectacle and emotion, as in *Victory at Sea*, largely employing general descriptions to describe a mission while letting the music give meaning to many scenes.[180] Likewise, the Air Force's influence was equivalent to that of the Navy in *Victory at Sea*, the service was only allowed provide direct feedback in the scripting stage and request changes to the edits on the grounds of national security and historical accuracy, but not on editorial content.[181]

Nonetheless, *Air Power* has some differences which help it avoid being a carbon copy of *Victory at Sea* and arguably hampered some of its appeal. As noted by historian Richard C. Bartone, whereas Salomon's naval background and political ideology brought "blinders to history," Wolff's background as an infantryman in the war meant he did not have the same passion for the service presented. As such the series has a somewhat conflicted presentation on the forces behind the Allied victory as some episodes stress how the combined efforts of the infantry and Air Force won the day. Also, as claimed by its editor Peter Poor, the producer Wolff was not as involved in crafting the totality of the finished series as the editor was. Unlike Salomon who was the sole determinant on content and structure, here the producer largely

[180] While Cronkite narrated all 26 episodes, episode 2: "The Early Days" was co-narrated by flying ace Eddie Rickenbacker; episode 5: "The Battle of Britain" was co-narrated by British actor Michael Redgrave; and episode 7: "Fools, Daredevils, and Geniuses" was co-narrated by American actor Art Carney.
[181] Richard C. Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis" (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 65.

established the general historical boundaries of each program but left it to the editor to shape each program while maintaining final say on all major decisions.[182]

The series also utilizes a different narrative structure than its predecessor, which its editor Marshall Flaum dubbed "Aristotelian structure." *Air Power* dropped the essay approach to history, punctuated by dramatic moments, as used in *Victory at Sea* and *Project XX*, instead utilizing a formal 3-Act dramatic structure. Bartone summarized the structure for each episode as such: "first, establish setting, problem, and tension; second, increase tension through a series of complications; and third, release tension through a climax leading to resolution."[183] The structure was also employed, in part, because the production did a minimal amount of historical research, so they had to cover this gap in knowledge with more action. Its episodes also contain less of the overt flag waving theatrics of its predecessors, as the narration abstains from repeatedly expressing that the Air Force is a protector of liberty and freedom in the world. While still indubitably an endorsement of the Air Force which showcases its exciting, impactful history while highlighting its cutting-edge technological developments, the Cold War dichotomy is not as pronounced.[184]

Air Power still contained many of the hallmarks of *Victory at Sea* and was made with a similar intention to promote support for the nation's Armed Forces as a vanguard against future threats. While having a slightly different structure and containing less of the overt Cold War propaganda of its predecessor, it still held the stylistic components that had made *Victory at Sea* so compelling and pushed a largely surface-level history of the war which emphasized the role of the Allies will power and technology as keystones in the defeat of the Axis, things which were

[182] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century," 75.
[183] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century," 77.
[184] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century," 74.

still applicable to the war against communism. However, while not a failure the series did not have the same impact or reach of the *Victory at Sea*. This could be attributed to the development of programming since the naval history's airing as well as the fact that *Victory at Sea* was still airing in syndication.

Victory at Sea (1952-1953) and *Air Power* (1955-1956) stunned audiences with vivid renditions of the past war, featuring skilled editing of archival footage combined with rousing musical scores and omnipresent narrators describing exciting victories. By highlighting American military superiority and ingenuity in time of dire crisis both documentaries reminded audiences of the United States' past glories, but more importantly, the need for vigilance against communist foes confronting the nation. Each espoused a predetermined view of history fashioned to benefit American naval and air power at the expense of thoughtful inquiry of the war. Products of a cold war environment which would continue to equate communism with fascism for the remainder of the 1950s, these documentaries reflected the influence of the military and their sponsors in crafting such non-controversial, patriotic, and pro-military perspectives. Yet, as the decade and the television environment progressed, such multi-part documentary epics focusing on a branch of the service or theater of the war would soon fall out of favor.

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Air Power

CHAPTER 3 *THE TWENTIETH CENTURY* & THE MIDCENTURY MEDIATORS OF WORLD WAR II

1957 was a watershed year for the American television industry. The television landscape was continuing to evolve thanks to rapid expansion, new business practices, and a flurry of content development. By August 1, 1957, approximately 40,706,746 homes contained a television, totaling 82 percent of all-American households. This was a rapid advance from the nine percent of American homes that housed television receivers at the end of 1950. As the 1950s began there were 108 television stations in operation, largely confined to big cities of the coasts and the Midwest. By the end of 1957 there were 467 throughout the nation.[185] Furthermore, American television owners were turning on and watching on average 5.1 hours of content a day with television schedules now full from morning through night, seven days a week with a variety of programming.[186] These included children's programs (over 14 hours a week); entertainment programs like Westerns, situation comedy, suspense and adventure totaling (19 hours); sporting events (18 hours); quiz and audience-participation programs (7 hours); music and dance programs (3.5 hours); and news (over 6 hours). The viewer also had a broad choice of feature films, documentaries, foreign language telecasts, and farm-agricultural programs and a variety of religious programs on Sunday.[187] This growth in audiences and content led Lansing B. Linduist, vice-president and associate director of advertising giant McCann Erickson's tv-radio

[185] "Focus on Business," *Television Magazine,* August 1957, pp. 11.
[186] "Combined Radio-TV Use Continues Up," *Broadcasting*, February 24, 1958, pp. 120.
[187] "Focus on Business," *Television Magazine,* August 1957, pp. 11.

department, to declare: “When we turn the corner into 1958 we are dealing for the first time with a full-blown, grown-up set of media tools.”[188]

To many the growth of television was astounding, but to some the programs which dominated the airwaves were troubling. By 1957, filmed programs shot on location in California or in studio backlots had overtaken live broadcast productions out of New York. The live drama productions and comedy variety shows like *Kraft Televisions Theater* (1947-1958) and Sid Caesar’s *Caesar’s Hour* (1954-1957) were replaced with westerns like *Gunsmoke* (1955-1975), *Wagon Trail* (1957-1965), *The Rifleman* (1958-1963) along with numerous quiz-shows and sitcoms. These offered audiences a burst of excitement or laughs, but not much intellectual stimulation.[189] As the networks solidified their control over the medium, their commitment to diverse programming that welcomed the 1950s began to diminish in favor of entertainment programs that attracted large audiences at a lower cost. Television historians Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik conclude that, “the viewers had cast their votes for the old sage and the isolation booths.”[190]

Television’s historical documentary programming was one of the waning program types of the late-1950s. The network higher-ups and broadcasters wrote off news and public affairs programming as money losing ventures, a “noble” loss for the public’s good. As such they allocated less money for this type of programming than on popular entertainment programs like westerns and sitcoms. By the late-1950s, sponsors were sought to shoulder the cost of production, but this was a tempestuous task given the perceived lack of viewers for historical or public interest programs. Sig Mickelson, vice-president of CBS-News from 1952 to 1959 and

[188] Lansing B. Linduist, "Radio-TV: They're Now Grown Up," *Broadcasting*, Nov. 11, 1957, pp. 36.
[189] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse Univ. Press, 2010), 111-119.
[190] Castleman and Podrazik, *Watching TV*, 114.

later president from 1959 to 1961, reflected on the difficult position of informational programming in his history of CBS News *The Decade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s:* "It was hard to attract a sponsor to a program that was produced with only a bare minimum of the resources required to make it a crowd pleaser, and without adequate resources it was hard to create programs that would attract commercial interest."[191] The economic recession that hit the United States in 1957 accentuated this situation as the News and Public Affairs divisions of CBS was first place the network sought to cut costs.[192]

There was a notable exception to this recession of historical documentary programs, one which would mark a new chapter in the format's history, CBS's series *The Twentieth Century*. CBS's follow-up to *Air Power*, utilizing the same format, narrator (Walter Cronkite), and sponsor (Prudential Insurance) while expanding the purviews of the television documentary with its anthology format. Produced by Burton Benjamin and Isaac Kleinerman, editor of *Victory at Sea* and its follow-up *Project XX* (1957-1970), the series was one of the longest-running and most acclaimed documentary series to air on American television. Running nine seasons from the fall of 1957 through the summer of 1966, and airing in syndication for years afterward, with a total of 219 programs: 112 half-hour historical compilations and 107 documentaries on contemporary subjects.[193] Between the fall of 1957 and the onset of the 1960 season, it was the only regularly scheduled series of its kind, producing 26 original shows each season.[194]

It is also a pivotal link between the documentary miniseries that dominated the 1950s and the new specials style series of the 1960s that worked to espouse Cold War prerogatives. It was

[191] Sig Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 197.
[192] Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News*, 199-200.
[193] Richard C. Bartone, 'The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis' (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 1.
[194] NBC had a similar series *Project XX* (1954-1970), which highlighted events in twentieth century history in hour-long programs. However, *Project XX* was not regularly scheduled and produced roughly 2-3 specials a year.

made during and reflects a pivotal period of the Cold War from the beginning of the "Space Race" with the launch of Sputnik in the late-1950s to the commitment of U.S. ground forces in Vietnam. The launch of Sputnik, the U-2 Incident, and the fall of Cuba to communism spurred criticism of the medium's network hierarchy, leading to a flurry of documentaries that worked to promote the ideological constructs of the United States' role in the Cold War, especially with the Kennedy administration's goals of re-asserting the need for American intervention in world affairs to safeguard against the subversive influence of Communism. *The Twentieth Century* played a part in this in its contemporary programs on world affairs as well as its historical programs which fashioned its portrayal of historical incidents to complement the popular dialogue of the period.

Cold War imperatives permeated numerous episodes the series produced on the Second World War. Although not solely devoted to the presentation of World War II, *The Twentieth Century* is a vital example of the Cold War's influence in the rendition of World War II on television. While utilizing the style and rousing rendition of combat as its predecessors, its anthology format allowed for a wider variety of topics on the war. The series addressed a plethora of different topics related to the war, including figures, battles, weapons, or events throughout the war on the part of the Allied or the Axis as opposed to just one theater of the war or one branch of the Armed Service.

The series stands out for its variety, but also as the most visible depiction of the war on television for a generation of viewers. Its episodes were the primary means of seeing the war on television outside of a staple of old war films, reruns of the *Victory at Sea*, and the Army-produced series *The Big Picture* (1953-1970) which was offered for free to local stations. While scripted World War II-set series ranging from dramas like *Combat*! (1962-1967) to comedies

Hogan's Heroes (1965-1970) gained prominence by the mid-1960s as the primary images of the war on the small screen, the series documentary portrayals would give it an authority in its depictions and estimations on the war that had made a greater imprint in affecting older Americans understanding of the conflict.

Yet the World War II episodes were normally crafted around a theme or styled their presentation which benefitted the popular understanding of the Cold War. This extended to their presentation of the U.S. military as nearly infallible, the Germans as equals and the evils of Nazism not shared with the people, and the need for America's presence in world affairs. Of particular interest are episodes concerning the Eastern Front and the portrayal of the Soviet Union. These were the first detailed displays of the Eastern Front on American television and did so by framing the leaders, battles, and populace of the Soviet Union couched in anti-communist precepts that had permeated popular culture since the late-1940s.

Additionally, the series portrayal of such topics represents an elaboration on the mediators that guided the depiction of World War II on television in conjunction with the Cold War atmosphere. Like its predecessors it was subject to the interests of the Department of Defense, which it relied upon for a significant amount of war-related footage, but also guided by the interests of their sponsor, the Prudential Insurance Company of America, and the network, both of whom put a maxim on avoiding controversy. Examining the role of these mediators shows the variety of forces at play in determining the presentation of the war in response to concerns of appeal and conformity spawned by the Red Scare.

The series production model also details how the depiction of the war continued to be tailored to the perceptions of their showrunners, again veterans. Although the show promoted its scrupulous research and adherence to facts as well as scripts written by historians and journalists,

who in many cases witnessed the events depicted, the programs were guided by the outlooks of its producers. This resulted in a largely conservative presentation which endorsed the popular perception of the war and the importance of acting on the world stage while at time echoing present-day concerns through its framing of events or figures covered. All of this showcases how the pervasive influence of the Cold War on the television industry continued to promote a depiction of war which reinforced the valor and strength of the military and the place of the United States abroad.

Historical Context

The premiere of *The Twentieth Century* on October 20, 1957 coincided the expansion of calls for television to take more responsibility in their selection of programming and commitment to national interests. Television's expanded role in public life coupled with the bulk of its programming as seemingly mind-numbing entertainment was troubling for some in the government given the rapidly changing situation of the United States at the end of the 1950s. Despite Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev's call for warmer relations with the United States at the 1955 Geneva Conference, the Soviet crushing of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising reinvigorated the perception of Communism as a brutal, expansive force which needed to be contained.[195] Most prescient, however, in the minds of Americans was the Soviet Union's launch of the first artificial, earth-orbital satellite "Sputnik" on October 4, 1957. This display of Soviet technological prowess not only launched the world into the "Space Age," but shocked observers in the United States, creating a sense of vulnerability amongst the public. American journalist Marquis Childs captured the reaction of Americans when he wrote: "This struck our deepest

[195] Walter L. Hixson, Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 104, 109.

pride. It tore at the myth of our invulnerability. Striking at the precious legend of our might, it seemed to leave us suddenly naked and defenseless."[196]

The panic over Sputnik reverberated so strongly in part because it coincided with growing critiques of American society at the time. Not only was the United States behind the Soviet Union in rocketry, but it was on a general decline according to numerous social critics. Many cited American society's emphasis on materialism and conformity while also pointing out rising rates of juvenile delinquency, a staggering economy, and a population which had little urgency in combating communism in the emerging Third World. Media historian, Michael Curtin deduces that Sputnik, "became a key moment of transition in American society not only because it raised the possibility of American nuclear vulnerability but because it enhanced the status of social critics who yoked a whole constellation of social issues to the global struggle of communism."[197] Thus, there emerged an immediacy to the social concerns of the American populace, whose position on the world stage would soon fall to the next generation. A generation increasingly glued to their televisions.

The launch of Sputnik and subsequent space activities of the Soviets at the end of the 1950s, bolstered criticisms leveled against television as the medium became linked to the larger re-assessment of American society. The networks were criticized not only for poor programming and commercialism, but their larger failure to act as caretakers of the airwaves, defenders of the integrity of the medium and abandoning the commitment to diverse, engaging programming.[198]

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[196] Childs quoted in Victor Rosenberg, Soviet-American Relations, 1953-1960: Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange During the Eisenhower Presidency (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company Inc.), 115.
[197] Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 30.
[198] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland*, 23.

Jack Gould, esteemed television critic for the *New York Times,* "as a critic," asked: "How much interest can be generated about a medium which is losing excitement through repetition of forms?" Although Gould claimed he understood the financial strictures of the industry, he nonetheless believed that the medium had a responsibility to provide a greater diversity of programming, especially education and public affairs programs, for the sake of the nation's youth for whom television was a primary influencer.[199] Instead of producing nullifying entertainment, television could inform its audience to the pressing concerns of the nation and reinvigorate their sense of duty to country.[200]

The fallout from the Quiz Show Scandal of 1957-1958 gave credence to criticisms of television abandoning the integrity and ideals Americans needed so pivotally to maintain their place in the world.[201] "Even if one dissents (as I do) from alarmist predictions about television producing a nation of imbeciles," wrote historian, critic, and later advisor to President Kennedy Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "one must still wonder about the social wisdom of letting so miraculous and compelling a medium degenerate into electronic vaudeville."[202] It was becoming more of a public concern that television was harming, not helping the nation at so pivotal a time.

The network heads, seeing the writing on the wall, met in secret at the New York St. Regis Hotel at the end of 1959 to discuss ways of handling the mounting public criticism.[203] The result was an agreement dubbed the Doerfer Plan, named after outgoing FCC Chairman John Doerfer, in which each network promised to increase their investment in documentary

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[199] Leon Morse, "Inside Jack Gould," *Television Magazine*, Nov. 1958, pp. 49-51, 94-95
[200] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland*, 27.
[201] The Quiz Show Scandal was the revelation that the producers of several quiz shows had been passing answers to their contestants to raise tension and popularity of certain contenders. The scandal led to the virtual extinction of large prize quiz shows from prime-time television and placed a greater emphasis on limiting the power of sponsors. Although network heads claimed ignorance of the cheating and increased their power, they were accused of negligence in having allowed this to happen, prompting renewed calls for government oversight.
[202] Arthur Schlesinger Jr., "How Television Can Meet Its Responsibilities," TV Guide, December 12, 1959, 25.
[203] *Broadcasting* January 25, 1960, 70-72.

programming.[204] Although more a symbolic gesture, the agreement signifies the stock placed in documentaries as tools for the public's benefit. It was the format which, in the words of Sig Mickelson, "can tackle a difficult, complex story and make it not only of high significance, but also of absorbing interest to the viewer."[205] Curtin goes further, describing why documentary was ideal format to fulfill the calls for responsibility, they, "not only promised to reconnect the suburban middle class with public life, but it also offered a form of expert, 'value-free' information that would make it possible for a reinvigorated American public to make crucial decisions about global issues."[206]

As the 1950s came to an end, criticism of the industry began to taper off slightly, in part due to the seemingly improving relations between the two superpowers. The signing of the Exchange in the Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields Agreement in 1957 – better known as the Lacy-Zarubin Agreement – facilitated the exchange of cultural products like films, music, and scholarly works and opened the door for more reciprocity between the two nations. High-profile visits to the Soviet Union were made by such figures as Eleanor Roosevelt, Adlai Stevenson, and Senator Hubert Humphrey whilst Soviet vice premier Anastas Mikoyan and Frol Kozlov made tours of the United States. This cultural reciprocity would reach a zenith in 1959 with the Soviet Exhibition in New York City in June, the American Exhibition in Moscow in July and Nikita Khrushchev's visit to the United States in September. These exchanges birthed a renewed hope for peace, dubbed "the spirit of Camp David," after Khrushchev's sojourn with Eisenhower at the Presidential getaway, at the end of 1950s.[207] As cultural historian Jennifer M.

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[204] *Sponsor*, November 7, 1960, 29.
[205] Sig Mickelson, "TV Accepts Its Greatest Challenge," *Television Magazine*, May 1958, pp. 46.
[206] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland*, p. 19.
[207] Victor Rosenberg, *Soviet-American Relations, 1953-1960: Diplomacy and Cultural Exchange During the Eisenhower Presidency* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 223.

Hudson concludes, the rise in cultural exchanges helped stoke "reciprocal curiosity at the grassroots level" as the "Rhetoric of coexistence overshadowed talks of hegemony - an indication that cultural detente could exist alongside political tensions."[208]

Unfortunately, animosity between the United States and Soviet Union flared up again in the beginning of the 1960s. The downing of Francis Gary Powers' U-2 spy-plane's flight over Russia on May 1, 1960, infuriated the Soviet populace, especially after Eisenhower's blanket denial was disproven. Eisenhower's subsequent refusal to apologize sabotaged the goodwill fostered from the previous year. The fall of the Battista regime in Cuba to Fidel Castro who would firmly ally with the Soviet Union by the end of 1960 further heightened Cold War anxieties. Less than a year after the failed Bay of Pigs invasion, American and Soviet tanks would be facing one another in Berlin and a year later the two sides would be at the precipice of war with the Cuban Missile Crisis. The need for a more informed populace, educated and energized to combat the pervasive forces threatening global security became increasingly urgent, especially in the John F. Kennedy White House.

Kennedy, who owed his election in part to the influence of television, sought for it to take an active role in alerting the world to the Cold War struggle. His inaugural address explicitly called upon Americans to take up the torch; "unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world."[209] President Kennedy's choice for the chairman of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Newton Minow would make the administration's emphasis on social action clear in his first address to the National Association of

[208] Jennifer M. Hudson, *Cold War Twitcher: Russo-American Cold War Relations* (Lanham, NC: Lexington Books, 2019), 151.
[209] The Avalon Project (Ed.). (2008). Inaugural Address of John F. Kennedy (Friday, January 20, 1961). Retrieved December 03, 2020, from https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false

Broadcasters on May 9, 1961. Traditionally a meeting to establish the tone for the following relations between the chairman and the industry, Minow made waves amongst the room of television executives with a stunning rebuke of the medium. He not only referred to television as a "vast wasteland," but elicited the Cold War imperatives: “with Communist tyranny on our Caribbean doorstep and relentless pressure on our Atlantic alliance… and with technological knowledge that makes it possible, as our President has said, not only to destroy our world but to destroy poverty around the world - in a time of peril and opportunity, the old complacent, unbalanced fare of action-adventure and situation comedies is simply not good enough.” [210]

Minow would later focus his concern to advocating for more informational programming as opposed to outright overhaul of the schedule when faced with staunch opposition by the industry and their powerful congressional lobby.[211] Nonetheless, the networks and independent stations responded to the chairman’s call, with a flurry of documentaries. More documentaries were produced and aired in network prime time from 1961-1965 than any other comparable time-period of American television. In the peak season of 1962, what *Broadcasting* magazine dubbed the “Documentary Year”[212] NBC, CBS, and ABC together produced a total of 387 documentaries. Furthermore, the season featured six weekly prime-time documentary series along with frequent nighttime specials like NBC’s *White Paper* on topics of interest in world and domestic affairs including the situation in hotspots like Berlin, the emerging third world nations, and even in the struggle for Civil Rights at home.[213]

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[210] Newton N. Minow, *Equal Time: The Private Broadcaster and the Public Interest* (New York: Athenaeum, 1964), 50-51.
[211] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland*, p. 32.
[212] "Will 1962 Be Documentary Year?" Broadcasting, Dec. 25, 1961, pp. 19.
[213] “’Will 1962 Be Documentary Year?" Broadcasting, Dec. 25, 1961, 18-19.

The Twentieth Century, however, had already fostered a reputation by this. Begun in 1957, the series was in its fourth season during Minow's speech and its renown within the industry made it an exemplum of what could be done. When executive producer Isaac Kleinerman met Minow sometime after his "vast wasteland" speech Minow informed him that his comments did not extend to *The Twentieth Century*.[214] The producers took up the call by the Kennedy administration by producing more programs on contemporary issues in the early-1960s in relation to their historical programs. Yet it had couched its presentation of historical subjects in relation to prerogatives of the Cold War since its first season.

Conception, Creation, and Reception

The Twentieth Century's incubation began during the production of *Air Power.* CBS, hoping to capitalize on the success of military-themed documentaries, approached the U.S. Army about a series on their role in World War II into the present under the title "Ground Power." However, the Army informed the network that they could not accommodate CBS's request at the time.[215] This was likely due to several factors from the production of the Army's own series *The Big Picture* (1952-1970), much of its story having been told in *Crusade in Europe*, and fear of diminishing public interest after the war had been presented in such grand fashion for the other two branches first. Nevertheless, the need for another documentary series lingered at CBS-News after *Air Power*'s success.

In late 1956, Irving Gitlin, CBS vice-president of public affairs programming, conceived a proposal for a new series of documentary programs based on Mark Sullivan's collection of

[214] "'Twentieth Century' Oasis in TV Desert," *The Brooklyn Eagle*, May 8, 1963, p. 17.
[215] Richard C. Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis" (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 108.

writings on events of the twentieth century titled "Our Times." Gitlin thought Sullivan's work provided nifty outlines for subjects that could be displayed through archival footage as well as themes that could make programming easy to digest for the public. His notion of a documentary series on the twentieth century likely also had to do with NBC's wildly successful series *Project XX* (1955-1970). Henry Salomon's follow-up to *Victory at Sea*, the largely seasonal show whose hour-long specials covering a crucial period or development of the twentieth century from the rise of Soviet Communism and German Nazism to chronicling the jubilance of the 1920s and the grimness of the 1930s in the United States.[216]

To make his conception a reality Gitlin began meeting with possible candidates to produce such a show, amongst them Tom Wolff, the producer and writer of the CBS series *Conquest*.[217] By February 1957 Gitlin decided Burton "Bud" Benjamin was the man for the job. Beginning as a news and sports reporter for Newspaper Enterprise Associated, a Scripps Howard syndicate, Benjamin left newspapers for newsreels after World War II. He obtained a job at RKO-Pathe where he produced and directed, among others, the documentary "Pepito," a chronicle of a Puerto Rican boy's first day in New York, which won a prize in the Ford Foundation Fund's documentary competition. After leaving RKO-Pathe in 1956, he worked as an associate producer and story editor on Philip Wylie's *Crunch and Des*, produced a film on ore mining in Venezuela, and wrote scripts for the *Kraft Theater*, *Robert Montgomery Presents*, and *Schlitz Playhouse*.[218] Benjamin was intrigued but thought "Our Times" unadaptable for television. He later recalled, "it [the book] dealt in trends rather than in actual historical

[216] On occasion the two shows would examine the same periods such as similar programs showcasing the high life of the 1920s. However, on most occasions *The Twentieth Century* tried to examine a topic or period from another angle as is the case "Creative Thirties" which detailed the boom in art and literature in the USA during the depression as opposed to the harsh conditions and New Deal work projects of *Project XX*'s "Life in the Thirties."
[217] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[218] "The Twentieth Century (Nine Year Report: 1957-1966)," n.d, Sec. VII, p. 1.

sequences. The only way the show could be plausible, we decided, was to deal in specifics – to search for the microcosm."[219] Benjamin instead sold Gitlin on a half-hour series chronicling figures, events, and technologies that made a mark on the century, *The Twentieth Century*. The network's press release for the show described the series as such:

> "The Twentieth Century" will present a broad pictorial canvas of our times, told in terms of personalities and events that have shaped the period…. In the programs devoted to "personalities" and their niche in 20th century history, they will be the "stars," so to speak. magnitude as to overshadow any single personality, such as the story of German V-2 rocket and the development However, a number of other programs in the series will be devoted to events of such of the guided missile – an instrument that could take us to the moon or to complete destruction.[220]

Joining Benjamin was Isaac Kleinerman, the man who played an integral part in establishing the style and scope of television documentary series. Kleinerman, a veteran of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in World War II had worked at RKO-Pathe at the same time as Benjamin and were already, "really very good friends," when the offer came in early 1957. Kleinerman, drafted into NBC's documentary Division in 1951 for *Victory at Sea* was still head editor on *Project XX* in 1957. Having edited seven of the series programs over a period of three years, including the programs "The Twisted Cross"; "Nightmare in Red"; and the less satisfactory "Fidelio" Kleinerman signed on as the series associate producer in March of that year despite his comfortable job at NBC. "It had nothing to do with disliking Salomon, with disliking NBC, or feeling that NBC was retrogressive and CBS was progressive," he later said, "All I knew was that when I met Irving Gitlin and he outlined what was going to be done, that

[219] John Crosby, "20th Century Makes Good Summertime TV," *The Tampa Tribune*, July 24, 1959, p. 12-E.
[220] "'The Twentieth Century' Debuts on CBS Television Network with Special Hour-Long Program Devoted to Churchill, Oct. 20.", June 11, 1957.

Bud Benjamin was going to be working with me, that we would have a collaborative partnership, I felt that I could thrive better than whatever might happen."[221]

The Prudential Insurance Company of America, agreed to sponsor *The Twentieth Century* as part of a stand-by development deal with CBS, a first in public-affairs programming.[222] Prudential Insurance Company was a pioneer amongst sponsors as one of the first to provide a sizable investment in Public Affairs programming. Having first signed on as an alternate sponsor for CBS's *You Are There* (1953-1957) they made their first substantial investment with their sponsorship of *Air Power* in 1956, a success which influenced their continued collaboration with CBS-News. "We want people to have a picture of Prudential as being a big, solid, progressive company" Prudential president Carroll Meteer Shanks noted, "We're trying to be progressive, and we want out TV advertising to reflect that."[223]

The agreement for *The Twentieth Century* dictated the company would fund the program for one year with a contract that permitted the cancellation of this deal at any time during the first 13 episodes. This was due to their insecurity over sponsoring another compilation series, a concern which also facilitated Prudential's demand that news-anchor Walter Cronkite serve as host and narrator of *The Twentieth Century* as he had with *Air Power*.[224] This, however, would be inconsequential as the company loved the program and would continue to sponsor its

[221] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[222] The deal also included Prudential sponsoring six special 30-minute news programs on topics of immediate interest produced by CBS News under the direction of News Director John F. Day.
[223] "Shanks of Prudential," *Television Magazine*, Sept. 1958, 93.
[224] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century," 83.

production for nine years. [225] It even changed their slogan from "See Your Prudential Agent" to "For Twentieth Century Protection, See Your Prudential Agent" to capitalize on the show.[226]

The series would premiere on Sunday October 20, 1957, with an hour-long program on the life of Winston Churchill titled: "Churchill, Man of the Century." The premiere episode showcased many of the series' strengths – its concise use of archival footage, incorporation of on-camera interviews, and a pace that made the program seem like a dramatic thriller over a news program – whilst exposing the show's ideological precepts by highlighting Churchill's seemingly prophetic estimations of communism sugarcoated with the man's witty asides on subjects ranging from the sunshine of Miami beach to the influence of television.

The Twentieth Century was an instant hit with the critics, a seeming answer to their qualms about the lack of serious television. "Those who have charged that television lacks purpose and direction ought to take another look, especially at CBS-TV's *The Twentieth Century*," noted in *Broadcasting* magazine's review of the series' first two episodes, "If this series in the future lives up to the near-perfect craftsmanship of the first two episodes, then CBS will have scored nothing less than an absolute triumph."[227] John Crosby of the *New York Herald Tribune* echoed said sentiments, writing the series is, "such a good solid consistent show that it's hard to write about. 'Twentieth Century' is the sort of thing television ought to do more often and the rest of us ought to look at more often.[228] In its nine-year run the series would garner garnered two Primetime Emmy Awards, a Peabody Award, and numerous other awards.

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[225] Below the line production cost for an episode in the 1958-1959 was $21,170. In the next 2 seasons the cost increased to $25,136.35 and $28,045.38. The final season the cost per program rose to $58,000 per program, reflecting the rising union costs associated with original shooting for documentaries which made up the majority of programs in the final season.
[226] "Shanks of Prudential," *Television Magazine*, Sept. 1958, 93.
[227] "In Review: The Twentieth Century," *Broadcasting*, October 21, 1957, pp. 17.
[228] John Crosby, "Some Reruns Worth Seeing," *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, July 26, 1959, pp. 36.

A critical darling, the series was also a hit with television audiences. Despite its 6:30P.M. timeslot on Sunday, during the "opinion time" which independent stations could decide whether to air a program, the show maintained a wide appeal throughout its run. It consistently maintained a sizable number of viewers for its timeslot - with the editors of *T.V. Guide* remarking: "Guess what program came in 69th among 131 evening programs in the last Nielsen ratings, had an average audience of 8,814,000 homes and had a higher rating than the average half-hour mystery, adventure or audience-participation quiz show. By its 6th season, CBS reported the show had an audience of roughly 30 million viewers a week with an additional 38,109,443 from private screenings for organizations, service groups, schools, and colleges for whom study guides and quizzes were available courtesy of CBS.[229] Its audience numbers coupled with the critical praise was a boon to CBS while its use in the classroom testified to its validity and influence as a tool for espousing history.

Style and Content

When asked by a reporter what the secret to the series' success was Kleinerman responded that he did not know. "We do not have a fundamental format for the series. Our only programming philosophy is quality and absolute honesty, which is not unusual in programs of this nature. But if there is one reason for our success, that must be it."[230] Kleinerman was not mistaken in citing the show's lack of a "fundamental format" as part of the show's appeal. Its diversity of programs, with each half-hour covering a new topic every week, meant if one subject did not interest the viewer, another might. Sometimes the series would cover contemporary

[229] "The Twentieth Century (Nine Year Report: 1957-1966," n.d, Sec. 4, p. 1.
Richard C. Bartone estimates that on a whole the show averaged between 10-15 million viewers a week.
[230] Hal Humphrey, "20th Century Durable Documentary," *The Troy Record*, March 31, 1962, 29.

issues like the latest guided missiles in nation's arsenal or the state-of-affairs between East and West Berlin, other times historical topics from rise of talking films in Hollywood to an account of the like of the Kamal Ataturk, the first president of Turkey.

Of the series 219 episodes, 107 programs (many of which shot by filmmakers outside of the series' staff) covered contemporary issues while the other 112 covered historical topics. Especially important to the historical compilations was Benjamin's insistence on covering events and personalities that shaped the twentieth century or events and people less prominent in history books, but still of significance. The latter being what Benjamin called "back of the book" topics.[231] Media historian Richard C. Bartone further organized the series' historical programs into three sub-groups: the biographical compilation, the event compilation, and the broad-canvas compilation.[232] The first subgroup consisted of concise biographies of prominent and little-known figures, the second largely on battles and political upheavals or technological milestones; and the third more expansive examinations of a period or era of history including Paris in the 1920s or Germany from the end of World War I to Hitler's takeover in 1933.

Benjamin and Kleinerman's strength for reading the public's appetite aided the show's timeliness regarding the state of television and the invectives of the nation. Its second episode on the development of the Nazi's rocketry program entitled "Guided Missile," which despite being planned months in advance, aired less than four weeks after the launch of Sputnik when the nation's interest in rocketry was at a fever pitch.[233] In its first season the show covered such pressing issues as juvenile delinquency (The Class of '58"), Soviet propaganda offensives ("The

[231] William Bluem, *Documentary in American Television: Form, Function, Method* (New York: Hastings House, 1977), 168.
[232] Richard C. Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis" (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 113.
[233] Burton Benjamin, "From Bustles to Bikinis – And All That Drama," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, pp. 35.

Red Sell"), and the state of United States' position as a world leader ("Where We Stand") along with historical programs promoting the theme of triumph in the face of incredible odds against an omnipresent foe as seen in its biograph of Winston Churchill ("Man of the Century") and its chronicle of the D-Day invasion ("D Day").

The series popularity came not only from its range of topics, but also its presentation which utilized and expanded upon the trappings that had made its predecessors of *Victory at Sea* and *Air Power* a success. Its rapid-fire editing coupled with a stirring original score gave the series an immediacy and cinematic quality that drew its audience closer to the screen while its Walter Cronkite, one of the most respected and authoritative figures on television, gave context to these images, providing set-ups, narration, and a summary of what was just shown and its importance. It was also willing to break away from its straight narrative context at times in order make its point, such as its incorporation of footage from the 1927 film *Berlin: Symphony to a Great City* in its episode "From Kaiser to Fuhrer," using its sequence of a roller coaster as a visual metaphor for the unruliness and feeling of unease that dominated Germany in the 1920s.

The series also expanded on the compilation format with the use of on-camera interviews with figures pertinent to the topic presented, be they officers who devised the strategy of the Battle of the Bulge, or a soldier who was on the battlefield. Although not new, having long been incorporated into news programs, the interviews inclusion in the historical compilation added, in the words of television theorist William Bluem, a "you-are-there aspect" as having their accounts complimenting the archival footage made the program "even more forceful."[234]

[234] William A. Bluem, *Documentary in American Television: Form, Function, Method*, (New York: Hastings House Publishers), 1965, p. 173.

The Twentieth Century and World War II

Throughout the series run the producers turned to World War II for topics. Of the series' 112 historical compilations, 58 dealt with the war in some capacity. These covered both "back of the book" and "front page" subjects and each of three subgroups identified by Bartone as its anthology format allowed it to cover a wider array of topics than the preceding war documentary series which focused on one branch of service or theater of the war. The series produced biographies of key figures in the war including Herman Goering ("Goering") and George Marshal ("Marshal"), as well as lesser-known individuals like Soviet general turned Nazi ally Andrey Vlasov ("Army of the Damned"). It presented well-known battles and campaigns of the war like the D-Day invasion and the Battle of the Bulge along with events less-well-known to the American public like the Danish resistance's sabotage campaign ("Sabotage") and the Chinese theater of the war ("The War in China").[235]

World War II was a fruitful area to dissect for a range of reasons. There was vast supply of footage on the war that could be obtained rather easily from the Department of Defense as well as various European film archives to fill a thirty-minute program. Also because of the war provided a broad range of topics for programs. "Besides their dramatic potential and the availability of footage," notes Bartone, "World War II compilations dominate the series because of their national and international importance."[236] Indeed, these episodes, normally filled with scenes of action and larger than life figures, tended to equate to high ratings.[237] The war was still fresh in the minds of many of its viewers having lived through it and now their children were

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[235] "The Twentieth Century (Nine Year Report: 1957-1966)," n.d, Sec. 1, p. 2-29.
[236] Richard C. Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis" (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 108.
[237] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century," 90.
The World War II themed, 3rd Season programs "Sabotage," "The Battle of the Bulge," and "Tarawa" each garnering between 23 and 25 of the total audience rating for the night.

being taught it in school. Kleinerman hypothesized that that these program's popularity grew from this dynamic, as he explained, "Well now what you had was the children of the guys who had fought the war, and adolescents having heard Dad maybe blow hard about this experience now had a chance to see what his Dad had been through."[238]

The conception of World War II between parent and child pinpointed by Kleinerman was indubitably a key component in the baby-boomer household. As described by cultural historian Tom Engelhardt, a child of the 1950s, the war had an almost mythic quality to boys of his generation who came of age when films, comic books, and various other paraphernalia showcased World War II as the glory-filled "American War" personified in their veteran fathers. "For me, the war John Wayne and my dad fought together," Engelhardt recalled, "that global war against the Japanese ('I studied in your University of Southern California') and the Nazis ('You lie, Sweinhund!') was part and parcel of fatherhood. Like millions of other dads, mine was a living representation of war, American style."[239] While Engelhardt admits this "ritualistic association" of war media with fathers may seem obvious, he contends that during that period it had a "special, visceral quality to it" which informed his budding understanding of who were the good guys and bad guys, aggressors and defenders, and under what conditions force was okay.[240]

Another aspect to the dominance of World War II in the series was the ease in which such episodes fit into the show's narrative structure which tended to cast complex, multi-faceted issues into simplistic story with "good" and "bad" guy terms. Burton Benjamin described how the series was structured like a drama program: it had a beginning, middle, and end that resolved

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[238] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[239] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*, (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), p. 73.
[240] Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 72.

the issues introduced in the beginning. In the case of program on a battle, Benjamin explained, the program, "told the story of specific incidents from the beginning or reason for the undertaking through the middle or struggle itself with all its suspense and shifting of advantages to the conclusion for end of the fighting victory or defeat."[241] This structure was a part of compressing and simplifying various strands of information, as well as engaging the audience. Bob Lang, one of the producers of *The Twentieth Century,* elaborated upon the effect of this formula as such: "We built this show for 6:30 p.m. on Sundays, when kids control the sets. So, we built in 'cops and robbers' (we called them Nazis and Poles and British and Americans) and the ratings were there."[242] As Engelhardt summarized, this depiction promoted his conception of the war at a young age as the greatest of all wars won by men like his father.

Engelhardt's sentiment, indubitably shared by many of his generation, was fostered from the multitude of World War II media available from novels to comics to toys but most certainly on the big screen. Films set during the war reached a zenith in American film productions by the late-1950s with eighteen such films in 1958 alone. These films inhabited a range of genres from big-budget, prestige epics like *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) and *The Young Lions* (1958) to lower-budget action-adventure yarns like *Darby's Rangers* (1958) and *Tank Commandos* (1959) as well as service comedies like *Mister Roberts* (1955) and *Operation Petticoat* (1959). But, with few exceptions, American World War II films of the 1950s and early-1960s did little to comment upon the machinations behind war of the nature of man in conflict.[243] Instead, most war films tended to retell the same stories of bravery under fire or harmless galivanting of servicemen who become heroes by the end of the film. According to historian Lawrence Suid,

[241] Burton Benjamin, "From Bustles to Bikinis – And All That Drama," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, pp. 35.
[242] *Sponsor*, March 25, 1963, pp. 75.
[243] Some exceptions include *Attack*! (1956), *Paths of Glory* (1957), and *Men in War* (1957), none of which received aid from the Department of Defense.

Hollywood studios tended to prefer these types of stories because of cost. "Given the high cost of filmmaking, few studios cared to gamble large sums of money on unconventional or controversial films," notes Suid. "Moreover, because of the unique requirements of large-scale movies dealing with military subjects and the expense of trying to fulfill them through civilian channels, filmmakers preferred traditional stories about men in war, ones that would guarantee Pentagon cooperation."[244]

Such presentations of war were popping up on the television by the mid-1950s as the medium was rapidly expanding. War was indubitably in abundance on the tube from dramatic series like *The West Point Story* (1956-1958), combat series like *Navy Log* (1955-1958), military comedies like *The Phil Silvers Show* (1955-1959), and army-sponsored series like *Talent Patrol* (1953-1955), which showcased the entertainment abilities of service men and women along with special programs of military exercises, bomb testing, and other Department of Defense sponsored displays or U.S. military might. However, such programs largely showcased the contemporary peacetime, standing military not World War II.

Aside from a few multi-part documentary series produced for network television like *Churchill: The Valiant Years* (1960-1961) on ABC as well as a staple of old war films, reruns of the *Victory at Sea*, and the Army-produced series *The Big Picture* (1953-1970) *The Twentieth Century*'s depiction of the war was the most prominent, routinely scheduled depiction.[245] Furthermore, the series' strong viewership while its accolades gave greater credibility to their depictions of the war and the viewer's understanding of the war's underlying themes which were crafted to echo present concerns of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations.

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[244] Lawrence Suid, *Guts and Glory*: *The Making of the American Military Image* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 142.
[245] J. Fred MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1985), p. 111-121.

This narrative construct not only made the programs more thrilling, but also allowed the producers to advance themes which tended to promote Cold War ideological precepts. Such Cold War renditions were born from the producers but enforced by institutional safeguards. Richard C. Bartone claims that even into the 1960s, television series on the war, especially the documentaries, were beholden to three primary mediators in their presentation of history - Sponsors, the Network, and the Department of Defense (DOD). Each held influence in the portrayal of the topic as a program needed funding (sponsor), airtime (network), and access to footage and advisors (DOD) to various degrees. Each mediator was influenced to various extents by the Cold War atmosphere, which in the 1950s was particularly prescient due to the Second Red Scare. Sponsors and networks insisted on shows with broad appeal and themes that aligned with popular perception to limit controversy, while the military insisted on programming that would benefit their image both for their recruitment and budget proposals.[246]

The Role of the Sponsor

The advertising agency, Reach, McClinton and Company Incorporated, represented Prudential in all matters with CBS. Burton Benjamin handled sponsor-related issues with Werner Michel, the company's vice president of radio and television, for the show's first five seasons until James Graham replaced him in late 1962. Henry M. Kennedy, Prudential's Vice-President of public relations and advertising, described how informational or public affairs shows were a benefit for Prudential Insurance, whose business was not selling a product but a promise of future payments, as the shows helped cultivate an image of reliability and integrity. "Although the audience for an individual 'Twentieth Century' program, telecast early Sunday evening,

[246] Lt. Col Donald Baruch, June 22, 1954, Department of Defense – Pictorial Division, Memorandum for Record, Booth Family Center for Special Collections, Georgetown University.

cannot compare with that of an entertainment program in prime evening time," Kennedy remarked in an interview with the Federal Communications Commission, "during the course of four broadcasts, the program may reach almost half of the United States TV homes."[247] CBS maintained that they held "ultimate responsibility" for the "programming fare," but conceded that advertisers did "influence both entire programs and elements within programs."[248]

Prudential held the right of approval over the topics presented on *The Twentieth Century* and as such held considerable sway in the show's content. Each year Burton Benjamin and Isaac Kleinerman would submit a "formal list" of 36 possible subjects for programs to Werner Michel for consideration.[249] Prudential had the right to deny any idea they deemed ill-suited to their interests as well as the privilege to recommend program ideas of their own. Kennedy described this arrangement as such: "They will present us with a lot of ideas. We will usually go through them, and we will say: 'This looks pretty good; we have our doubts about this,' or once in a while we will say, 'We do not think this is a good show.' Perhaps they can convince us that it is."[250] To maintain the aura of respectability it was important that nothing tarnish their company's name; like all television sponsors Prudential was reluctant to examine topics considered too controversial or unusual.

Kennedy claimed that there was no list of "subject matter limitations" or "anything like that," but through "discussions" with CBS executives, the network and producers knew there were certain issues the company would prefer not to address. Some examples he listed were

[247] Henry M. Kennedy, "Television Network Program Procurement, Part II," Television Network Program Procurement, Part II § (1965), pp. 387-389, 387.
[248]Henry M. Kennedy, "Television Network Program Procurement, Part II," Television Network Program Procurement, Part II § (1965), pp. 233.
[249] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 86.
[250] Henry M. Kennedy, "Television Network Program Procurement, Part II," Television Network Program Procurement, Part II § (1965), pp. 387-389, 388.

"anything that shows a religious or social bias or anything of that kind."[251] While such restrictions largely applied to the documentaries on contemporary issues, historical programs also fell under this purview. While most program ideas received approval, the real issue was self-censorship or what ideas were never submitted because producers assumed Prudential would not give their approval. Prudential wanted topics which would attract the large and diverse audiences and not take a point of view that was counter to the popular view.[252]

Prudential's preferential outlook seemed to have had a dual effect in regard to the series' World War II programs. On the one hand, Prudential welcomed proposals for programs concerning the war as they were popular with audiences. On the other hand, these programs had to be handled carefully to not challenge the audience's view of the military which at the time was largely positive. Highlighting military blunders, questioning the rationale of generals, or analyzing the necessity or effectiveness of costly strategies would, in Kennedy's words, "please some people and make maybe half the audience mad, and that is not why we are sponsoring television."[253] Thus, the series' programs on the Eastern Front of World War II had to be careful in its depiction of the Soviets, tending to remind viewers of the antagonism of the Soviet Union. Likewise, programs on the German and Japanese adversaries contained commentary which linked reprehensible actions to government officials whilst rarely inquiring on the culpability of the soldiers or officers in the field.

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[251] Henry M. Kennedy, "Television Network Program Procurement, Part II," Television Network Program Procurement, Part II § (1965), pp. 387-389, 388.

[252] Prudential also had the option to remove sponsorship of a program after reviewing the final cut. They never exercised this option, but for the program "The Nisei: The Pride and the Shame" which partly blamed President Franklin Roosevelt for the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, Prudential removed its promotion of the program, including its on-air ads during the program break.

[253] Henry M. Kennedy, "Television Network Program Procurement, Part II," Television Network Program Procurement, Part II § (1965), pp. 387-389, 388.

The Role of the Network

Prudential's outlook on the type of topics covered on *The Twentieth Century* was complimented by the interests of the network which vied for viewers whilst trying to avoid controversy in its programming. Even though CBS was built upon its strength in providing stunning informational programming since the 1930s and being the network that produced Edward R. Murrow and Fred Friendly's seminal *See It Now* (1951-1958) whose on-air indictment of Senator Joseph McCarthy was indispensable in bringing about the senator's fall, things changed substantially by the mid-1950s due to the pressures of the Second Red Scare and the drive for profits.[254]

The downfall of Senator Joseph McCarthy following the Army-McCarthy hearings of 1954, which came roughly a month after the March 9th *See It Now* condemnation of the Wisconsin senator, managed to defuse the public acrimony and dulled the validity of fiery charges of subversion. But the momentum of the Red Scare and its fervent anti-communist campaigns subsided slowly in the television industry. The blacklisting of actors, directors, writers, and other production officials continued into the 1960s, whilst coverage of news subjects followed the official government line. Kleinerman claimed the show was never affected by the blacklist in terms of staffing or, to his knowledge, content; however, documentary filmmaker Albert Wasserman, whose documentary "Brainwashing" aired on *The Twentieth Century,* contended that one working in the industry could not escape the Red Scare. [255] "It was like a hurricane that was blowing through," he claimed, "you might try to stand in the wind a little bit, but .... Everybody was on the defensive."[256] Indeed, when photographed at home for an

[254] Gary Paul Gates, *Air Time: The Inside Story of CBS News*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 23-24.
[255] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[256] Albert Wasserman Interview, Fordham University Libraries, May 12, 1998.

interview, Kleinerman made sure in advance to remove certain books from his bookcase that could be deemed "subversive" by a conservative examiner.[257]

The effects of the Cold War on the networks were furthered by the business interests of their shareholders as well as their pursuit of ratings. Sig Mickelson claimed that as the profits from television had propelled CBS to net sales of over $460 million by 1960, the Wall Street representatives on the company's board of directors had to henceforth be listened to and they at times critical of things that might be interpreted as "liberal." "It was no longer the chairman's company to deal with as he would Stockholders had to be taken into account." noted Mickelson in his history of CBS News in the 1950s; "This was also the era of blacklisting and McCarthyism. Critics were quick to speak out."[258] Such persuasion is what eventually led to the end of the highly acclaimed, yet controversial *See It Now*, as the shows programs on such figures as Robert Oppenheimer or the issue of school segregation in the South proved too big a risk.[259]

As a result of these pressures, the network that FBI director J. Edgar Hoover had dubbed the "Communist Broadcasting Network" had adopted a largely conservative disposition by the end of the 1950s. *The Twentieth Century* despite a seemingly progressive offering of subjects and expert analysis, reinforced this conservative bent. The avoidance of controversial issues and reinforcing lines of anti-communism in many of their programs made the series boon for the network's espoused commitment to "fair" and "balanced" reporting unlike *See It Now* and *CBS Reports* which upset some viewers and was thus not "balanced" in the eyes of William Paley.[260] The series World War II episodes were particularly effective in this agenda as, in the words of

[257] Judy and Laura Kleinerman Interview by Michael LoSasso, February 6, 2021.
[258] Sig Mickelson, *The Decade That Shaped Television News: CBS in the 1950s*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 145.
[259] Gary Paul Gates, *Air Time: The Inside Story of CBS News*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978), 24.
[260] According to Bartone, Benjamin was surprised that the series was allowed to proceed with a program on Vladimir Lenin and the rise of communism in the USSR, aired as "Lenin and Trotsky" (5/3/1964).

Richard Bartone, "A compilation film pitting a liberating U.S. military force against a fascist or communist aggressor offered evidence of a network's anti-communist sentiments."[261] The adherence to Cold War ideology and espousal of American military superiority served as a useful public relations tool to shield from accusations of anti-Americanism.

The Role of the Department of Defense

The sponsors and the network executives keen to avoid backlash and maximize audiences, abetted in the series' evasion of topics seen as too "controversial." However, regarding the portrayal of World War II, the Department of Defense (DOD) played the largest role. As has been established custom since the production of *Victory at Sea*, the film archives of each branch of the military proved an indispensable source for those looking to chronicle the American war effort and beyond. The DOD, savvy to promote a positive image of the military to the public and the Congress which allocated their budget, was keen to continue aiding their portrayal in films and television programs, but on their terms. While the Film, Radio, and Television Branch was happy to offer every kind of aid to military themed series or programs - from loaning out a military base to providing footage of subs diving or missiles launching to giving original DOD programs to networks and stations free of charge– the producers had to ascribe to a set of terms and conditions crafted to present the military in the best light possible. "This was more than military oversight, censorship, or propaganda (though it was all of those)" Tom Engelhard notes, "The marriage of the military way of life to the television set (owned by

[261] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 97.

half of all American families by 1953] and the movie screen was part of a larger transformation of the military's role in the years after the Korean War."[262]

In the case of *The Twentieth Century*, the DOD held a mediating role in the series' selection of topics on and depiction of the war. It offered aid in locating military officers for interviews as well as in providing research materials for the history of a battle or military figure and helped locate the desired archival footage from its voluminous film collections. Indeed, the Department of Defense was a vital source of footage for many of the World War II episodes and held certain rights which affected the depiction of the U.S. military in several episodes. As per their agreement with CBS, the DOD had the right of broadcast approval for programs which: 1) used footage from military or government sources; 2) used footage of U.S. military operations not from U.S. government sources; 3) contained narration referring to U.S. military operations; 4) utilized footage taken by CBS film crews of U.S. military operations or hardware.[263] Thus, if a program utilized even one sequence of any of the above categories, it needed the approval of the Department of Defense prior to airing or be pulled from the air.[264]

For approval, a rough cut was sent to the series' liaison at the DOD one week before its air date, there representatives from the different branches of the armed services reviewed or approved each program. Cpt. Wallace C. Marley was the series' contact at the Pictorial Branch, Audio Visual Division, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for the first five seasons. Russell W. Wagner took over Marley's position in 1962. This arrangement could be hectic given the tight deadline, as any issues over a program or narration script, sent only one or two days

[262] Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture*, 76.
[263] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 101.
[264] The Department of Defense also held right of approval on all programs for foreign syndication falling within the four categories. This approval was needed for each country irrespective of prior U.S. approval. In 1958 conditions in France and Italy prevented "Hiroshima" and "Trial at Nuremberg" from being released there until 1959.

before the broadcast, had to be worked out over the phone. Additionally, each May the production team sent a list of program ideas, not for approval but as an indication of the subject that needed assistance or military clearance for film research. The series also requested clearance for certain classified films in military archives. Thus, the DOD could mediate the presentation of a subject by only declassifying certain footage or barring access to certain records. Such was the case with the program "War in China" (05/04/1958) for which the DOD granted clearance for use of footage from *The Battle of China* (1944) after Marley was guaranteed that "War in China" would not examine the politics of China.[265]

The series' production team thus had to work with the conservative nature of the U.S. military or risk losing an episode over approval concerns or worse lead the DOD to restrict access to their footage for future episodes. The wording in some of Benjamin's correspondence with Cpt. Marley illustrates this: "I believe our approach on this subject avoids any sensitive areas and I would like to get an approval for us to proceed as soon as possible."[266] For the World War II episodes, the first five seasons avoided any mention of operational mistakes or errors in judgement on the part of the Allied leadership. Even the episode "Battle of Cassino" (01/15/1961), in which the sacred abbey of Monte Cassino was bombed on the mistaken belief that there were German forces inhabiting it which facilitated subsequent German occupation of the grounds, contained no mention of U.S. strategic errors.

The series was thus good publicity for the Department of Defense and throughout its run did a good deal to enhance the image of the military. Aside from the historical documentaries, the series also broadcast multiple programs on the latest military technology and equipment shot

[265] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 103.
[266] Letter from Benjamin to Marley, 1 July 1957, CBS News Files. Quoted in Richard C. Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966) Television Series: A History and Analysis" (dissertation, New York University, 1985), 104.

by the Department of Defense, totaling 28 programs by the ninth season. The U.S. Army awarded the series with the Certificate of Achievement on December 15, 1963 for "outstanding contributions to public understanding of the United States Army through the telecasting of seven significant US Army programs during the period of 4 April, 1959 to 10 February 1963."[267] Kleinerman would later express his remorse over their acquiescence to the Department of Defense, particularly in its airing of their documentaries as part of the shows regular programming. Nonetheless he maintained that while those episodes had a definite propaganda bent, the World War II episodes were clean of any such influence.[268]

The conservative force of the military had a say in the show's production, it certainly was not an all-encompassing mediator on its depiction of the war. Although they requested all World War II related compilations be submitted for their approval, those that did not meet their four criteria were never sent. These included programs that did not address the U.S. war effort including episodes which chronicled the Eastern Front of the war or episodes on the rise of the Nazis and the lead-up to the Nazi invasion of Poland like "The Week That Shook the World" (01/10/1960). Benjamin and Kleinerman also pushed back on any attempt at direct oversight of their work or throw away the suggestions offered, such as when the show nixed a proposed biography of General Douglas McArthur when McArthur demanded script approval. Thus, a degree of responsibility needs to be ascribed to the showrunners in crafting their programs to enforce Cold War precepts when addressing these topics in lieu of overt oversight from the series' mediators.

[267] "Twentieth Century Series Wins Award From Army," *The Fresno Bee Republican*, Dec. 15, 1964, p. 77.
[268] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Crafting History

The mediators – the sponsor, network, and DOD – created certain parameters for the portrayal of the war in *The Twentieth Century*, but the producers outlook on historical issues and their belief in American Cold War prerogatives must not be overlooked. The series' utilization of a prescribed narrative formula guided its presentation of issues to "mirror" the facts and imitate historical reality to be captivating, but easily understandable to the viewer. It is through this model that the series related historical episodes to contemporary issues as well as left out information which could disrupt its viewpoint to make the topic more engaging. In short, the series crafted the facts around predetermined view of the history, which sometimes distorted the picture of the person or situation.

The selection of information for programming began at a season's inception when Benjamin submitted the list of 36 possible subjects to CBS and Prudential for approval. Each program idea on the list had a brief description which presented the producer's general conception of the episode and prescribed a predetermined view of history to follow. This view was chosen before research began on a program and was done to appease the mediators, but also present a subject in the most entertaining, simple was possible. For their program on the Greek Civil War – "Zero Hour in Greece" – the predetermined viewpoint for the program was such:

> "Zero Hour in Greece" documents the violent civil war in Greece resulting from the first attempted take-over by the Communists following World War II, and the brutal German occupation which preceded it. The broadcast traces the tragic years in "the cradle of democracy" from the winter of 1941-42 when the Nazi policy of "extermination by starvation" took 450,000 lives.[269]

As such the presentation of history and its interpretation were crafted before sufficient research allowed for an informed conclusion on the matter.

[269] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 118.

The Twentieth Century production team did engage in a good deal of research for each program after the initial list of topics was approved. A research report was compiled on each topic by one of several researchers working for the show. These reports were given a month's time to complete and ran thirty to fifty single-spaced pages. The researchers compiled their reports from the most authoritative sources, employing primary sources wherever possible and utilizing numerous secondary sources, not just two or three books. If sources presented conflicting accounts of an event, some researchers interviewed the authors to clarify central points of contention.[270] For the World War II related programs great stock was put into the captured documents section of the Library of Congress as well as old military wire recordings containing interviews with soldiers and officials after the battles. Finally, when applicable, researchers interviewed eyewitnesses. In locating figures to interview or primary sources for the war-related episodes, the researchers relied heavily on the support of the DOD.[271]

The research report was critical in creating the program and differentiated the show from its predecessors. The care taken to compiling an accurate account of the event or figure examined put it ahead of its compilation predecessors. Furthermore, the report was utilized by each figure working on a program - the story editor, film researcher, writer and primary editor –in completing their responsibilities.[272] Burton Benjamin, who routinely heralded the show's "fetish for facts," stressed the series "must adhere strictly to historical accuracy." He elaborated on this point, explaining, "In other words, we can't play with facts they provide the inflexible framework within which we must dramatize our story." [273]

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[270] In some cases, historians criticized the research reports which used their works. Richard Slote had Bernard Field, a scholar of Southeast Asian affairs, critique the report on Dien Bien Pho. Bertram Wolfe was historical consultant on "Lenin and Trotsky."
[271] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 118-120.
[272]Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 118-120.
[273] Burton Benjamin, "From Bustles to Bikinis and all that Drama," *Variety*, July 27, 1960, p. 35.

The research report ensured the programs were accurate, but the producers' "dramatization" of the history meant that the facts were crafted in service of a pre-determined theme. The research rarely informed the presentation of a topic, and never dictated the narrative line of a program. The information gathered was never intended to analyze the "facts" or interpret meaning or importance of the history; the producers had already decided the general conception and meaning. Their purpose was rather to gather information to support the producer's interpretation and help make the programs intriguing.[274] Cynthia Coulson, one of the series researchers from its fourth season onward, would frequently use the narrative approach of the most authoritative author on the program's subject, and then bolster this narrative with data from other sources. The author whose work informed Coulson's narrative was one which concurred with the producer's stance on the subject, and at times inspired the initial program idea. Any research report detailing or questioning alternate versions of history, while placing reportage of facts as a secondary importance, risked rejection.

In various cases the information of the research report was left out due to time or ideological reasons, as was the case with Richard Slote's research on the kamikaze at the Battle of Okinawa. Slote emphasized the Japanese side of the battle and tried to shed light on the rationale of the kamikaze's "crazy" actions, such as some kamikaze pilots not being volunteers. His research report thus gave a full presentation of the facts of the battle, but through an organization and narrative that emphasized Japan's side of the battle. The resulting program "Typhoon at Okinawa" would only use a small portion of Slote's research, instead devoting more attention to the American side and the typhoon that struck the U.S. ships off the island.[275]

[274] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 119.
[275] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 122.

The Kamikaze were stripped of their nuance with the only rationale provided being, "a finale expression of Bushido – the Japanese warrior code."[276]

As mentioned earlier, programs were crafted using the prescribed narrative structure which gave it the feeling of a three-act play. Although scripts placing narration to images collected by the film researchers for a program were normally written by people with firsthand knowledge of the subject, including many CBS correspondents, Benjamin gave each writer a series of instructions to follow when writing the script. Although these instructions largely concerned narration style like minimizing adjectives while stressing verbs or placing one fact in each sentence, he also dictated that each script must follow the theme prescribed at the beginning of production as a framework for historical information.[277] To ensure that his instructions were followed and control the historical perspective Benjamin used a template called a story script. Written by the story editor, it told the writer what to write, when to write it in the production, and the perspective to take to prevent the introduction of any unwanted perspectives on history. In this way the producers maintained complete control of the perspective being espoused.[278]

In short, although the mediators played a role in influencing the type of programming of the show and worked to ensure its commitment to non-controversy, the show's underlying themes were decided upon in advance by the Benjamin and Kleinerman which were the guide to their presentation of history. The themes espoused were normally guided by the maxims of popular Cold War ideology, if not the personal convictions of the filmmakers involved. World War II was presented in the series in a way that promoted Cold War imperatives of the late-1950s and early-1960s; such imperatives included the importance of taking an active role in

[276] "Typhoon at Okinawa," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, Nov. 26, 1961).
[277] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 143.
[278] Bartone, "The Twentieth Century (CBS, 1957-1966)", 145.

world affairs, the need for a strong and modern military, the virtue of its wartime enemies, now allies of Germany and Japan; and the duplicitous nature of communism and the Soviet leadership. Such can be gathered through an examination of several episodes of the series.

The Strength and Virtue of Our Fighting Forces

The influence of the Department of Defense and Benjamin's outlook guaranteed the promotion of the U.S. military in the presentation of the armed forces. Episodes on battles and campaigns always end in Allied victory, with losses presented as temporary setbacks before final victory and the elimination of fascism. The biggest detriment of American military operations in programs like "Invasion of Sicily" and "Target North Africa" is bad weather. The strategies devised by the generals is tactful and rarely fallible, while the American Armed Forces are backed by an inexhaustible supply of the best equipment and weaponry available. The series broadcast a few episodes specifically on the evolution of military technology in the war like "End of the Battle Wagon" on the evolution of the battleship and its service in the war before being replaced by jet carriers and missile cruisers, emphasizing that the United States military is on the frontline of technological advancement into the present day to meet present opponents.

The series also follows-up on the theme of American duty to liberate the world espoused by its predecessor *Victory at Sea*. Many of the World War II episodes promote the notion that the United States, and by extension its Allies, are fighting fanatical forces polluting the world. It is the United States mission to liberate the world from such authoritarian monstrosities and the United States succeeds thanks to its keen commanders, its arsenal for democracy, and its commitment to the ideals of liberty and security. The series tends to exclude information which could detract from this theme. It is illustrated in examining the darker facets of our allies, like in

its rendition of French Resistance in Paris during the war which whitewashed the role of communists and collaborators, or America's conduct in the war.

One of the clearest examples of this is the program "Freedom for the Philippines," an account of the Philippines road to becoming an independent nation which begins with Walter Cronkite announcing that American interests in the nation could be summarized in two statements: "I shall return" and "freedom for the Philippines." As such a beginning implies, the series glosses over the American occupation of the islands after the Spanish-American War, here presented as a beneficial experience. Cronkite explains that at the time of its acquisition Americans did not know if it was a country or a food, but that under America's rule the Filipino population had doubled, and the United States had invested over 200 million dollars towards its development. Footage from before the war accentuates this, presenting an Americanized indulging in a variety of Western products and playing baseball. The program treats the Filipino plight for independence as a welcome notion to American authorities, the only obstacle presented is over the readiness of the nation for independence and highlighting the "significant departure from big power colonialism in Asia" of the United States Congress to make the Philippines independent by 1946. Thus, with the Japanese occupation "independence must wait for liberation." The American invasion to retake the islands is a fulfillment of McArthur's promise to the island and with the vanquishing of the Japanese from it the United States could fulfill its second promise of independence for the former colony.[279]

This image promotes the notion that the United States interests are wholly benevolent, and that countries under its influence benefit both economically and culturally, indeed the word colony is never used in the program. The heavy toll the United States pays to liberate the islands

[279] "Freedom for the Philippines," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, February 22, 1959).

is further evidence of the country's commitment to its word and granting the Philippines independence in 1946 as promised cements this notion. This is particularly cogent in the Cold War when American influence and involvement abroad was beginning to expand by the end of the 1950s and the example of the Philippines here acts as an example for justifying America's role and its commitment to its allies. However, this image is achieved through obscuring the varying interests in the United States decision to grant the Philippines independence as well as erasing the violent campaign the United States engaged in early in the 20th century to pacify the islands. Thus, darker truths are hidden in favor of a more positive, nurturing notion.

The World War II episodes also expand upon the precedent established in *Victory at Sea* in emphasizing what Peter C. Rollins describes as "the machines of war and the visual excitement of the scene" rather than "the less photogenic" images of costs of war.[280] These programs' uses an omnipresent point of view which distances the viewer from the individual hardships faced by the soldiers and instead take awe in the immensity of the canon fire, the aerial assaults, and the numerous shots of soldiers firing their weapons. Although the series exhibited what was then a shocking degree of violence in its exposition of the footage of dead bodies, this was used not to evoke disgust from the audience but instead to display the necessary sacrifice to guarantee the survival of world as reinforced by the narration and musical score. Arguably the result of its each episode's lean run-time, the series promulgates the notion of American fighting servicemen as a homogenous fighting force.

Many of the war episodes utilize on-camera interviews from high-ranking officers including General Mark Clark, General Lucian Truscott, General [then colonel] James M. Gavin

[280] Gary R. Edgerton, Peter C. Rollins, and Peter C. Rollins, "Victory at Sea: Cold War Epic," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), pp. 103-121, 110.

amongst others to give validity to its account, but only occasionally provide a "you are there" aspect. In these interviews the audience see the men who devised the tactics and commanded the units share their recollections of decisions on strategy, interactions with other officers, and personal analysis of the battles or campaign presented. This works to accentuate authority and valor of the men "responsible" for victory, but rarely do they give a sense of the grim realities of battle and the struggles of the average foot soldier who is never interviewed. Although, the military officers speak high praise those who fought for them, they do so in a manner which promotes the image of the military established in the series as a united, undogged force for good. General David M. Shout, commander of the 2nd Marine Division at Tarawa, is one such example when he commended the resolve of the men in his division, concluding on camera that, "The reason this battle [Tarawa] was won was that these great American men were determined that their nation would not go down in defeat."[281] Not having the privates or corporals involved in the fighting speak about their experiences deprives the forces of personality while reinforcing the authority of the nation's military leaders, limiting the exposure of the horrors of war.

The emphasis on officers over enlisted men is illustrated in several of the series biography programs as well as their battle programs. An interesting case study is the program "Patton and the Third Army" (3/20/1960) which chronicles General George S. Patton's tenure in World War II, with an emphasis on his command of the Third Army in Western Europe. In detailing Patton's work and his character, the program attempts to flesh out the man's eccentricities and faults, but only to the degree that it does not harm his image as a titan amongst military commanders.

[281] "Tarawa," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, Feb. 14, 1960).

Patton, "Old Blood & Guts," is described by Cronkite in the episodes opening during the invasion of North Africa as "57 years old, he has been a pell for leather cavalry men, organizer of the first American tank forces in World War I, student of history, deeply religious, an amateur poet… he will soon find fame as the great gamble among modern general. The one who loves to court extraordinary risks." The program continuously emphasizes the effectiveness of Patton's command and the swift victory his tough-minded approach brought the Allied war effort in North Africa, Sicily, and finally France where his forces advanced so quickly that the supply line found it "more and more difficult to keep up with his terrific pace." Cronkite's narration describes Patton as "the man who has said, 'battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge,' values personal glory and never feels doubt." Patton is "no great planner," with "little patience with soldiers who got at war methodically." He prefers the blunt approach of "find the enemy, hit him fast to get him off balance, then smight him down." A methodology Cronkite concludes, "Isn't book generalship, it's almost medieval, but it's the Patton way and it works."[282]

In this way Patton is seen as the man-of-action hero, a symbol of masculinity that praises fighting with disregard for death, never staying still and always advancing. In this sense Patton, like John Wayne's Sgt. Stryker in *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), embodies many of the traits of the Western individualist – a larger than life figure who comes from a civilized society but is at home on the battlefield.[283] Towards this end, the program minimizes unsavory aspects of Patton's character while accentuating his noble qualities. His penchant for flashy garb and demand his soldiers dress in tie and helmet for inspection on the front lines are displayed as

[282] "Patton and the Third Army," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, March 20, 1960).
[283] Debra A. Ramsey, *American Media and The Memory of World War II* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 48.

almost humorous peccadillos while his grandstanding at the expense of his men's well-being is largely ignored. The program also highlights Patton's respect for those serving under him with footage of Patton pinning medals onto the soldiers. After Cronkite notes that Patton "enjoys decorating his own men," the footage fades into Patton delivering a speech in which the old general remarks "I want to correct a grave illusion. You don't have to be dead to be a hero. People always talk about the heroic dead, well god-dammit there are a lot of heroic alive ones." He continues, "Dammit it's no fun to say to a man that you love go out, go out and get killed. And we've had to say it. And by god they have gone, and they have won. But I want you to remember that the sacrifice that these men have made must not be in vain." Such narrative choices raise the image of Patton who while egocentric and vicious in his conduct of warfare, got results and showed a deep appreciation for those who performed to his standards; a figure Americans can revere.

Even the most infamous incident of Patton's conduct, his slapping of two soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress is addressed but handled with delicacy. It is explained by SLA Marshall to the viewer because of Patton being "caught between the 20th century view of war as something dirty, and his own 18th century view that war was man's most glorious adventure," which birthed his belief, "mistakenly, but positively" that such mental breakdowns were voluntary, and that ridicule was the best tonic for it. The slapping is described as reprehensible, but the apologies Patton is ordered to give the soldiers, the field hospitals, and the body of his army makes it right. As Marshall notes, "the judgement was that Patton's service to the nation far outweighed his disservice to himself."[284]

[284] "Patton and the Third Army," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, March 20, 1960).

This depiction does more than just smooth over Patton's assaults but makes them appear like negligible character flaws. It also ignores the repercussions of such actions like Patton being passed over for Operation Overlord and the brunt of negative publicity he received when it was reported back in the States. Furthermore, it suggests that while the military may have hot-headed leaders like Patton, the larger hierarchy of the Army and presumably other branches of the military will mediate these personality traits. Even-tempered, organization men like Eisenhower, who inhabit the decision-making command positions, assure that Patton apologized to his troops as penance, putting in him his place while having the foresight to recognize Patton's value in the fighting to come.

In presenting the soldiers who served under Patton, the program is unique in presenting the Third Army with some degree of identity, but with features which conformed with the popular understanding of the "citizen soldier" that dominated wartime media. The Third Army is described as "mechanized like no other in the world. It is the blitz army. The army he [Patton] names 'Lucky'." Under Patton the army goes faster and farther than any other American army in history, liberating 40,000 miles of land in seven weeks. Like a real-life Sgt. Stryker, Patton has made his men into effective soldiers: tough but still humane as shown in footage of a halt in their motion to bandage up an injured little girl. Despite very heavy combat by the soldiers of the Third Army, especially in the Saar Campaign and Battle of the Bulge, as presented with numerous shots of dead bodies lying in the snow, soldiers being fired upon in the French towns, or the injured being carried away to field hospitals no psychological breakdowns or shortcomings are presented outside of Cronkite noting they were "overstretched and tired."

The program is also unique in containing interviews with regular soldiers of the Third Army taken in the aftermath of the Battle of the Bulge.[285] The viewer hears Pvt. Pat Brady of North Hollywood, California, who later went on to become a mildly successful actor, discuss his receiving a Purple Heart from surviving a tank explosion when hitting a roadblock and Sgt. Peter Di Giuseppe of Kennett Square, Pennsylvania talk of his taking out a pair of German 88 artillery guns. These interviews are brief but bolster the popular image of the men who fought World War II, the "citizen soldier." They are not shown as having any psychological afflictions from their service or ill will towards military life, only an increased desire to get it over with and go home.

By the sixth season the series did go deeper into the fallacies of the Allied military during the war. The programs "Beachhead at Anzio" (01/20/1963) and "Air Drop at Arnhem" (02/10/1963) mentioned errors by the American military which ended up costing lives, showing the military hierarchy was indeed fallible. But by 1962 the DOD's relationship with the series could survive these faults. Although there would be sporadic mention of future mistakes, the military always came out victorious and the military leaders eventually find the path to victory. Thus, the impression of the American military during the war was one that was fervently patriotic and victorious, re-emphasizing the classic attributes of the American soldier whilst praising the officers in command who led the troops to victory.[286]

[285] This use of wartime interviews with U.S. soldiers was only utilized in one other episode, "The Frozen War" (02/08/1959) about the Aleutian Islands Campaign.
[286] Bartone, "*The Twentieth Century* (CBS, 1957-1966)", 104-105.

Former Enemies, Now Allies

The Twentieth Century's World War II episodes also advanced the 1950s effort of rehabilitating America's former adversaries. West Germany and Japan had become two of America's most important allies in the fight against communism since the end of World War II and promoting good relations was critical to foreign policy initiatives. As such a narrative of the nations' peoples in the war was constructed, aimed at easing the transition from enemies to allies. This "Cold War narrative" sought to absolve the general populace from their role in the war, as well as some officials and military officers, by placing the blame for the war and its atrocities on the ideologies propagated by the ruling regime and leading figures, whilst highlighting the importance of their former enemies as allies in the fight against Communism.

The popular "Cold War narrative" held that the Japanese people were, like the Germans, \ duped into the war by rabid Japanese militarists, personified in the figure of Hideki Tojo who was regularly equated to Hitler and Mussolini as the propagator of the war. According to this narrative, the emperor, portrayed as peaceful family man who was silenced by his generals early on and now only wants to make amends. This narrative makes several leaps of logic in implying Tojo had the authority of Hitler or Mussolini and absolving the emperor, even though the Japanese equivalent to *Heil Hitler!* was T*enno-heika banzai* – "Long live the emperor!'"[287] Nonetheless, by attributing the war to a class of militarists, whom the American people saw tried and punished after the war, the Japanese people could now move on and with American guidance build a democratic, capitalist state to fully enter modernity.

The American media worked hard to push this narrative on the American people after the war. Historian Naoko Shibusawa argues that journalists for the mainstream press and writers

[287] Naoko Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally: Reimagining the Japanese Enemy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 139.

who lived in occupied Japan worked consciously to recast the emperor and the Japanese in part due to their access and relationship with the Supreme Command for the Allied Powers as well as, "a combination of personal beliefs, particular epistemologies, cues from officials, and individual assessments of the situation."[288] Stories from Japan were filled with industrious Japanese whom exhibited common traits like soldiers returning home to families while minimizing mention of cruelty and atrocities committed during the war. These stories were supplemented by a number of films throughout the 1950s that drew the Japanese as distinct but beautiful nation that is developing into a modern state quickly while keeping its traditions. Films like *Sayonara* (1957) with Marlon Brando used the interracial love story to promote the idea of acceptance with the Japanese, a message preached in other American films set in Japan like *House of Bamboo* (1955) and *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956). "Americans, to be sure, never completely forgot that the Japanese had been wartime enemies responsible for heinous brutalities" notes Shibusawa, "But vision after vision of cherry blossom Japan, receptive Japanese women, and grateful, smiling Japanese children in postwar Hollywood films helped Americans accommodate a more tolerant view of the Japanese."[289]

On World War II American films began the 1950s by rarely showing the enemy themselves. In the massively popular *The Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), only one Japanese soldier is seen on screen. As the 1950s and 1960s progressed the image of the Japanese enemy evolved creating more well-rounded Japanese characters on par with the popular narrative. One of the best examples is seen in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957) with the character Colonel Saito (Sessue Hayakawa). His troops seem to fear him and thus follow his every command unquestioned, filling the role of the imperious Japanese militarist. However, as the film

[288] Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally*, 101.
[289] Shibusawa, *America's Geisha Ally*, 259.

progresses the audience sees a more complex figure as evidenced in the dinner scene with Lt. Colonel Nicholson (Alec Guinness) in which he reveals he attended the London School of Economics and prefers scotch whisky to sake. His evolution from monster to man is complete when he surrenders to Nicholson's demands and is seen crying in his room over his failure, but later building something of a rapport with the British officer albeit in a subservient role.

The Twentieth Century's portrayal of the Japanese was mixed throughout its run. It would on several occasions portray the Japanese in a manner similar to wartime propaganda, barbarous and fanatic people driven to mayhem by a strict militarist culture as seen in "War in China" (05/04/1958) and "Typhoon at Okinawa" (11/26/1961). However, other episodes work to present a humanized, equitable picture of the Japanese forces like in "Tarawa" (02/14/1960) in which the Japanese are personified in Sergeant Kiyoshi Ohta, the highest-ranking Japanese survivor of the battle interviewed on camera. His observations provide the Japanese soldiers with a much greater will and strategy as opposed to just blind faith in the emperor and glory in death, as Ohta notes on the invasion: "Since we were unable to get any help from Japan all of us made up our minds that we would fight to the death." He further noted the decision to not fire until the American soldiers were within 200 meters on the beach as a strategy and the night attacks done because they were told Americans could not see in the dark. The program also ties into the Japanese "Cold War narrative" in Ohta's description of his capture and how he tried to kill himself in the hospital ward of a ship twice until a chaplain came to him and said, "Please do not worry, you and I are good friends. The bad one is not you but Japan's Tojo." This and the incredible hospitality of the American staff convinces him to go to the U.S. prison camp, showcasing the separation between people and leaders as well as the power of American humility.[290]

[290] "Tarawa," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS: February 14, 1960).

In the case of Germany, a similar narrative was constructed but also supported by the immediate concerns of the nation and its history. The sympathy garnered for Germany through the numerous articles in popular publications as the frontier against Soviet communism that had distinctly made the Germans America's beneficiaries was backed by a narrative to relieve the people from the guilt of Nazism, promoted under the Truman administration, and continued through the Eisenhower administration. Historian Brian C. Ethridge contends in his book *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* that the U.S. government was the most effective force in promoting this perception as its prestige in the early Cold War made it a powerful voice people of both nations to listen to. "In a period of hyperpatriotism, official U.S. pronouncements served to demarcate the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable discourse" Ethridge claims, "Those actors who championed narratives different from the one supported by Washington ran the risk of marginalizing themselves within the larger society."[291]

This narrative highlighted how historically Germans were similar to Americans in their acceptance of capitalism and anti-communism but were duped during a low point in its history by a military minority that hijacked the country. The destruction of the Nazi leadership was also the extermination of Nazism and the emancipation of the German populace. The Nazis were thus an aberration in the history of Germany and the Germans should be judged not by the deeds of Hitler, but by their larger contributions to civilization and their present, vulnerable position. Ethridge describes how, "Policymakers minimized the influence of Nazis on the German population before, during, and after World War II, preferring instead to emphasize the long-standing similarities between Americans and Germans and the readiness with which Germans

[291] Brian C. Ethridge, *Enemies to Allies: Cold War Germany and American Memory* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press), 60.

adopted or supported American-style democracy, capitalism, and culture.[292] Such as case was made in several programs of *The Twentieth Century*, the most prescient being "Road to Berlin" (11/10/1963). Made in the aftermath of the Berlin Crisis of 1961, it told the tale of the beginning of the Cold War with the emergence of the Soviet Union's true colors in their obstruction to establishing an equitable postwar German government.

Another tenet of the narrative espoused to alleviate prejudice towards the German people was the definition of the Nazi regime as totalitarian. Many U.S. officials, aided by the media outlets, conflated Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in an invocation of the concept of totalitarianism. Using cursory similarities between the two governments – their suppression of individual liberties, forced labor camps, world dominating ambitions – this construct stoked emotions relating to the war to both justify the present struggle with the Soviet Union and excusing most Germans for the atrocities of the Nazis. Blaming the "ruling cliques" and the ideology under which they governed for the terrors of the war largely absolved the German populace of the abuses of the Nazis.[293]

This narrative was endorsed throughout the American media for much of the first fifteen years of the Cold War, especially the film industry. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, numerous American films on the war drew the German people and German soldiers as respectable, decent people caught in a wave of insanity propagated by Hitler. Douglas Sirk's *A Time to Love and a Time to Die* (1958) is a high point in the sympathetic portrayal of the German people. This adaptation of Erich Marie Remarque's novel illustrates the suffering of the German populace in the final year of the war, as German soldier Ernest Graeber (John Gavin) returns to his village on

[292] Ethridge, *Enemies to Allies*, 65.
[293] Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (1970): pp. 1046-1064, https://doi.org/10.2307/1852269.

his first furlough in two years to find it leveled by Allied bombing and his parents missing. His love affair with local girl Elizabeth (Lislotte Pulver) is frequently disrupted by the struggles of food shortages and constant air raids. The film hammers home the image of the Germans as people too, suffering in a war they did not want, manipulated by conniving Nazis like Captain Rahe, merely out to enrich himself at the expense of the people. It is clear here that the German people are the victims; of the war and of the Third Reich.

The Twentieth Century followed this Cold War narrative throughout much of its run in their presentation of the German people in several of their programs, both historical and contemporary. It is clearly seen in their biography episode on Hitler's Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels entitled "Minister of Hate" (02/19/1961), which opens with the exclamation "One man poisoned the minds of 80 million people! And led them to their ruin."[294] The program builds upon this thesis by showing Goebbels skill in utilizing every tool at his advantage – newspapers, radio, films - to win the hearts and minds of the German people. Pieces of Goebbels writing are used to reinforce this notion and explain the man's view of the masses as "uninformed stuff" whose "primitive instincts" must be appealed to. Footage of a Nazi rally as the narration describes how: "In full view for all to see: parades, pageantry, propaganda…. Goebbels spellbinds the German people with his stagecraft. With Wagnerian-like spectacles calculated to enflame their emotions and confuse their minds." Through these displays of the Nazis' power and appeals to the baser senses that the infallibility of Hitler and the Third Reich becomes a reality for the German peoples and this, according to the program, is where the power of the Nazis lies.[295]

[294] "Minister of Hate," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, February 19, 1961).
[295] "Minister of Hate," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, February 19, 1961).

The show did not completely absolve the Germans for their part in the war. Several episodes acknowledge the brutal measures taken by the German forces in their occupations of Norway ["The Battle for Norway"], Denmark ["Sabotage"] and France ["The Liberation of Paris"]. These mention the concentration camps and harsh measures taken to weed out resistance groups in the occupied European countries, whilst naming several officers involved in said atrocities. But again, it is the officers in charge and a few bad souls that are responsible for the harsh treatment, the foot soldiers come across as men obeying orders or a people brainwashed into following the demands of a madman. Numerous examples abound throughout the series, the episode "The Battle of the Bulge" (01/31/1960) presents the victims of the Malmedy Massacre of December 17, 1944 in which German forces murdered 84 American prisoners of war in cold blood. Over footage of the corpses Cronkite's narration explains "Hitler has ordered his men to stage a *rabatz* against the Americans, an orgy of cruelty. Near Malmedy his order results in massacre."[296] Furthermore, the expulsion of the Germans from these countries perpetuates the notion that the problem of the Germans had been addressed and ended.

The Germans were no longer the foe, but an important ally that the United States has no ill-will toward. Such is accentuated in episodes like "Monte Cassino" and "The Invasion of Sicily" in which German and American generals are both interviewed on-camera. There is never a hint of animosity towards the enemy by these men despite being on opposing sides, and the objectiveness of these former Nazis, now resettled and out of the military, accentuate how removed they are from their past.

Such presentations promoting the belief that the German people had been suckered into the Nazi ideology, negligent of the horrific ramifications until it was too late, began to change as

[296] "Battle of the Bulge," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, January 31, 1960).

the 1960s progressed. The decade witnessed an Anschluss of events that helped spur a re-examination of Germany and threaten the narrative of Germany promoted since the late-1940s. Amongst the events that began to turn public attention were public paintings of swastikas and other anti-Semitic vandalisms in 1959, the publication of William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* in 1960, the worldwide telecast trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1960–1961, the discussions over the expiration of West German statutes for war crimes in 1965, the electoral victories of the right-wing West German National Democratic Party (NPD) in 1966, and the appointment of Kurt Georg Kiesinger, a former member of the Nazi Party, to the highest office in West Germany the same year.[297] By the mid-1960s the narrative began to unravel as development in Germany and the world drew attention to the endearing vestiges of Nazism, the complicity of the general populace, and the greatest atrocity committed on behalf of the ideology – the Holocaust.

The Holocaust and its Legacy

After over a decade of silence on the issue, aided by Cold War prerogatives of maintaining a strong West German/Austrian alliance the Holocaust began to enter the lexicon of the American public in the early-1960s. The re-examination of the genocide was an action aided by shifts in Cold War ideology that saw greater questioning of the German "Cold War narrative" coinciding with public displays of remembrance and several important cultural works on the tragedy. *The Twentieth Century* was a critical outlet for viewing this shift thanks to its prestige as well as one of the first sights for witnessing a critical investigation of the Holocaust on American television.

[297] Ethridge*, From Enemies to Allies*, 163.

While thousands of Americans had viewed footage of the concentration camps in newsreels and millions had read of their horrors in various newspapers in the ending days of the war in Europe, it quickly disappeared from the public sphere with the heightening of Cold War tensions. The Holocaust became a part of the German Cold War narrative in the sense that its public discussion was deemed counterproductive to present concerns. Jewish Literature scholar Alan Mintz described how as public interest began to wane following the first round of trials at Nuremberg, and concern shifted to the threat posed by the Soviet Union, "the question of German guilt was bracketed while the United States rebuilt West Germany and rehabilitated its citizens as a key bulwark against Communist aggression."[298]

By the end of the 1950s, there was little mention of the Holocaust outside of Jewish groups and, even then, conducted with cautious interest.[299] There were only a handful of books on the Holocaust available to American readers, with most barely read. Only two histories of the Holocaust were available in the United States - Gerald Reitlinger's *The Final Solution* (1953) and Leon Poliakov's *Harvest of Hate* (1954) – each printed by obscure U.S. publishers, not reviewed by a general-circulation press, and only sold a few hundred copies. Likewise, coverage in high school and college textbooks was miniscule at best and non-existent at worst.[300] Hollywood to was silent on the matter throughout the 1950s and only very cautiously examined it in the 1960s.

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[298] Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001), 5.

[299] Major American Jewish organizations like the American Jewish Committee were afraid that speaking out in the evolving Cold War atmosphere would make them seem "out of step" with other Americans. An over-emphasis on the Holocaust and memorialization of its victims could draw unwanted emphasis on their Jewish identity at a time when Americans were united in their euphoria over the "total" defeat of Nazism and impede their assimilation efforts. There was also a fear that speaking out would seemingly confirm the age-old alignment of Jews and communism. In another sense, many American Jews did not feel a strong identification with the European Jewry at the time. They like many of their generation were focused on taking advantage of the post-war opportunities and integrating themselves into American life. Such was the case of the show's producer Isaac Kleinerman, whom rarely addressed his Jewish identity and did not raise his daughters in the Jewish faith.

[300] Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 108.

Even the most popular work of Holocaust media *The Diary of Anne Frank*, gave readers a subdued look at the Holocaust. "The diary succeeded in overcoming the natural American resistance to reading about unhappy things because it steered clear of the horror," says Alan Mintz, "because it stressed the commonality of human experience rather than the distinctiveness of the victims."[301]

The Twentieth Century, tended to follow this line in its early seasons, rarely mentioning the Holocaust or if doing so, tending to cast it as a maxim of the crimes committed by the Nazi leaders. The most notable example of this is their program on the Nuremberg Trials titled "Trial at Nuremberg" (03/2/1958). The program details the first major trial of high-ranking Nazi officials described as "the makers", "the salesmen" and "mascots" of Nazi policy in a very about-face fashion stressing the defendants' denial of any wrongdoing and the immense importance of international law. The program largely endorses the Cold War narrative that the end of World War II saw justice delivered and the total defeat of Nazism. That the punishment of these officials, death to twelve of the twenty-four Nazi officials and imprisonment for most others, is taken as the end of the Nazi nightmare. The program, however, makes no mention of how of the three figures given life sentences, two had been released along with two others who had received shorter sentences. At the program's conclusion over footage of Spandau Prison, a brief statement of justification is offered, "to the trials record of Nazi mass murder and inhumanity," as well as criticism the trial received for its sentencing of military men. Cronkite's closing narration holds: "The trial at Nuremberg awaits a final judgement. The verdict of history in the twentieth century." The old foes have been vanquished, what is done is done, and there are more pressing concerns today so leave further mediation to the history books. Such is evidenced

[301] Mintz, Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America, 17.

in the program's penultimate scene showing the changing of the guard at Spandau, from American guards to Soviet ones. "Thus, with the nation most widely nominated as our enemy in any war to come," Cronkite notes, "Americans continue to guard peacefully the enemy of a war long passed."[302]

More subversive is how the program's subdued presentation of the crimes committed against the Jews, who are barely referenced as the primary victims. The program devotes nearly a quarter of its runtime to footage of the concentration camps, detailing the "solution" of "shower rooms neatly converting with admirable Nazi efficiency, into gas chambers" as well as the ovens used to dispose of the bodies after their hair, gold fillings, and anything else deemed of value was extracted from the bodies. Yet, at no time does the narration identify the victims as Jews. Although the matter "systematic murder of the Jews" in the subsequent scene of the cross-examination of Herman Goering, it is brief. Any viewer could miss the connection without narration to guide them, making the display seem as if the camps were standard punishment of the Nazis' opponents.[303]

Novick notes that the neglect in describing the Holocaust as directed against the Jewish people was common in the early U.S. reporting on the camps, with prisoners normally described a "political prisoners, slave laborers, or and civilians of many nationalities." The Jews were mentioned, especially in more detailed reports amongst other groups of victims, and it was often noted that the Jews fared worse in the camps. But, in Novick's words, "there was nothing about the reporting on the liberation of the camps that treated Jews as more than among the victims of the Nazis; nothing that suggested the camps were emblematic of anything other than Nazi barbarism in general; nothing, that is, that associated them with what is now designated as 'the

[302] "Trial at Nuremberg," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, March 2, 1958).
[303] "Trial at Nuremberg," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, March 2, 1958).

Holocaust.'"[304] Novick points out that this likely stems from the fact that of the camps liberated by the Americans only about one-fifth of the prisoners were Jews and thus did not figure prominently in initial observations. However, enough time had elapsed, and facts gather for the series to clarify this point, why they did not make this point clear is dubious.

A rude awakening of this notion came with a vengeance in the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann. Captured by Israeli agents in May 1960 after living incognito in Buenos Aires for over a decade, the coverage of his trial in 1961 would bring a new level of consciousness to the systematic murder of the Jews. The trial, which was reported on and broadcast throughout the world, presented a grim retelling of the history of the Holocaust from the enactment of the Nuremberg laws to the mechanics of the death camps at a time when a re-evaluation of Cold War dynamics was in its opening stage. Novick holds that the trial and death sentencing of Eichmann had the effect of both introducing the term "Holocaust" for the systematic murders as well as present it to the American public as "an entity in its own right, distinct from Nazi barbarism in general."[305] Mintz concurs with Novick's claim, holding that the trial of "registered" the Holocaust in the American collective memory of the war and the evil man is capable of. "Although the Holocaust in no way replaced the great patriotic American narrative of 'WWII,'" Mintz notes, "a niche was created alongside that chronicle to make room for this other story that had no uplifting ending."[306]

The wave of publicity caused by the Eichmann trial spurred an upsurge of works examining the Holocaust and German complicity. More personal memoirs began to emerge on the bookshelves and into people's homes, including Eli Wiesel's *Night* (1960). Hannah Arndt's

[304] Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life,* 65.
[305] Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life*, 133.
[306] Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of the Holocaust Memory in America*, 12.

controversial *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1963), a collection of her articles on the trial in *The New Yorker*, which implied a level of Jewish complicity in the genocide and the "banal" character of its propagators, provoked a heated debate amongst the Jewish intellectuals highlighting the need for a more aggressive approach to education and definition of the Holocaust. Hollywood also began to tackle the horrors of the Holocaust and the question of complicity with the films *Exodus* (1960), *Judgement at Nuremberg* (1961), and *The Pawnbroker* (1965). These films were supplemented by foreign films trickling into the United States in the mid-1960s, including *The Ninth Circle* (1960), *Kapo* (1960), *Diamonds of the Night* (1964) and *The Shop on Main Street* (1965) which won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

The Twentieth Century provided a compelling example of Holocaust media in their program "Who Killed Anne Frank" (12/13/1964). Made when the producers learned the statute of limitations on war criminals in West Germany was set to expire on May 8, 1965, the program is a complex investigation on who was responsible for the Holocaust.[307] Using the story of Anne Frank's, the personification of the Holocaust for much of the American public, and the man who arrested her as a starting point, it proceeds to comment upon the issue of Nazi war criminals at large, the meaning of justice for the victims of the Holocaust, and the importance of expounding the genocide to the public.

The opening of the program, with CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr at the former hideout of the Frank family, now a museum, and an interview with her father Otto Frank on their capture and experiences of Auschwitz. This is both a reminder to the audience with knowledge of Anne Frank's story and an addition to the narrative exposing the horrific fate of Anne and her family in the camps. The audience watches the emotion overcome Otto as he describes his wife

[307] Robert Mussell, "Will Nazi 'Dead' Walk Again?: War Crime Statute Opens 'Twentieth Century' Season," *Press-Telegram*, December 13, 1964, p. 127.

and children's death, "Anna had typhoid fever just as Margot had. Margot had fallen out of her bed and broke her skull, more or less. So, she died, and when Anna was in high fever she lost courage. She said, 'No more Margot… no parents.'… there was just thousands of people being ill with typhoid fever."[308]

The program progressed to examine the work of Nazi-hunter Dr. Simon Wiesenthal who found the police inspector Karl Silberbauer who arrested the Franks and their constituents. "'This is all a swindle. Anne Frank no exist.' And a hundred thousand and thousands of young people in Austria and Germany believe them," Wiesenthal explains on camera, "I tell me-self the best way to find this man arresting Anne Frank family; because if he will tell, 'Anne Frank was existing because I arrest her,' this will be believable." Through a montage of still image of Silberbauer with statements he had made to the press the program reveals the cold detachment these men had towards their work, exclaiming he was "just doing his duty," he had no knowledge of the camps, and "if Anne Frank had not left her diary behind... then his present misfortune would not have happened." Silberbauer, the audience is told, like many who took part in the round-up of Jews, was living a normal life in Vienna and was still a police officer whom the authorities found he had done nothing wrong. But, as Cronkite notes, "just as Anne Frank was a small symbol of a much greater tragedy so Silberbauer was a small instrument of a much greater crime."[309]

Silberbauer is just one example of many, according to the program. Schoor proceeds to cite the work of the Central Investigation Office of Ludwigsburg, which located 550 German war criminals who, like Silberbauer, were presently living normal lives with some in prominent positions like a city police chief and the chief of the West German Chancellor's security. The metaphor of cogs in a machine is repeated in the program at the trial of twenty-two former

[308] "Who Killed Anne Frank," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, December 13, 1964).
[309] "Who Killed Anne Frank," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, December 13, 1964).

officials and guards of Auschwitz. The narration notes, "These defendants were small cogs in a big machine. Not here, are bigger cogs – the last Auschwitz commandant, Richard Baer, who died awaiting trial… and Camp Doctor Josef Mengele."[310]

The theme of justice and its meaning is echoed throughout in the survivors Wiesenthal and Frank, who find justice in the trying and imprisoning those who took part in the systematic murder of over 6 million people. "This is problems – big problems for the survivors. You cannot this problem with restitution, with money settled" claims Weisenthal, "This problem can only be settled by justice." Likewise, Otto Frank when inquired about perhaps the most famous line in his daughter's diary on her belief in the inherent goodness of men, "I think she didn't mean that. She thought there is some good in every man, and I am an optimist too…but we know how much bad people exist. You can't forgive those who really are murderers. This is going to far." The program's depiction of the expiration of the statute of limitations, less than five months after the broadcast, as point of how this justice may not occur.[311]

Another key issue the episode examines is who is culpable. It takes the viewer to Frankfurt where twenty-two former officials and guards of Auschwitz are being tried. "Camp survivors give sickening testimony of babies bashed against trees, of prisoners thrust alive into the incinerators," the narration informs, "Still a poll shows that 39 percent of Germans are against these trials." Such information reveals how the Nazi past of the nation is still very much alive and how burying the past was a mistake. While Wiesenthal and Frank both want to see justice served to those who actively participated in the genocide, the program points to a deeper responsibility on the part of the populace who did nothing. At the trial Schorr interviews several students outside the courthouse about the trial and asks who they think is culpable. Their

[310] "Who Killed Anne Frank," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, December 13, 1964).
[311] "Who Killed Anne Frank," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, December 13, 1964).

responses express surprise of the level of the crimes and a responsibility of the people for allowing this to happen. One student explains, "I feel we all are responsible, every one of us because it has happened in Germany, and we are all Germans – and because we have to somehow carry what has happened in history." Indeed, Cronkite's closing narration sharpens this sentiment: "Who, then killed Anne Frank? Hitler and his system, say the Germans…. But a system that depended on willing executioners, and the obedient compliance of millions who helped Hitler, and did nothing."[312]

America's Former Ally, Present Foe

Another aspect of the war in which the series helped illuminate for viewers through the filter of Cold War mentality was the Eastern front of the War and the role of the Soviet Union, a participant that was routinely slighted in American renditions of the war. Television depictions of the war mirrored Hollywood in minimizing mention of the Eastern Front and the Soviet Union as allies due to the Cold War. Historians Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies note how when relations with the Soviet Union changed after the war, "it was important to erase at least some aspects of the recent war from public memory and revise the terms of discussion of other aspects, particularly with regard to our new enemy – the former ally – the Soviet Union."[313] The resulting Red Scare led both networks and advertisers to reject any subject it considered pro-Communist. Films like *Mission to Moscow* (1943), *The Song of Russia* (1944) and even *Ninotchka* (1939) were aired with caution by the networks and local stations while the Pro-Soviet World War II film *The North Star* (1943) was re-titled and re-edited to lessen its praise of the Russians. In *Victory at Sea*, the Soviet Union is only shown in three of the series' twenty-six episodes and

[312] "Who Killed Anne Frank," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS, December 13, 1964).
[313] Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front,* 2.

only one battle mentioned by name.[314] *The Twentieth Century* would devote six episodes to actions on the Eastern Front and in doing so broke a kind of taboo for television.[315]

The availability of footage was another factor in the exclusion of the Eastern Front in documentaries. No American cameramen were present at key battles and Cold War relations prevented the acquisition of film from most of Eastern Europe. Researchers had to make do with German-shot or captured Soviet footage, largely in West German and British archives or consult private collectors. When *The Twentieth Century's* Mel Stuart inquired Soviet authorities about footage from a Soviet documentary on the Battle of Stalingrad he had seen during the war, he was informed those films were "obsolete" and rebuffed.[316]

A wide network of connections to film archives and private collections around the world provided the coveted footage of the Eastern Front. For the program "Stalingrad," the first portrayal of the Eastern front on the series, Mel Stuart spent six months scouring repositories in Germany and Washington D.C. for appropriate footage of the German side and acquired the Soviet documentary he remembered from two private film collections. The ability of the series' production crew in locating footage reinforcing Kleinerman's belief that if there is a "body of film" to make a program practical pursue it.[317]

Although a bold move to present the war in the East, the series' portrayal of the Soviet Union was couched in anti-communist precepts that had permeated popular culture since the late-1940s. Media scholar Cydney Hendershot notes how during this period, "Suspicion of and

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[314] C. Fred MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1985), 124.
[315] The five episodes are, in chronological order: "Stalingrad"; "Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War"; "Army of the Damned"; "Leningrad"; and "The Warsaw Uprising."
[316] "TWENTIETH CENTURY SCOURS U.S. AND GERMANY FOR STALINGRAD FILMS THE RUSSIANS CALL OBSOLETE," CBS Television Network Press Release, April 6, 1959, in Benjamin Burton Files, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.
[317] "Film Bloodhounds Find Intriguing, Forgotten Shots," *Victoria Advocate*, March 1, 1959, p. 76.

hatred for Communism, and especially Soviet Communism, formed the backdrop of Cold War politics" while popular culture aided in interpreting the threat.[318] Being particularly vulnerable to government regulation, the medium was quick to fall in line with popular attitudes and official lines of thinking. American television, in the words of J. Fred MacDonald, "flooded the culture with politicized rhetoric that, rather than reason with viewers, bombarded them with anti-Communist platitudes."[319]

One way it accomplished this was by relating Soviet communism to Nazi fascism as "Red Fascism." This unison of the two ideologies began before the Second World War, as several critics noted the parallels between the harsh rules of Hitler and Stalin which seemed to be officially bonded with the Molotov von Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. Shortly after the war the association was revived as the Communist takeover of Eastern Europe became increasingly apparent.[320] Figures like FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, journalist Howard K. Smith, and even President Harry S. Truman began conflating the threat of Soviet Union with that of Nazi Germany, with Truman declaring in a 1947 speech, "There isn't any difference in totalitarian states. I don't care what you call them - you call them Nazi, Communist or Fascist or Franco, or anything else - they are all alike."[321] Media outlets soon followed with Look magazine publishing the feature "Communism – Heir of Fascism" and films like *The Red Danube* (1949) and *Guilty of Treason* (1950) each containing Soviet officers and soldiers who share the same

[318] Cydney Hendershot, *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America*, (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 144.
[319] Fred C. MacDonald, *Television and the Red Menace: The Video Road to Vietnam*, (New York: Praeger, 1985), 105.
[320] Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (1970): pp. 1046-1064, https://doi.org/10.2307/1852269.
[321] (Comment of May 13, 1947), Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Harry S. Truman. Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January I to December 31, 1947 (Washington, D. C., 1963), 238.

calculating sadism and adherence to authority as the Nazis of just a few years earlier. Examining this connection, historians Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson explain how this conflation eased Americans into the Cold War: "The analogy between the two European nations provided frightened Americans with the assurance they knew what to expect from Russia, because the analogy taught them and convinced them that the 1940's and 1950's were simply a replay of the 1930's."[322]

On television, this link was illustrated largely in documentaries.[323] These included overt anti-communist programs on the rise of the Soviet Union like NBC's "Nightmare in Red" (1954) to later specials in its *White Paper* series "The Death of Stalin" (1962) and "The Rise of Khrushchev" (1962) which depict the country's leaders relying on ideology, repression, and personality to jockey for control like the Axis leaders of World War II. Even an UpJohn, sponsor of the program "Who Goes There? A Primer on Communism," commercial draws parallels between the Axis powers and the Soviet Union. It displays a series of extreme closeups of Hitler, Tojo, and Stalin in tangent while a narrator describes America as a healthy and prosperous nation "thanks in part to the men who weren't shouting or marching, but just working quietly at Upjohn, hoping in their way to change things."[324]

Portraying relation of communism and fascism through its leaders is apparent in the opening scene of "Stalingrad" which presents Hitler and Stalin side by side as Cronkite explains: "two dictators, Russia's Joseph Stalin and Germany's Adolf Hitler, make this battle of half a

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[322] Les K. Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, "Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's," *The American Historical Review* 75, no. 4 (1970): pp. 1046-1064, https://doi.org/10.2307/1852269, 1046-1047.

[323] Some scripted programming also made this conflation. Perhaps most famous is found *in The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle and Friends* (1959-1964) where the Russian-accented spies Boris Badanov and Natasha Fatale perform the bidding of the German-accented, Nazi-like uniform wearing Fearless Leader.

[324] Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 48.

million men their personal death struggle here in this city."[325] The positioning of the two leaders - totalitarians, embodiments of their respective governments who led thousands to death for their megalomania – implies the two men are one in the same. Such imagery likens the leadership of Stalin to that of the Axis leaders, inviting the viewer to compare the Communist world to the legacy of fascism, America's past foe with its present.

Most of the program that follows proceeds as a compact history of the battle and its brutal conditions with the two sides portrayed even-handedly. It is in the final minutes on the aftermath of the battle that the Cold War remerges. After the German surrender of February 2nd, 1942, Cronkite dubs the victory the turning point in the war on the Eastern Front, "decisive as Marne, Verdun, and the Battle of Britain," but reminds viewers, "From this point on the Russian Army will move constantly westward to the Danube, the Odor, and the Elbe. With it will march Soviet communism and the torments of a divided postwar world," as a shot of a Soviet tank rolling westward through the snow. The program cuts to the arrival of one man, a man Cronkite calls "an important functionary in the Ukraine and virtually unknown outside of Russia,", this man "will later direct communism's destinies – Nikita Khrushchev." [326]

Here the program connects the viewer of the present to the war. The viewers' mind would likely turn to domination of Eastern Europe and the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian Uprising a year previously. The appearance of Khrushchev further reinforces this. As Michael Keller and Steven Barson point out in their history of anti-communist propaganda and popular culture, by the late-1950s, "Khrushchev had taken on the aspect of King Kong, a fearsome

[325] "Stalingrad," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, April 19, 1959).
[326] "Stalingrad," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, April 19, 1959).

monster who 'brought half the world to its knees!'"[327] The scene thus reminds the audience of the ills of the contemporary Cold War are rooted in the Soviet victory.

"Stalingrad" furthers the notion of Soviet oppression with its ending depicting lines of cold, bandaged, poorly clothed German prisoners marching through the snow as Cronkite informs the viewer, "123,000 Germans, less than half of fortress Stalingrad, lived to be captured. Of these, 50,000 die on the road to Siberia or typhus ridden Russian prison camps. Since the war fewer than 5,000 have been returned to Germany. It is unlikely that any more will return."[328] An ending which reinforces the perception of the Soviets as brutal conquerors. TV Keys, a team of critics used by several newspapers, said as much in their review noting it was, "hard in retrospect to remember how America's heart went out at the time to 'our brave allies."[329]

The Twentieth Century also built upon another strand of the "Red Fascist" propaganda – the separation of Soviet communist government, with the average citizen. Since the late-1940s a view persisted amongst many Americans that while the Soviet hierarchy, the leaders in the Kremlin pulling the strings of international communism, were evil, scheming figures bent on world domination, the general populace of the Soviet Union were, by-and-large, prisoners of the Soviet state.[330] Such was espoused by public figures like Lewis H. Brown, president of the Johns-Manville Corporation, when he told the U.S. Senate Committee on foreign relation "the Russian people, like the German people, do not want to rule the world, but they are helpless slaves of the ruling clique that dominates the people through fear and terror, through

[327] Michael Barson and Steven Heller, *Red Scared: The Commie Menace in Propaganda and Popular Culture*, (San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2001), 116.
[328] "Stalingrad," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, April 19, 1959).
[329] TV Keys. The Twentieth Century: 'Stalingrad" // *Herald and Review*. April 19, 1959. C. p. 48.
[330] Cydney Hendershot, *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America*, (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 40.

concentration camps and secret police and through the whole mechanism of totalitarianism."[331] Such sentiment was seen in numerous news articles and public interest pieces throughout the 1950s[332] as well as on the television with the *Project XX* program "Nightmare in Red" in its chronicle of the rise of communism in which the people at once hopeful with the ousting of the czar find themselves trapped in a system of forced labor, food shortages, and genocide.

This conception of the people as prisoners of the Soviet state would be elicited in The *Twentieth Century's* follow-up program on the Eastern Front "Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War" (02/11/1962). this episode takes a more expansive view, beginning with the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of August 1939 and ending with the German retreat of late 1941 with a focus on the rise of the partisan guerrilla fighters whilst highlighting the atrocities of the Stalin regime. In this it draws a stark picture of the duplicitous nature of the Stalin regime and the commitment of the people not to communism but to the survival of their homeland.

The program opens with a wicked act of greed with the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, described as "an uneasy bargain with Hitler" made by Stalin who now, "makes plans for war." The program proceeds to describe how Stalin begins the Winter War of 1940 while fueling the Nazi war machine with Soviet goods. The viewer watches sacks of grain and train cars of oil sent to Germany as Cronkite explains, "The Soviet breadbasket is plundered by Stalin to pay off the political debt" to "fuel Hitler's panzers already poised to attack the West" whilst "every part of Russia is deprived of food." It cuts to November 1940 where Stalin has sent his Minister of Foreign Affairs Vyacheslav Molotov, "a hearty Bolshevik," to, "insist that Hitler

[331] US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, Hearings, European Recovery Program 80 Cong., 2 sess. (Washington, D. C., 1948), 1191.
[332] Some articles include *Look* 's articles "What Stalin Tells the Russians About Us" and "John Gunther Reports from Behind the Iron Curtain" (1948); *The Saturday Evening Post's* "Now the Russians are Fleeing Russia"; and *Life's* "Russia Through Russian Eyes" (1949).

acknowledge Russia's dominance in Eastern Europe as the 'Reds' have already annexed Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This again highlights Fascist-Communist equivalency with Molotov's words used to show the two as equals while by detailing the Soviet complicity in the sufferings of World War II. Stalin and other "hearty Bolsheviks" helped start the war, supply the Nazis, and annex free countries as the Nazis had in Western Europe.[333]

Yet when Germany invades the Soviet Union on June 07, 1941, implied here as the result of Molotov's request of Hitler for acknowledgement of the Soviet's territorial gains, the Soviet armies quickly crumble due to Stalin's purges of the 1930s. As the German Army moves further inward through Ukraine, Belorussia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the episode notes how hundreds of thousands, "Fanatically hating the Stalin regime, gladly surrender, and are ready to cooperate with the Germans in any way." The narration details how, "Ukrainians, Cossacks, Moslems, and other minorities at last can voice their resentment of Stalin. Millions horrified under communism welcome their conquerors as liberators." Footage of crowds waving and saluting passing German soldiers, giving flowers and openly embracing the soldiers is accompanied by the destruction of monuments to Lenin and Stalin, which Cronkite calls "symbols of tyranny."[334] This reinforces Curtin's conclusion on the period's anti-communist documentaries: "the 'effects' of these programs were not limited to what they had to say about particular places or events but included how they positioned these elements in relation to other elements, drawing attention to some things while obscuring others."[335]

According to the program it is only Hitler's order of mass-enslavement and execution of the "racially inferior Slavs" what the program dubs, "Hitler's most fatal blunder," that led the

[333] "Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, February 11, 1962).
[334] "Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, February 11, 1962).
[335] Michael Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland: Television Documentary and Cold War Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 39.

people to take up arms, for their "homeland" and their "lives." This creates the partisan forces which sabotaged the Nazi war machine and turned the tide of the war. The episode makes it clear that the partisan guerrilla fighters are not Communists. Cronkite calls the civilian soldiers "minute men," like those in the Revolutionary War, with the only semblance of government support stated is the commissars dropping ideology to urge people to fight, "not for communism, but for Mother Russia."[336]

The Twentieth Century would address the Eastern Front in another four programs between 1962 and 1965, the most notable is "The Siege of Leningrad" which premiered on February 28, 1965. It was the first program made with footage from the Soviet archives which offers a grand display of the struggle for survival in the city's 880-day siege. [337] It also removes the government/people separation of the previous program to focus solely on the plight of Leningrad's citizens, victims of the German war machine, who suffer over a million losses in the siege yet never give up. The viewer sees the damage of the German bombardment, children pulling sleds of dead bodies through the snow, and women receiving their minuscule bread ration, which is made partly from tree bark, cotton seed, or moldy grain salvaged from sunken ships. Here the audience is not reminded of the atrocities of the Stalin regime or the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe, only of the people's indefatigable will to survive.[338] One review cited such sentiment, in how the program "is built around the Russians' inexhaustible spirit, in temperatures 50 degrees below zero, to keep their city free."[339]

[336] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland,* 39.
[337] Producer Isaac Kleinerman, with the help of CBS's Moscow correspondent Stuart Novins, negotiated the purchase of the 58-minute Soviet documentary *The Bastion of Neve* and available outtakes from the State Committee of Radio and Television, which was re-edited into the episode.
[338] "The Siege of Leningrad," *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, February 28, 1965).
[339] TV Scout, "The Siege of Leningrad," *Express and News*, February 21, 1965.

Such depiction coincided with an easing of U.S.-Soviet relations by the mid-1960s.[340] The Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 spurred a reappraisal of the maxims of Mutually Assured Destruction while reinforcing the need for better communication between the two nations. This spawned legislation like the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963 which in turn was complimented by a new look at the Soviet Union in the media. Hendershot notes how the move towards attempting peaceful coexistence by the two governments translated into a "gradual humanizing of American images of Russia."[341] These emphasized the people and their similarities with Americans, whether students or housing communities, while the government leaders are shown heralding cooperation and co-existence, not nuclear superiority.

American television was also going to the Soviet Union to bring Americans a comprehensive look at life in the Soviet Union. The fall of 1965 NBC broadcast a half-hour news report on the personalities and political attitudes of the Soviet Union's new leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Aleksei Kosygin. CBS Reports news program would air a program on a voyage down the Volga River and life in the Russian heartland for its 7th season premiere in January 1966.[342] *The Twentieth Century* too would go to the Soviet Union, when, after years of requests, the producers received Soviet approval and aid to film a program on student life at Moscow University for their ninth season, free of any hassle by the Soviet censors.[343] It was one of the series final programs.

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[340] *The Twentieth Century* would once again conflate German Nazism with Soviet Communism in the program "The Warsaw Uprising" (03/28/1965) on the Polish assault against the Nazi occupying forces of Warsaw that was put down thanks in part to the Red Army halting its advance towards the city and not providing access to its airfields for American/British supply runs to the Poles. The press release claims that the event serves as a warning to the West of Soviet ambitions while the closing narration describes the outcome as: "the tragedy of a great and living city, victimized by two dictators… the Nazi Hitler… the Red Stalin.

[341] Hendershot, *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America,* 143.

[342] Richard Doan, "Life in the U.S.S.R.," *The Evening Review,* May 19, 1965, p. 31.

[343] Bill Byers, "Meet Ike Kleinerman: Out of the Classroom and Off to Siberia," *Kingston Daily Freedman*, Feb. 19, 1966, p. 22.

Conclusion

The Twentieth Century would end its production after the completion of its ninth season in 1966 when Prudential Insurance ended its sponsorship. The changing of the Sunday evening schedule from documentary and cultural program to one centered around NFL football resulted in the loss of the first thirteen weeks of the fall, leading to only 18 new programs from October 31, 1965, to April 17, 1966. For Prudential 52 weeks of programming a year: 26 original programs and 26 reruns was essential to their business. Outside of the promotion of its image, Prudential was able to amortize the series on a 52-week program schedule, twice the amount of programming they paid for; but because of televised football CBS only offered 39 weeks a year. This reduced schedule, according to Kleinerman, "threw [Prudential's] budgeting askew for the amount of viewers they were able to reach in the course of the year. So they backed off."[344] Finding another sponsor was "impossible" as the identification of Prudential with *The Twentieth Century* had become engrained in the mind of the viewers.[345] Thus, the financial appeal of televised sports led to the end of the series network run.

Besides the enormous popularity of Sunday-night football, the historical compilation series that *The Twentieth Century* had built its acclaim upon was beginning to fall out of favor with viewers as the sixties progressed. The upsurge of pressing current events happening throughout the country on civil rights, the buildup of military forces in Vietnam, and other issues placed greater interest on current events than historical documentary. The "cinema-verité" style of live-reporting on the scene had also shifted the dynamics of documentary filmmaking to a new

[344] Isaac Kleinerman, Interview by Barbara Hogenson, 1980, transcript, Columbia University Oral History Collection, Columbia University, New York, NY.
[345] The same team behind The Twentieth Century – Benjamin, Kleinerman, and Cronkite – immediately began production of a new docu-series *The Twenty First Century* (1967-1970), securing Union Carbide as its sponsor. During its first season most of the viewer mail went to Prudential Insurance and not Union Carbide, revealing the high level of association between Prudential's image and *The Twentieth Century*.

style more appealing to the younger, baby-boom generation.[346] *The Twentieth Century* had observed with the number of contemporary, on-the-scene programs outnumbering the historical compilations by the show's fourth season.[347] Although the World War II programming remained popular, the times were changing, and documentary focus went with it.

Furthermore, documentary programming on television was on the decline. Network and station interest in documentary programming significantly waned due to subpar ratings and low returns on their investments, flustered by the limited pool of sponsors for such programming. As an article in *Variety* noted in October 1865: "Like live video drama and the Bisson, the hardhitting TV documentary is nearly extinct."[348] Indeed, by this time the government pressure that had helped to birth the wave of documentaries had greatly dissipated by the time of the 1964 election, in which television played a big role. Indeed, by 1964 the need for documentary analysis of global issues was not as important to corporate leaders, who had largely attained their goals in the Kennedy White House regarding an increase in defense spending and ameliorating issues of tariffs and trade. On the other hand, the documentary did not receive the ardent support of government officials it once had in-light of emerging re-assessment of the Cold War. Michael Curtin concludes that by the mid-1960s, after epic East-West confrontations such places as Berlin and Cuba "tempered" domestic enthusiasm for global activism, "the time had come to cool off the rhetoric and direct public attention away from superpower conflict along the frontiers of the Free World."[349]

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[346] Jack C. Ellis and Betsy A. McLane, *A New History of Documentary Film* (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2005), 223.
[347] Richard F. Shepard, "'TWENTIETH CENTURY': C.B.S. Program, in Fourth Year, Looks Forward to Series of Topical Shows," *The New York Times,* Nov. 27, 1960, p. X13.
[348] *Variety* article quoted in James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 105.
[349] Curtin, *Redeeming the Wasteland,* 254.

Indeed, by the time of the series' end the critics which had once heralded shows like The Twentieth Century as an example for creators to follow had largely given up hope for the medium. By the mid-1960s, television was flooded with a series of silly sitcoms in mostly rural settings like *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-1971) and *Green Acres* (1965-1971) to the even more outlandish *Gilligan's Island* and *My Favorite Martian* as well as spy series like *I, Spy* (1965-1968) and *Mission Impossible* (1966-1973), coupled with other "harmless" program options. As networks had overtaken the role of the advertiser in the production of series by the mid-1960s, adopting more risks with programming costs and benefits, most network executives decided to aim for programming which could accrue the highest possible audience with largely mundane stories in sometimes outlandish settings or bombastic characters depending on the latest "boom" topic. Such unabashed escapist fare ultimately conclude that the networks had abandoned any desire toward improving the quality of content, satisfied with universal mediocrity. Television critic Jack Gould called the fall 1965 television season, "the biggest yawn in the modern annals of broadcasting."[350]

This development can also be seen in the usurping of the documentary with narrative-driven fiction as television's largest contributor to the war narrative. While fictional representations of the war had been attempted earlier on television with such shows *Navy Log* (1955-1958), *The Silent Service* (1957-1958), and the independently produced *Citizen Soldier* (1957-1958) it not considered a profitable venture given the price needed for the proper special effects and technical elements to bring war to life, especially with the glut of war films released in cinemas. This changed with the 1962-1963 television season when ABC drafted the audience into the war drama with their series *Combat*! (1962-1967) and *The Gallant Men* (1962-1963) as

[350] Gould quoted in James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 103.

well as the World War II set comedy *McHale's Navy* (1962-1966). As media historians Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik note in their history of American television Watching Television: Six Decades of American Television by 1962, "With World War II nearly two decades in the past, it seemed safe for television to restage the conflict" and they did so in both dramatic and comedic fashion."[351]

The success of *Combat*! And *McHale's Navy* on ABC sparked a surge in military and war set programs. For the 1964-1965 television schedule boasted four service comedies and three combat dramas on the networks and the following season eight service comedies and three combat dramas. These varied from thought-provoking combat dramas like *Combat*! And *Twelve O'Clock High* (ABC, 1964-1967) to action-adventure series which showed war as the great game like *Rat Patrol* (ABC, 1966-1968) and *Garrison's Gorillas* (ABC, 1967-1968) to war-set comedies involving the wacky hijinks of American or Allied soldiers like *McHale's Navy* and *Hogan's Heroes* (CBS, 1965-1970). "Why the sudden revival of interest in [World War II]? It's a classic period," noted *Combat* producer Richard Caffey. "It has all the elements of life and death."[352] The war made for compelling drama as well as plenty of colorful settings for less serious fare, but on another level the war was an ideal setting for presenting simple dichotomies of good and bad. This acts as an extension of the earlier depictions of the war, but in a largely less serious manner.

Nevertheless, *The Twentieth Century*'s depiction of World War II remains one worth noting for its influence and rendition of the war. Reaching millions of viewers each week, and utilized in schools throughout the nation, its portrayal of the conflict – its battles, leaders,

[351] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik. *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 153.
[352] "Those Cool War Heroes." *Newsweek* 19 Dec. 1966: 77.

military men, enemies, and allies – promoted the conservative war narrative that had been established in the early Cold War. Presenting a similar victory-over-totalitarianism theme that highlighted the strength and humility of the American fighting man, its strong-willed leaders, and the superior technology of its military it continued to promote an image of the war as the United States' maxim for its role in the world. Its episodes on the Eastern Front reasserted the duplicity of the communist Soviet Union as the equivalent of the Nazis, while many of its programs presented a largely sympathetic image of the German opponent, with the atrocities of war attributed solely to the regimes' leaders.

The show's promotion of Cold War ideological precepts through its episodes on World War II were an extension of the culture of the times and one which began to shift with opinions on Cold Way dynamics. The series recast its estimation on the culpability of the German people in relation to war crimes of the era, presented an honorable image of the Soviet people sans the communist overtones, and even began to re-examine American conduct of the war towards the end of its run. One of its final World War II episodes: "Nisei: Pride and Shame" (01/07/1965) was a history of the forced internment of Japanese Americans in the United States and the Japanese-American soldiers who were some of the most decorated of the war. Although, time and continuity constraints led to the omission of John McCloy and Henry Stimson's complicity in internment, while softening the guilt of Roosevelt, the program still provides a rather staunch look at how anti-Asian racism played a larger role than security concerns in the internment.[353]

It is interesting to wonder if the series would have continued to move in a revisionist direction in its approach of World War II had the series continued into the end of the 1960s and accompanying a larger re-formulation of World War II media. Yet, the end of the series reflected

[353] "Nisei: Pride and Shame," *The Twentieth Century* (CBS: January 7. 1965).

a temporary end of the high-profile documentary series as a major source of influence on the understanding of World War II for Americans. The dramatic depictions which followed offered a mostly enjoyable romp through the war which tended to reinforce the simplistic "good" and "bad" dichotomy which had marked the rendition of World War II. Yet their influence and such perception of the war would in short time be undercut by the moral complexities of the U.S. military commitment in Vietnam.

While the United States had been involved in the affairs of the Vietnamese since the early 1950s, it was only with President Lyndon Johnson's full commitment of ground troops and doubling the number of American draftees in 1965 that Americans really began to take notice. Unlike World War II or Korea, footage from the battle zones could be relayed back to the United States in a matter of hours as opposed to weeks with no government censorship bureau established to filter the images. The evening news was gradually littered with image of the Far Eastern nation and American troops being dispatched. However, outside of outliers like Morley Safer's seminal 1965 CBS report from Vietnam wherein his cameras captured a platoon of marines setting a rural village ablaze while herding the Vietnamese populace like cattle, the bulk of the initial presentation was complimentary to the U.S. war effort. Typical reportage of the war included encouraging announcements of "dramatic American victories" complemented by skewed casualty statistics along with combat reports presenting American soldiers jumping out of helicopters or on patrol in the jungle firing their rifles into the trees or towards a group of huts where the enemy was - purported– located; as well as the occasional shot of a dead Vietnamese "VC" or wounded Americans. [354]

[354] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 192.

Though the press and the government tried to present "progress" in the war the images on the television screens at times contradicted this sentiment and showed that Vietnam was a "different kind of war." According to cultural historian Tom Engelhardt what really made the media undermine the war effort was its multiplicity, the way in which certain images, "seemed to jump from the battlefield onto the home screen or into newspapers and magazines and were seared into public memory." This came to the forefront during the Tet Offensive of 1968 where the public saw upfront the gap in what the government had told them and the realities of the war. Images of the South Vietnamese police chief General Nguyen Ngoc Loan placing his revolver against the temple of a very young, handcuffed Vietcong suspect and pulling the trigger; the gaunt faces of American servicemen wounded and scared, unsure of what they were fighting for or why they were in Vietnam, the U.S. embassy in Saigon under attack and almost taken by the enemy. Soon the gruesomeness and moral murkiness of American conduct and purpose in the war came to dominate the tube and supplant the notions embedded in the popular portrayals of World War II.

As images from the Vietnam War came to dominate the public mindset, those of World War II began to fade away. The pro-military, pro-government, American valor renditions of the war that had once been a staple now seemed dubious if not outright deceitful in the face of the carnage in Southeast Asia. This situation led to the summary removal of war-themed series from television. As television scholar Rick Worland concluded in his study of war-themed series of the period, "After the 1967-1968 season, however - that is, after the Tet Offensive, Johnson's abdication, the assassinations, and the increase in antiwar agitation - military series evaporated quickly. By this point, evidently, even diverse representations of World War II were no longer

sufficiently." [355] By the 1971-1972 season - after the killing of four students at Kent State, the U.S. backed invasion into Cambodia, the trial of Lt. Calley, etc. - when there were no programs, comic or dramatic, with a military setting or servicemen as the main characters.[356]

[355] Rick Worland, "THE OTHER LIVING-ROOM WAR: PRIME TIME COMBAT SERIES, 1962–1975," *Journal of Film and Video* 50, no. 3 (1998): pp. 3-23, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20688185, 4.
[356] Rick Worland, "THE OTHER LIVING-ROOM WAR: PRIME TIME COMBAT SERIES, 1962–1975," *Journal of Film and Video* 50, no. 3 (1998): pp. 3-23, https://www.jstor.org/stable/20688185, 17.

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CHAPTER 4 *THE UKNOWN WAR* & THE EXPANDING WAR NARRATIVE

New Yorkers turning on their television sets to channel 9 on Saturday October 7, 1978, were treated to something few Americans had ever laid eyes on. On that night, beginning at 7:00PM, a new documentary series titled *The Unknown War* premiered its first of twenty-one-hour long episodes chronicling the Eastern Front of the Second World War between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.[357] Known as 'The Great Patriotic War' in Russia, it was a struggle that took the lives of over twenty million Soviet peoples, razed entire cities, and saw some of the fiercest fighting of the war. It was also a conflict most Americans had almost no knowledge of. This theatre of the war was ignored in school lectures on World War II, as well as in movies and other media due to the Cold War. That night Air Time International, a New York based television production company, in conjunction with the Russian film company Sovinfilm presented the first ever American-Soviet television documentary co-production, featuring footage not seen in over thirty years, taking the viewer through the Soviet experience from Operation Barbarossa in June, 1941 to the Allied entrance of Berlin in May, 1945.

The Unknown War presents an achievement in documentary filmmaking that embodied the spirit and possibilities of a period in the Cold War called détente. Relaxed relations between the United States and the Soviet Union allowed for a new dialogue of co-existence between the two powers, not seen before. In seeking to educate the American public on an area of the war all but forgotten in the United States due to Cold War animosity, *The Unknown War* was a solution borne of the Cold War to a problem caused by the Cold War. However, just as *The Unknown*

[357] Tom Buckley, "TV: Soviet Union's 'Unknown War' with Germany," *New York Times*, November 25, 1978.

War was a product of the Cold War it would also be slain by developments in the conflict and its message drained by the renewal of antipathy.

The production of *The Unknown War* is a fascinating case study of the difficulties of collaborations across the Iron Curtain as well as how the series showcased the themes of the Détente period of the Cold War. *The Unknown War* has been largely passed over in writings on American and Soviet documentary, television, and cinema history. Aside from brief references in Neya Zorkaya's *The Illustrated History of Soviet Cinema* and Hal Erikson's *Syndicated Television: The First Forty Years* there has been no English language scholarship on the series. There are few reasons for this aside from the series being largely unseen for almost forty years in the United States. Utilizing interviews and contemporary writings on the series, this chapter details how the first American-Soviet television co-production came to be and how the two sides worked together to bring the project to fruition.

This chapter examines the production and reception of the first American-Soviet television documentary series *The Unknown War*. It illustrates the institutional and cultural contexts in which the series was produced, and the differing agendas of the main parties involved in its creation. It examines its similarity to other World War II documentary series in its use of archival footage, presentation of the conflict, and underlying themes. It shows how the series acts as a reflection the official Soviet line on the war's importance while advancing the ideals of "détente" with the United States whilst it challenged the enshrined American understanding of the United States being the primary force in victory over the Axis powers. Finally, it presents the critical reception of the series and its eventual withdrawal from public view in the United States due to shifting relations between the superpowers. It draws extensively upon oral accounts of the production gained from both contemporary and recent interviews with participants from both the

American and Soviet side in detailing the narrative of its production as well as several newspaper and journal articles on its production and reception.

Détente and Television Exchanges

The 1970s witnessed a new phase in the Cold War, a period historians identify as Détente. Lasting roughly from 1969-1979. the Détente period of the Cold War was a period of relaxed relations and attempted cooperation between capitalist West and communist East on issues such as nuclear control, human rights, and cultural exchanges across the Iron Curtain. While Détente affected numerous countries around the world, between the United States and the Soviet Union several critical international agreements were born. At the Moscow Summit of 1972, President Richard Nixon and Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev signed the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT) and other accords. These measures capped the number of intercontinental nuclear missiles, missile launchers, and sub-launched missiles each side could deploy, as well as banning all but symbolic defenses against such missiles. Particularly important was the agreement that despite any ideological differences the United States and the Soviet Union would conduct relations based on "sovereignty, equality, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, and mutual advantage."[358] This was followed by the Helsinki Accords of 1975, which produced an official acknowledgement of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and held all nations to a set of standards on human rights in accordance with the United Nations Charter. Historian H.W. Brands notes that by the mid-1970s, "the rivalry between the two great powers would continue, such rivalry would be less ideological than

[358] Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 243.

geopolitical, less a matter of broad existential purpose than of pragmatically specific give and take."[359]

Along with agreements on weapons restrictions and human rights were new cultural programs between the two nations. Film historians Tony Shaw and Denise Youngblood note that cultural exchanges enacted thanks to détente, "effectively inhibited neo-Stalinist efforts to turn the cultural clock all the way back to Stalinism," through introducing the Soviet people to an array of Western media.[360] Such efforts included the purchase of the official licenses to produce records of popular music from the West, while Soviet television broadcast concerts of popular American and British musicians and incorporated rock and disco music into original Soviet programming such as *International Panorama* and *Vesiolye rebiata*. *Soveksportfilm*, the main organization for the acquisition and distribution of foreign films in the Soviet Union, increased the number of films imported from the West with over 150 films imported in 1973 and the number of new American films screened per year rising to six and then to eight by the end of the decade. 1975 Hollywood produced the first Soviet-American feature film co-production (Lenfilm/Twentieth Century-Fox) with George Cukor's *The Blue Bird* featuring American stars Elizabeth Taylor and Jane Fonda, shot on location in Moscow and Leningrad [St. Petersburg].[361]

Television was another important site of cultural diplomacy between the East and West, one that encompassed the bulk of Europe. While television developed along a roughly similar path for both sides of the Iron Curtain, in most of Eastern Europe, television did not take hold as

[359] H. W. Brands, *The Devil We Knew: Americans and the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 126.
[360] Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 51.
[361] Sergei I. Zhuk, *Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 141, 160.

a mass medium until the late-1960s.[362] Government control of television varied throughout Eastern Europe from total control of programming as in Albania to oversight and even allowance of sponsors to carry the cost as in Yugoslavia. However, the consolidation and overall expansion of television throughout Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, with second channels by the national services and "third" or regional television channels, created a greater demand for content to fill the growing television schedules. Marie Cronvqvist, in her article on the Swedish purchase and presentation of the popular East German *Unser Sandmannchen* claims the importation of the series in 1972 was a harbinger for the warming relations between the nations across the Iron Curtain, while working with the larger Swedish agenda to subvert the American dominance of programming, especially children's programs.[363]

The mutual need to fill the blank spaces of programming tables fostered a profitable transnational trade of television programs during Détente organized on the basis of bi-lateral agreements or embedded in larger institutional structures such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) or the *Organisation Internationale de Radiodiffusion et Television* (OIRT).[364] Aside from being a profitable endeavor, such television exchanges were officially declared a means for the peaceful rapprochement in the final acts of the 'Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe' (the Helsinki Final Act in August 1975), becoming an official part of

[362] Sabina Mihelj and Simon Huxtable have found that the number of inhabitants per TV set dropped into single figures across Eastern Europe. Assuming that an average family owning a set had four members, they conclude that roughly half of the population living in state-socialist European nations had regular access to a television.
[363] Marie Cronqvist, "From Socialist Hero to Capitalist Icon: The Cultural Transfer of the East German Children's Television Programme Unser Sandmännchen to Sweden in the Early 1970s," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 41, no. 2 (2020): pp. 387-388.
[364] Andrea Fickers, "Looking East-Watching West? On the Asymmetrical Interdependence of Cold War European Communication Spaces," in *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain*, ed. Bönker Kristen, Julia Obertreis, and Sven Grampp (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016), pp. 1-24, 13.

détente politics.[365] Contingent to the development of organizations like the EBU and the OIRT were the rise international television fairs and festivals as sites for initiating or negotiating bilateral agreements and co-productions. As noted by media scholar Andrea Fickers, festivals, like the 'Prix de Jeunesse' in Munich, the 'Golden Prague' festival, the 'Prix Danube' in Bratislava or the European film festivals in Cannes, Venice, Berlin, or Karlovy became central arenas for the international trade of European and American television productions. The exception to these exchanges was the Soviet Union which remained largely resistant to such cross-curtain trade.

It was during the decade of détente that Soviet television "hit the big time" in terms of technological and institutional capacity as well as reception in the upper echelon of Soviet authority The Brezhnev regime increased investments in broadcasting, with the planned budget (radio and television) of 1979 standing at 1,314.4 million rubles, roughly four times the amount for 1967.[366] In the 1970s television programming filled nearly an entire day with viewers in many areas having access to Central TV's Second or Third Channels in the evening as well as one or two regional channels. Nonetheless, Soviet television, despite containing a range of music, sports, comedy, documentary, and other programming, was dictated by a largely traditionalist political elite. Their goal was, in the words of Soviet media scholar Kristen Roth-Ey, 'fulfilling a certain idea of Soviet TV that was about Soviet state power and largesse and about the enduring value of culture in the Soviet system: the USSR as a culture-giving and leisure-providing state.'[367]

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[365] Andrea Fickers, "Looking East-Watching West? On the Asymmetrical Interdependence of Cold War European Communication Spaces," in *Television Beyond and Across the Iron Curtain*, ed. Bönker Kristen, Julia Obertreis, and Sven Grampp (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2016), pp. 1-24, 14.
[366] Kristen Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time: How the Soviet Union Built the Media Empire That Lost the Cultural Cold War*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 217-218.
[367] Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*, 279.

The Soviet Union did engage in some exchanges with the West via *Intervidenie*, an organization for socialist bloc exchanges established in 1960, which also arranged exchanges with Eurovision, the West European group that was its model. But these exchanges were limited, the most the Soviets traded with Eurovision in any given year of the 1960s was about 20 programs, or 40 hours of airtime.[368] Concerns over the influence of Western ideology within its sphere of influence, evidenced in the Prague Spring of 1968, kept their disposition narrow while their production capacity made them less dependent on foreign programs than other nations in their sphere of influence. Access to content from other Eastern bloc nations like East Germany was sufficient fill in any gaps in Soviet programming.[369] Furthermore, as the Sabina Mihelj and Simon Huxtable contend the Soviet Union, being the 'core country' of the communist world had a responsibility to, 'act as a model for others and use its television as a means of demonstrating its superiority vis-à-vis the West.'[370] Thus, while Soviet television was booming in production capacity, it largely isolated itself to better serve its purpose of promoting the agenda of the state.

American Television Opens Up

In the United States, the nation which held hegemony in the overall production of television content for the world market, the broadcasting industry was beginning a shift in the 1970s designed to open television for more content. By this time, the "Big Three" television networks – ABC, CBS, and NBC – had a monopoly over syndicated television. Aside from their programming dominating prime time viewership, their production of content and retention of the

[368] Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time*, 231.
[369] Some Western programs were purchased by the Soviet Union in the 1970s, most notably the BBC miniseries *The Forsythe Saga* (1969)
[370] Sabina Mihelj and Simon Huxtable, *From Media Systems to Media Cultures: Understanding Socialist Television*, (Cambridge University Press, 2018), 84.

rights to the shows aired on their network meant they controlled a great deal of content aired on local stations. When local stations sought to purchase re-runs of the network's programming, the big networks tended to adopt a "buy all our reruns or get nothing," policy, not a far cry from the 1930s block-booking practices of the big film studios.[371]

In the mid-1970s things were changing thanks to a series of decisions by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) that took some of the power out of the hands of the major networks. They pressured networks to leave syndication to other distributors, leading to the creation of shell companies to handle the networks shows, and had to sell off all of their reruns. However, the game-changing move by the FCC was the 1971 Prime Time Access Rule which held that the networks had to give one nightly half-hour of airtime [between 7:00-8:00PM] to their local and non-network station affiliates. This decision created a huge demand for original content by local stations for content to fill these timeslots, especially after a 1972 rule that barred stations in the top 50 markets from scheduling reruns during this time slot and requested that "educational" or family-oriented programs be aired. The Prime-Time Access Rule was also critical in fostering a "Barter" system for syndication, a practice of sponsors offering non-network programs for no charge or a nominal fee in exchange for gratis advertising time. This, as opposed to cash sales – sold for cash to a local station, who would find their own sponsors – gave more control to sponsors and led advertising agencies like J. Walter Thompson and Ogilvy and Mather to become syndicators while new companies arose to produce content. One such company was *The Unknown War's* producer Air Time Inc.[372]

Founded by Metromedia Broadcasting colleagues Bruce Fogel, Kal Liebowitz, and Frank Weiner, Air Time Inc. was established in 1970 as a media buying service, purchasing airtime

[371] Hal Erickson, *Syndicated Television: The First Forty Years,* (New York: McFarland & Company, 1989), 183.
[372] Erickson, *Syndicated Television,* 184-185.

from television and radio stations for companies to market their products and services.[373] Starting with coordinating spot TV buys for small and medium sized companies, instead of advertisers, Air Time found that their input on market trends and planning a valuable asset. This helped spark an expansion into media marketing research work and later into media production work. As Bruce Fogel noted, "our original purpose was to be just a spot buying service, but we found much larger opportunities in becoming a multi-faceted media service."[374] Thanks to new rules that left TV, radio, magazine, newspaper, and out of home media open to bartering amongst independent media focused companies, media companies expanded from purchasing media space for clients and expand into "full service" operations, meaning they conducted numerous services based on each area of media marketing. By 1978 Air Time had an estimated 130 employees working in market planning, research, media buying, public relations, and merchandising. Air Time was creating marketing plans, conducting research on sales trends, and even developed a phone service called "Phoned Programs" that operated entertainment programming for telephone companies such as "Sports Phone" and "New York Report."[375]

By the mid-1970s Air Time had been increasingly working with television stations on a barter system. As Weiner explained:

> News stations needed certain products like news cameras or cars, they would prefer to trade for things rather than pay cash for. So, we would trade with the TV stations… give them the car they needed or the camera they needed and instead of paying us in cash they would give us a block amount of time [for advertising]. So, let's say we gave them a car that cost us $25,000, they would give us time worth $50,000. So, it was to their advantage since time is very perishable because with time if they don't use it they lose it,

[373] Media companies were something of a middleman for companies and the media market promote their goods. Companies could come to them to negotiate space for their products in media outlets like magazines and television. Advertising companies tended to contract work out to media companies as it was cheaper than maintaining and staffing departments in these fields. As the needs of buying services became broader, media buying began adding fields and professionals in other media areas like network television and print planning. In short, media buying companies could deliver local broadcast media cheaper than and advertising agency.
[374] Bruce Fogel, "Now Media is 'Full Service,'" *Media Services*, April 1978, 67.
[375] Philip H. Dougherty, "Media Buying Services Come of Age," *New York Times*, Nov. 17, 1977.

> so for us it was an ineffective way of getting a larger discount on the time we were buying.[376]

It wasn't long before Air Time decided that producing content for television to trade with the stations was better, and cheaper, means of getting a discount on the time purchased. As Weiner explained: "instead of having to buy a $25,000 car for every single station that I did business with… I decided to produce shows which we believed that the stations would like. So that way if I had a $50,000 television show, I would trade it to the stations, but it would only cost me $50,000 once."[377] Air Time subsequently developed their television production company Air Time International, headed by Weiner in 1975.

Exegesis of *The Unknown War*

Fred Weiner, the then thirty-five-year-old Vice-President of Air Time Inc. and head of their television production branch Air Time International was the ultimate mastermind behind *The Unknown War*. In the spring of 1976 Weiner was visited by Robert Estes, the president of Five Star International, a company which amongst other things bought Soviet animated films for airing on American television. Estes informed Weiner that Soviet studios were looking to sell some material to U.S. television stations for the American bi-centennial and asked if he would be interested in traveling to Moscow to check out the film. Intrigued at the prospect, especially the opportunity to visit the nation he was taught was the hub of the greatest threat to democracy in his youth, Wiener agreed. Treated to first-class accommodations Weiner experienced none of the antagonism previously espoused in the U.S. media. Although Weiner did not find the material suitable the experience stayed with him. Subsequently, while reading in a biography of George

[376] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 19, 2018.
[377] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 19, 2018.

S. Patton and how the general's comments offended the Soviet Union the thought struck him: 'Wait a minute! What did the Soviet Union do anyway in World War II? I went to college, I took history, and I never heard anything about those guys.'[378]

Eager to know more Weiner called Harrison Salisbury. An author on Russia, Salisbury had reported on the Eastern Front as correspondent for United Press from 1944 to 1945 and later the *New York Times* correspondent in Moscow from 1949 to 1954, earning a Pulitzer Prize for his articles. Salisbury had an extensive knowledge of the Eastern Front and had written a best-selling book on the Siege of Leningrad, *The 900 Days of Leningrad* (1969). Having been introduced by a friend sometime earlier, the two arranged to meet for lunch.[379] At lunch Salisbury regaled Weiner with an impromptu lecture on the Eastern Front. Astounded, Weiner motioned, 'This is amazing, I wish there was some footage of this.' To which the septuagenarian Salisbury replied with a smile, 'my son, there is plenty of footage. Much that has never been seen here in the West.' Without hesitation, Weiner asked Salisbury to write an outline for a 20-episode documentary series on this 'Unknown War.'

Weiner's lack of knowledge was representative of the majority of Americans at the time. Although the Soviets were extensively reported upon during the Second World War, the Cold War that followed led to a conscious erasing of the Soviet's contribution from memory. As Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies note, after the war, when Germany became an important outpost of the Cold War battleground, "it was important to erase at least some aspects of the recent war from public memory and the revise the terms of discussion of other aspects, particularly with regard to our new enemy – the form ally – the Soviet Union."[380]

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[378] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[379] Eric Pace, 'Harrison E. Salisbury, 84, Author and Reporter, Dies,' *New York Times*, July 5, 1993.
[380] Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), 2.

From the birth of the Cold War in the late-1940s through the 1970s the war between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union was given minimal attention in textbooks and history texts available after the war. The few Americans who covered the events in the Soviet Union during the war spoke little about the Soviet experience, thus leaving the public without another source of information. The Soviets too, were not willing to open their archives to Western historians; most of their histories were never printed in the West or derided as propaganda. Those histories that were available were largely written by German veterans of the Eastern Front whose works espoused a racialized view of the Red Army as brutal savages and presented the Nazi forces as honorable soldiers fighting for a misunderstood cause. While serious studies of the Eastern Front emerged in the late-1960s and early-1970s with such works as Alexander Werth's *Russia at War* (1964) and John Erickson's seminal *Road to Stalingrad* (1977), their readership flailed in comparison to the popular histories of German author Paul Carrell which romanticized the Wehrmacht. [381]

The erasure of the Soviets from World War II also extended to popular media of the Second World War. The American public was treated to a plethora of World War II films in the years following the Second World, including action films, comedies, espionage films, and heart-wrenching dramas all set during the war. As noted by film historian Thomas Doherty, the American film industry of the post-war years continued to make movies centered on World War II as "neither HUAC [House Un-American Activities Committee] nor the Senate Investigation Subcommittee objected to uplifting replays of the action-adventures of 1941-45 that tactfully omitted the Soviet contribution."[382]

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[381]Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), 56, 69, 86.
[382] Thomas Patrick. Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 271.

Such bias permeated television where the documentary reigned supreme in depictions of World War II and were historically intertwined with the Cold War. *Crusade in Europe* (1949) laid a precedent in showing the war as the 'great crusade' to free Europe from fascism's clutches. It was followed by the even more popular *Victory at Sea* (1952-1953) which went further to draw the war effort as a clear case of good vs. evil: The United States as a liberator bringing democratic values to the world, a role it had to maintain amidst the growing anxiety of communist expansion. These series stressed the importance of American character and leadership in the Allied victory with barely a mention of the Eastern Front. [383]

The few depictions of the Eastern Front on American television largely conformed with anti-communist propaganda of the 1940s and 1950s. The popular documentary anthology series *The Twentieth Century* (1957-1966) devoted five of its 58 episodes on World War II to the Eastern Front and couched their presentation in anti-communist platitudes. In the episode "Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War," in which examined the events preceding Operation Barbarossa through the rise of the Battle of Stalingrad, separates the people of the USSR from the communist government and its leaders. It portrays of Stalin's actions as equivalent to Hitler's with the annexation of Eastern Poland, Latvia and Lithuania while sending grain and oil to Germany to, 'fuel Hitler's panzers already poised to attack the West' whilst, 'every part of Russia is deprived of food.' When Germany invades the USSR the program notes that hundreds of thousands of, 'Ukrainians, Cossacks, Moslems, and other minorities at last can voice their resentment of Stalin. Millions horrified under communism welcome their conquerors as liberators.' It is only Hitler's order of mass-enslavement and persecution of the 'racially inferior Slavs' dubbed, 'Hitler's most fatal blunder,' that the people take up arms against the Nazis, 'not

[383] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 75.

for communism, but for Mother Russia.' The division is clear: the people are prisoners of an evil system run by despots[384]

World War II and the 1970s

Weiner's inclination towards a documentary on the Eastern Front seemed prescient for its novelty it would have been a difficult had it not been for a revival in World War II media. World War had largely vanished from American screens after the shift in public opinion regarding Vietnam in the late-1960s. The last slate of World War II films made by Hollywood in 1970 – *Patton*, *Tora, Tora, Tora*, and *Catch-22*– presented a more sordid depiction of the war. While *Patton* seemed to showcase the victorious leader who clobbered the Nazis, his portrayal as a bloodthirsty, warmonger seemed to be a dark mirror held to face of many Americans asking if this was their true character. *Tora, Tora, Tora*, a big-budget recreation of the attack on Pearl Harbor proved a downbeat tale of failure despite incredible resources and efficiency by the U.S. military to uncover the Japanese plot. While *Catch-22*, an adaptation of the acclaimed Joseph Heller novel, showcased the lunacy of war and paints American officers as petty and power-hungry willing to sacrifice the soldiers under the command at will while showcasing the range of contradictions which plagued the military. Such depictions reflected the general disillusionment with the military at the time and offered a darker, more somber interpretation of the war.

Such depictions were possible, in part, thanks to the loss of influence by the Department of Defense. By the mid-1960s, the U.S. Military had little World War II era equipment it could furnish for film productions, which instead looked to museums and militaries of foreign governments for this task. Also, film productions had less need to shoot on military installations

[384] 'Partisan: The Nazi-Soviet War,' *The Twentieth Century* (New York: CBS, February 11, 1962).

as such settings had become a staple of backlots by the 1950s and historians could be consulted outside of the Pentagon. Even in the realm of archival footage the military was losing some of its influence given the opening of the vast newsreel archives, the sizeable collections networks and film companies had acquired, and easier ability to source films from foreign governments and private owners.[385] Thus, getting the approval of the U.S. military for World War II productions a courtesy as opposed to a necessity for many war films of the mid-1960s onward, and in many occasions was not even sought, like with *Patton* and *Catch-22*.[386]

After a roughly five-year lull, the triumphalist narrative of the war returned to the big screen in a big way. Coinciding with the U.S. Bi-centennial celebration was the release of Jack Smight's *Midway* (1976), a throwback to the all-star cast big-budget battle re-enactment films like *The Longest Day* (1962) and *The Battle of the Bulge* (1965) with a cast including Charlton Heston, Henry Fonda, Toshiro Mifune, and Robert Mitchum, this time re-enacting the U.S. victory in the Battle of Midway. While not as well-reviewed as its predecessors and suffering from a glaring over-reliance on archival footage which poorly matched the newly shot film, it was a huge success at the box-office as the 10th highest grossing film of the year. Part of its success indubitably was owed to its themes of snapping victory from the jaws of defeat, a reminder that when the country is at its lowest point it can rebound. Robert Niemi, the author of *History in the Media: Film and Television*, called the film a "final, anachronistic attempt to recapture World War II glories in a radically altered geopolitical era, when the old good-versus-

[385] One exception to this was color footage which the U.S. Navy and Marines had used since the beginning of World War II and could make for an impressive display if well-edited. The film *Midway*, unable to acquire the necessary naval ships made extensive use of this archival footage for their action scenes.
[386] Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory: The Making of the American Military Image* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 169-170.

evil dichotomies no longer made sense" it was in the year celebrating the nation's founding the return to a moral certainty and pride in the nation the people seemed to need.[387]

Midway's success helped spark a resurgence of World War II on the big screen. It was followed by similar all-star cast, battle recreation film *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), *McArthur* (1977) a reverential biopic of the general starring Gregor Peck in the title role, and *The Big Red One* (1980) which resurrected the classic platoon of disparate soldiers' formula. Except for *A Bridge Too Far*, which detailed the failure of the Allied Operation Market Garden, these films attempted to resurrect the moral dichotomy of good and evil and remind Americans of the qualities which made them great in a time when the idea of American innocence had been gutted. As film historian Lawrence H. Suid noted of *The Big Red One*, "Audiences could cheer in all the right places as Lee Marvin and his group of four survivors triumphed over the Nazi threat. To be sure, Fuller was dealing in terms of black and white, not shades of gray. His men were fighting in a necessary war and performed bravely. They gave food to children, delivered a baby, and as Marvin stressed, they killed, not murdered, their enemy, only out of necessity."[388]

On television, World War II was also coming back. In the realm of fictional television, the most notable attempt to resurrect the war narrative was the series *Ba, Ba, Black Sheep* (1976-1978) a period military drama with heavy comedic elements about the VMF 214 Black Sheep Squadron of the Marine Corps. Despite its impressive production values and its cast of corky misfit characters popular in such films as *The Dirty Dozen* (1967) and *Kelly's Heroes* (1970) the series was decried as being old-fashioned and out of touch. In their review of the series' premiere *The Washington Post* called *Baa Baa Black Sheep* a "war-is-swell series [aimed] at anyone who

[387] Robert Niemi, *History in the Media: Film and Television* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 119.
[388] Lawrence H. Suid, *Guts and Glory: The Making of the American Military Image* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 425.

remembers World War II as a rousing, blowzy, fraternity turkey-shoot."[389] Despite the effort put into such a production, it seemed outdated amidst the general disillusionment with war after Vietnam, supplemented by a flailing economy and sense of victimhood amidst several terrorist attacks, largely hampered the attempt to revive the classic themes of the war narrative.

More success was found in chronicling a part of the war many Americans were still naïve of, the Holocaust. The 1978 NBC television miniseries *Holocaust* deftly chronicles the rise of the Nazis' antisemitic policies from the Reich Citizenship Law to *Kristallnacht* through the concentration camps and systematic extermination the Jews through the perspective of the fictional Weiss family of Jews and that of Erik Dorf, a rising member of the SS. While receiving criticism for its presentation of the Holocaust from some noted figures, including Holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel, the series was a massive success winning the Emmy Award for Best Miniseries as well as for Best Actress (Meryl Streep) and Best Supporting Actor (Michael Moriarty) while on a deeper level it informed its audiences the true extent of the Holocaust.[390] Indeed, when the series premiered in West Germany where viewership was estimated at up to 15 million households or 20 million people, approximately 50% of West Germany's adult population.[391] In fact, the miniseries enormous success helped popularize the term "Holocaust," which was later chosen as "word of the year 1979" by the "Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache" (Society for German Language).[392] Thus, while the series was incited in some areas for a simplicity and condensing of a complex matter, it did a great deal to raise awareness and expand

[389] Tom Shales, "'Black Sheep': Oh, What An Unlovely War" *The Washington Post,* September 21, 1976.
[390] It is rumored that so many people watched this mini-series in New York City when first broadcast, that when commercials were on, the local water pressure dropped, due to so many people using their toilets at once
[391] Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945*. (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 811.
[392] Internet Movie Database, "Holocaust." Accessed July 3, 2022. Holocaust (TV Mini Series 1978) - IMDb

the contours of the war narrative to include the Holocaust while bringing about its end would become marker of the virtuosity of the war effort.

In the realm of documentary filmmaking there were some signs that the public remained interested in the war. A documentary on the life of General George Marshall titled "The General," written and produced by Richard Hanser and narrated by Ben Gazzara, aired on CBS as a part of their series *The American Parade* (1974-1976) to good reviews and was re-aired during the bicentennial celebration. A documentary series produced by Time-Life titled *World War II: G.I. Diary* (1978) in which veteran from a major battle of the war recounted their experience as narration over an amalgamation of archival footage had a good, if unremarkable run playing in syndication.

The most substantial addition to World War II television during this period was the much-lauded documentary series *The World at War* (1974). The British documentary series premiered on September 14, 1973, to great acclaim, receiving a BAFTA Awards and high viewership throughout its twenty-six-episode run. Narrated by Laurence Olivier with numerous on-camera interviews, the series presented a more encompassing history of the war largely from the point of view of those on the ground. It detailed battles and campaigns like Battle of Britain, D-Day and the Burma Campaign; but also, the social effects and consequences of war, with episodes on the home fronts in Britain ("Home Fires"), Germany ("Inside the Reich") and the Soviet Union ("Red Star"); one on the effects of occupation in the Netherlands ("Occupation"); and an episode on the development of the "Final Solution" of the Holocaust ("Genocide").[393]

The World at War's portrayal of World War II is also noteworthy for presenting the conflict from the "bottom up" as opposed to the "top down." Unlike *Victory at Sea* in which a

[393] Internet Movie Database, "The World at War." Accessed June 17, 2022. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071075/?ref_=nv_sr_srsg_0.

narrator provided the narrative of the war while the people on screen were unknown, unnamed figures or *The Twentieth Century* in which the generals and ranking officers' narratives were given precedent, *The World at War* prioritizes the experience and perspective of the average soldier. While high-ranking military, political, and diplomatic figures like Sir Anthony Eden, Lord Robert John Graham Boothby, Albert Speer, and Averell Harriman are included, the bulk of the interviews were the ordinary people who fought in the battles or lived under occupation. Susan McConachy, who led the team of interviewers, later explained that the show's goal was "to look at the war from the level of ordinary people. We wanted to look at it from the level of housewives and ordinary soldiers."[394]

The series also went to great lengths to ensure the historical accuracy of its footage. Composed largely of archival film from the Imperial War Museum, the creators tried to make sure the footage was from the battle they were presenting or the ship the narration was describing. In cases where footage was not available as in the case of the attack on Pearl Harbor or the D-Day invasion of Normandy, dramatic re-enactments and reconstructions from other, unrelated footage was used but, unlike previous series, these are acknowledged in the series as such instead of being presented as authentic footage from the event.

The World at War was groundbreaking in its detail, graphic depiction, and inclusivity of perspectives, but nonetheless had an agenda in its presentation. Made in an era which had seen numerous seemingly senseless wars of aggression by the superpowers and shown to a conflict weary public amidst an atmosphere of renewed cooperation between the capitalist and communist world, the series pushed the message that in war there are no victors, only victims. As series creator Arthur Marwick noted, "The general theme was that all war is dreadful,

[394] Susan McConachy quoted in James Chapman, "Television and History: The World at War," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 31, no. 2 (2011): pp. 247-275, https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2011.572608, 254.

expressed in the opening sequence of the opening programme where, after the hideous civilian massacre carried out by the Germans at Oradour, the commentator (plummy and sententious Sir Laurence Olivier) remarks that shortly the young German soldiers will be killed too."[395]

While *The World at War's* attempt to encapsulate the international scope of the conflict was quite thorough, it was not complete. The highly acclaimed series only addressed the Eastern Front in three of its twenty-six episodes despite the Soviet Union's essential role in the defeat of Nazi Germany.[396] Thus, with a part of the war few in the United States were knowledgeable of, a similar documentary series could make waves.

Negotiations and the Great Patriotic War

A few weeks after their lunch meeting, Salisbury sent Weiner an outline for twenty-one, hour-long episodes, days later Weiner contacted the Soviet embassy and reconnected with Robert Estes to figure out how to gain access to the footage Salisbury spoke of, a difficult task. Historically requests for footage had routinely been turned down, as seen in *The Twentieth Century*'s efforts in the 1950s and 1960s. Even *The World at War* had to make do with the archival footage available in American, British, West German and Japanese archives.[397] Despite the ease in relations the Soviets were still hesitant about letting outsiders write their history, specifically on a subject as valued as the war.

It was not just that the war held a tremendous reverence amongst the people; it was also one of the government's greatest propaganda tools. Due in large part to the cultural exchange of

[395] Arthur Marwick quoted in James Chapman, "Television and History: The World at War," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 31, no. 2 (2011): pp. 247-275, https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2011.572608, 255.
[396] James Chapman, "Television and History: The World at War," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 31, no. 2 (2011): pp. 247-275, https://doi.org/10.1080/01439685.2011.572608, 252.
[397] *The World at War* was to have an episode on 'The Big Three' of Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Josef Stalin but abandoned the plan as they were unable to locate enough footage of Stalin to fill his segment.

détente, an "international youth culture" began to take root in the Soviet Union by the late 1960s. This group, fostered by rock music and Western philosophy, began to look to the West as symbol of prosperity. As Zhuk notes, "the limited sources of foreign cultural practices always produce an intense idealization."[398]

To combat this waning patriotism, a new emphasis was placed on the war and its veterans through a series of commemorations, memorials, and media products. This upsurge, what author Nina Tumarkin calls the "organized cult of the Great Patriotic War," created the image of the conflict as a sacrosanct embodiment of the superiority of communism, complete with martyrs, lavish memorials, and a master narrative. Museums and memorials to the war were constructed, education and after school programs initiated, and a slew of war films produced to shame the younger generation into respecting their elders, the generation controlling the government. [399] The master narrative held to the plot that "despite an overpowering surprise attack by the fascist beast and its inhuman wartime practices, despite the loss of twenty million valiant martyrs to the cause, our country under the leadership of the communist party… arose as one united front and expelled the enemy from our own territory and that of Eastern Europe, thus saving Europe."[400]

Like in the United States, television was an important instrument of illustrating the past and shaping historical awareness. As noted by Mihelj and Huxtable: "With the communist horizon seeming ever more distant, national leaderships looked to history to provide a solid national foundation. In the Soviet Union, several resolutions called on television to help commemorate the country's past achievements," foremost amongst these was its victory in the

[398] Sergei I. Zhuk, *Soviet Americana: The Cultural History of Russian and Ukrainian Americanists* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2018), 160.
[399] Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: BasicBooks, a Subsidiary of Perseus Books, 1994), 133.
[400] Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: BasicBooks, a Subsidiary of Perseus Books, 1994), 134.

war.[401] Soviet television was full of war documentaries and films, some fresh from the theaters, to promote the war narrative of the Communist triumph for the next generation while reinforcing the party's supremacy. The breadth of programming was such that one American journalist remarked: 'hardly a night goes by without some reference to the war, be it full-length documentary or the laying of a wreath at one of the thousands of war memorials in the Soviet Union."[402]

No deviation from the narrative was allowed, with any works that did not adhere to the standards of the official narrative were denied publication. The Ministry of Defense controlled the publication of memoirs through the Military Publishing House and all other war-related histories had to pass a special commission of the ministry. When historian Aleksandr Nekrich, a veteran who had fought at Stalingrad, raised questions about the "suddenness" of the German invasion and Stalin's preparedness for war in his work *22 June, 1941* (1965) his manuscript was grossly censored while he lost his job at the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of General History as well as his membership in the Communist Party.[403]

With the thirtieth anniversary of the victory over Germany just having passed, it is not surprising that the Soviet authorities were hesitant about an American produced history of the Great Patriotic War. Goskino, the main administrative body for cinema, headed by Filipp Yermash, was the decision maker on such matters. Goskino was conglomerate that controlled nearly everything film related through a string of companies from film exports (Soveksportfilm), film festivals (Sovinterfest), co-productions (Sovinfilm), the journals of *Art of the Cinema* and

[401] Mihelj and Huxtable, *From Media Systems to Media Cultures,* 236.
[402] James O. Jackson, 'World War II: Key Soviet TV Theme,' *The Daily Report* (Ontario, CA), Sept. 12, 1970.
[403]Nina Tumarkin, *The Living & the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: BasicBooks, a Subsidiary of Perseus Books, 1994), 135.

S*oviet Screen*, and the central state film archives (Gosginlmofond).[404] Goskino answered directly to the Party' Central Committee on ideological matters and ultimately turned down Weiner's request. Upon his return to the United States Weiner recalls informing the Soviet embassy in Washington of the failure and was essentially told, "sit tight, we will contact you in a week or two." Within a few weeks Weiner was back in Moscow.[405]

Soviet officials likely reconsidered the possible benefit of such a series. Made for a Western audience, it could further Premier Leonid Brezhnev's goals of détente by reminding Americans of a time when the two countries were allied in the fight against fascism and the goal of lasting peace. Brezhnev had recently evoked memories of the war in his speech at the Russian city of Tula two days before President Jimmy Carter took office in January 1977; preaching his devotion to détente in 'the overcoming of the cold war and transition to normal, stable relations among states.'[406] Also, as Western television began developing historical miniseries and historical event programs like *The Forsythe Saga* (BBC, 1967), *Roots* (1977), and *Holocaust* (NBC, 1978), the Soviet Union too began investing more heavily into production of historical television dramas. These included war dramas like the USSR's first television film, the four-part World War II drama, *We Draw Ourselves* (*Vyzyvaem ogon' na sebe*) (1964-1965), and the enormously popular *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (*Semnadtsat' mgnoveniy* vesny) (1973).[407] Although there were numerous Soviet documentaries on the war, there was never a twenty-hour series in the style of *Victory at Sea* or *The World at War*. Thus, a twenty-part series fit Soviet

[404] Tony Shaw and Denise J. Youngblood, *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 51.
[405] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[406] Lenoid Brezhnev's Speech in Tula,' 18 January 1977.
[407] Roth-Ey, *Moscow Prime Time,* 231.

television's preferences, could convey the enormity of the conflict to the younger generation and, with an American partner, a new level of appeal.

Negotiations began again in mid-1977 and within weeks Weiner had an agreement with Sovinfilm – Goskino's component in charge of co-productions - that satisfied all parties' interests. Air Time would cover the costs of the American side of production as well as pay for the rights for the footage used, while Sovinfilm would cover the expenses for the Soviet members of the production. Soviet documentarians would search the archives and assemble the footage as well as provide composers for the score, while an American team hired by Air Time International would produce the series, write the scripts for each episode, and select a narrator. The Soviets succeeded in keeping their archives free of foreigners while the Americans, in charge of the scripts, could craft the program to their liking. The first American-Soviet television documentary co-production was finalized, and the production began.[408]

Key Figures and the Production Process

In selecting a writer for the series Weiner had the perfect candidate already at Air Time - John Lord. An avid military historian, and World War II veteran, the British Lord had earned a reputation as a "jack of all trades" during his two decades in the television industry working as a writer, producer, and news-reporter, among other jobs. While working at NBC, he produced numerous documentaries including *Four Days To Omaha* (1968), the first 'fictional documentary' on American television, and a predecessor to modern 'docudramas.' He had also written for the 1960 documentary series *The Valiant Years* about Churchill and World War II, in which he claimed to have invented the 'ancient' myth that if the ravens leave the Tower of

[408] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.

London, England will fall. Having left a teaching position at Boston University in the late 1970s he was hired by Air Time and appointed head writer for the series.[409]

With Lord as the lead writer the production needed to not only present a comprehensive picture of the Eastern Front, but, more importantly, convince the American people that it was a high profile, non-propagandistic production. Despite the scale, a documentary made in cooperation with the Soviets was guaranteed to garner suspicion of being little more than Soviet made propaganda. To counter such accusations Air Time sought high profile figures for project to help give it legitimacy. Harrison Salisbury agreed to add his name to the series for his outlines, continued to answer any questions on the Eastern Front for the production, and would author a companion book for the series, but was not allowed to directly participate in Moscow due to ill-feelings by the Soviet authorities over his book *The 900 Days of Leningrad*.

The hiring of esteemed television producer Isaac Kleinerman as the series' lead producer also bolstered its credentials. Kleinerman had a long, esteemed career in television having helped pioneer the format of television documentary as the editor of NBC's *Victory at Sea* (1952-1953) and *Project XX* (1954-1970), before leaving for CBS where he was one of the showrunners of CBS's *The Twentieth Century* (1957-1966) earning an Emmy and a Peabody award for his work. Having left CBS in 1976 over difficulties in being able to get his projects off the ground Kleinerman was working as an independent contractor when Weiner contacted him about the series. While initially hesitant about the material, which he believed he had already covered in *The Twentieth Century*, and the prospect of working in the Soviet Union, he was ultimately won

[409] Simon Welfare, "Obituary: John Lord," *The Independent* (London), June 17, 1994.

over by Weiner and Salisbury's enthusiasm as well as the large paycheck.[410] Kleinerman would thus make yet another contribution to the narrative.[411]

The production also scored a big addition with acclaimed American poet, singer, and composer Rod McKuen. The author of several highly acclaimed works of poetry whose songs had sold over 180 million records worldwide and had collaborated with such artists as Johnny Cash, Barbara Streisand, and Frank Sinatra. Addressing themes of love and loss, the nature and spirituality McKuen's work appealed to a broad audience of people, both liberal and conservative. He was the recipient of the Horatio Alger prize and several Freedom Foundation Awards, "probably as far right as you could get," he once joked. McKuen was near the peak of his career when he got the call from Fred Weiner. "I never in my wildest dreams imagined that I would suddenly be giving up a million and a half dollars' worth of concerts to go to the Soviet Union and work on a documentary series," McKuen stated in a later interview "I saw a little footage and I thought to myself, Well, if I don't do this, I'll be missing a tremendous chance." A staunch believer in human rights and individual rights, McKuen saw the series as a grand opportunity to help bring people together in an international sense. "It's up to every individual, particularly if you love your country," he remarked, "to do what you can to make relationships better between people who for one reason or another are misinformed about each other." [412] McKuen joined the production as a Script and Music Supervisor, eventually composing roughly 90% of the music for the series including its main theme as well as helping to write the scripts.

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[410] Isaac Kleinerman, "Reminiscences of Isaac Kleinerman," interview by Barbara Hogenson on August 11, 1980, in New York, NY (New York: Columbia University Oral History Collection, 1981), 444.
[411] Wolfgang Saxon, 'Isaac Kleinerman, Producer Of 'Victory at Sea,' Dies at 87,' *New York Times*, March 28, 2004.
[412] Rod McKuen, "The Unknown War: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes," interview by Marilyn Bechtel, *New World Review*, March/April 1979, 8.

In choosing the narrator both the Americans and the Soviets agreed that they needed a figure recognizable to the American public whom they would trust to tell the truth. A list of several prominent American actors was compiled and reviewed. *Kojak* star Telly Savalas impressed the producers with his enthusiasm for the project, going so far as to send Weiner various gifts during his stay in Los Angeles.[413] In the end, the unanimous choice was Academy Award winning actor Burt Lancaster as the narrator and anchor of the series. "They wanted someone really macho and relatable," remembered McKuen, "he [Lancaster] was really the ideal man for it. He was pretty believable, he had done war films, he was the right age [World War II generation], he looked great… and he had a great voice."[414] "I was very happy to accept the proposal to take part in this unusual film," said Lancaster, "because I consider it my duty, the duty of the older generation, to tell the truth about the Soviet Union."[415] Also, in a bit of a career rut the chance to take part in something that could have the appeal of *The World at War* probably seemed particularly appealing to the aging actor.

On the Soviet side, Sovinfilm selected Roman Karmen as the director-in-chief and artistic supervisor. Karmen was unquestionably the most prestigious and highly respected documentary filmmaker of the Soviet Union at the time. The recipient of Lenin Prize and in 1973 was the recipient of a retrospective by the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), the seventy-year-old filmmaker chronicled the communist uprisings of Spain, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and the coup in Chile. One of the first graduates of the Moscow Film School, he entered film industry in the 1930s after the strict policies of Stalin had taken hold. This, in part, influenced his direct, confrontational style of documentary filmmaking, which relied less on the elaborate editing of

[413] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[414] "Interview with Rod McKuen," interview by Shout Factory for the DVD release of *The Unknown War*.
[415] Naum Marr, "The Unknown War...Eastern Front!" *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978): 168.

the previous avant-garde directors like Dzig Vertov and Esfir Shub and more on using the image in itself to convey meaning. “His workman-like presentation of uniformity was the rule of the day,” noted film historian Graham Roberts, “his work and writings would dominate the historical and documentary teaching at the State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK) into the 1990s.”[416]

For Karmen this was a project of great personal significance. Having served as one of roughly two hundred and fifty filmmakers assigned to follow the Red Army, fifty of whom lost their lives, he was at Leningrad during the siege as well as at Stalingrad.[417] He later traveled with the army throughout Eastern Europe, recording some of the first footage of the concentration camps and the Soviet entry into Berlin.[418] Karmen knew of the huge gap in knowledge from his time in America during an exhibit of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in 1973. “After the showings there were usually animated discussions with the audience,” remembered Karmen, “I was absolutely amazed to hear not only young, but even middle-aged Americans say quite openly: ‘Yes, yes, Mr. Karmen. We Americans know almost nothing about that war.” This series was his chance to rectify that.[419]

The two teams worked in what Karmen called an ‘air-film-bridge’ between Moscow and New York that required ‘flights, speed, and maneuvering.’[420] Writing the series came first, headed by Lord working from Salisbury’s outlines. Weiner, McKuen, and Kleinerman assisted as researchers and script editors, with McKuen helping to craft the narration into a more lyrical style. The research was dense as the series covered major battles like Stalingrad and Kursk, but also diverse subjects like the plight of resistance groups in Nazi occupied territory, the work of

[416] Roberts, Graham. *Forward Soviet!: History and Non-fiction Film in the USSR*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999.
[417] His footage of the Siege of Leningrad would be edited into the film *Leningrad at War* (1943) with Karmen listed as the film’s director.
[418] Ian Aitken, *The Concise Routledge Encyclopedia of the Documentary Film* (London: Routledge, 2013), 478.
[419] Naum Marr, "The Unknown War...Eastern Front!" *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978), 164.
[420] Naum Marr, "The Unknown War...Eastern Front!" *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978), 165.

the Soviet Navy and Air Force as well as an episode on the Grand Alliance. McKuen claimed to have read over two hundred books; most of them Soviet works.[421] Weiner and Kleinerman stuck to British and American authored histories, with Kleinerman shipping the equivalent of two large trunks of Western authored books on the Soviet Union during World War Two to Moscow.[422]

The American team, stationed in New York, would travel to Moscow to discuss the scripts with the Russian team which aside from Karmen included writers Konstantin Slavin, Ivan Mendzheritskiy, Edwin Polianovsky; directors Zoya Fomina, Ilya Gutman, Thengiz Siemenov and Lenoid Kristi; along with historical consultant Pavel Kurotchkin among others. In a total of eight trips, some lasting weeks, the two sides would work out issues over the construction and content of each script. "There were 16 or 17 of us in a room including interpreters, we would argue about situations" remembered McKuen, "I mean if there was something that was historically incorrect John would bring that up and the Soviet writer and director would say 'no, no, no, this is the way it happened,' and John [Lord] would say 'this may have been the way it happened in Russia but this is not the way it happened on the world stage."[423] Many disputes were over language, as Weiner recalled one script which said that several Soviet armies were pinned down, the Russian writers got livid as they thought it meant the whole army was about to be destroyed.[424] Such arguments although frequent, were relatively minor in the grand scheme as McKuen noted that, "we could have these incredible arguments

[421] Rod McKuen, 'The Unknown War: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes,' interview by Marilyn Bechtel, *New World Review*, March/April 1979, 10.
[422] Isaac Kleinerman, "Reminiscences of Isaac Kleinerman," interview by Barbara Hogenson on August 11, 1980, in New York, NY (New York: Columbia University Oral History Collection, 1981), 449.
[423] "Interview with Rod McKuen," interview by Shout Factory for the DVD release of *The Unknown War*.
[424] Howard Rosenberg, "World War II in Russia," *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 5, 1978.

and then go out and get drunk that night and the next day, if we wanted to continue the argument, fine. If we didn't, we didn't."[425]

Compromises on content and presentation abounded in the series, especially regarding Poland. Salisbury had outlined an episode on Poland which addressed the Katyn Massacre and the Warsaw Uprising. The Katyn forest in Western Poland witnessed the execution of roughly 22,000 Poles in the spring of 1940, including 8,000 Polish military officers. Although the identity of the executioners was still debated at the time, raising the possibility that it was the Soviets provoked major backlash. After several serious arguments over the issue, the Americans won its inclusion after Weiner stormed out of the office after declaring he was ending the project unless an acknowledgement of the Soviets' possible complicity was included.[426] In the end, the massacre was included in the episode "The Liberation of Poland." Although it does note that there was evidence that the Soviets could have committed the massacre, the episode's construction brings this up in the beginning and later presents evidence that it could have been the Germans, largely leaving the viewer with a sense that it was the Nazis who carried out the killings.

Another point of contention had to do with the Warsaw Uprising. Although Soviet histories held that the Red Army ordered its forces to halt roughly twenty miles outside of Warsaw to wait for supply transports and for the soldiers to rest, Western historians like Alexander Werth contended the Red Army stopped to allow the Polish rebels, allied to the anti-Stalinist Polish government-in-exile in London, to be decimated by the Nazis, reinforced by how Stalin refused to allow American and British planes to use Soviet air field to drop supplies to the

[425] Rod McKuen, "The Unknown War: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes," interview by Marilyn Bechtel, *New World Review*, March/April 1979, 9.
[426] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.

Poles until it was too late. Such suspicions were seemingly confirmed by Karmen who was with the Red Army in Poland at the time and recounted when asking a commanding officer about the sound of artillery coming from Warsaw, the officer responded that the sounds were "of no concern to us." The Americans fought for this inclusion but were unsuccessful.[427] In the series Soviet duplicity is stripped to a scene in which a Polish courier begs the encamped Soviets for aid only to be turned away with the pecuniary excuse "their forces were exhausted."

In fashioning the footage to the scripts, the Soviet team had a monumental job of going through the massive amount of film taken during the war which totaled roughly three and half million feet of film, some of which had never been processed. For over a month, the editors did not leave the screening rooms of the *Gosfilmofond* VGIK archives. 'It went on day and night,' Karmen reflected, 'we faced a host of problems that had to be solved' with much of the footage undeveloped or unmarked. Aside from the Russian archives, footage was also drawn from American, British, West German, and Japanese sources. Although the Soviet crew retrieved the footage, Isaac Kleinerman diligently supervised the editing. 'I insisted on complete artistic control,' said Kleinerman, 'I think they were somewhat suspicious in the beginning, but when they realized I was there to help and not hinder, it became a pleasant experience. They were extremely cooperative.'[428] Nonetheless, Kleinerman had difficulty imparting the format of American television with spotting for commercial breaks to the Soviet editors familiar with state-controlled television which largely lacked such features. In all, over 500 specialists – directors, cameramen, writers, archivists, editors, and consultants - worked on the series.[429]

[427] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[428] Betty Utterback, 'World War II: Another view,' *Democrat and Chronicle*, Rochester, NY, Oct. 8, 1978.
[429] Naum Marr, 'The Unknown War...Eastern Front!' *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978), 167, 163.

Karmen also traveled around the USSR to record interviews with important figures including Defense Minister Marshal Dimitri Ustinov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers Alexei Kosygin, Marshal of the Soviet Air Force A.I. Porkyshkin, and the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Supreme Soviet Leonid Brezhnev.[430] Karmen also traveled to New York to film an interview with Averell Harriman, the American ambassador to the Soviet Union during the war and paid a visit to Studio 54 with McKuen where he was entranced by the bathroom's hand dryers.[431]

For filming the prologues and epilogues, the government appropriated a private plane to the production so Karmen and Lancaster could travel throughout the country unobstructed to film at different sites for each one. It was on these occasions the Lancaster's infamous temper would at times flare up, sometimes to the benefit of the series. While filming in the Red Square, the members of the Soviet crew launched a last-minute objection to a line of narration that placed Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, and Hitler in the same sentence. Lancaster exploded at this delay and began cursing out Karmen despite being surrounded by crowds of tourists who likely recognized him. He turned to Kleinerman at one point and said, "Where's my car, I'm going back to the hotel. Get me on an airplane, I'm leaving today, but no later than tomorrow." The issue was resolved in the Americans' favor, however, as Kleinerman noted, 'this went on every single day, every single day.'[432] The Soviet's resolve to maintain the façade of the 'Cult of the Great Patriotic War' thus proved a hassle for the American team even during filming.

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[430] Naum Marr, "The Unknown War...Eastern Front!" *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978), 167, 169.
[431] Rod McKuen, 'The Unknown War: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes,' interview by Marilyn Bechtel, *New World Review*, March/April 1979, 10.
[432] Isaac Kleinerman, "Reminiscences of Isaac Kleinerman," interview by Barbara Hogenson on August 11, 1980, in New York, NY (New York: Columbia University Oral History Collection), 446-447.

The series was completed in roughly a year and a half with production running from the spring of 1977 until the fall of 1978. Karmen was quite proud of the series as well as his friendship with the American crew, with Weiner and McKuen, who said he became a father figure to them both. Although, initially not happy with the title he later had a change of heart. "His war was known so well by us," he claimed in an interview with the *Washington Post*, "But now I am happy, this is a clever thing, a little ironic, but aimed at the postwar generations who know nothing of the war." A view reinforced by a conversation with some American youths who when asked what they knew of the war asked if he meant the time when the Americans and British fought the Russians.[433] His work was a personal labor, going back through footage he had shot over thirty years ago, and a demanding one, supervising all of the episodes and meeting with all the writers and directors. But with it he felt he had made his definitive statement on the war, its bloody cost, and the overcoming of impossible hardship through collaboration and belief. "For me personally," he later recalled, "the theme of the Great Patriotic War was, is, and will be the theme of my life."[434] A life that came to an end too soon, Karmen died on April 28, 1978, a few months before the series was set to air. "He died on my birthday," remembered McKuen, "and that was the worst birthday present I ever received in my life."[435]

Style and Themes

The series presents a detailed history of the Soviet Union in World War II. Like *The World at War*, some episodes on specific battles and larger campaigns like "The Siege of Leningrad" (Episode 3) as well as episodes devoted to specialized subjects like the role of the

[433] Kevin Klose, "Fresh Footage From 'The Unknown War'," *Washington Post*, Dec. 22, 1977.
[434] Naum Marr, "The Unknown War...Eastern Front!" *Soviet Literature*, no. 6 (1978), 165
[435] Rod McKuen, "The Unknown War: A Glimpse Behind the Scenes," interview by Marilyn Bechtel, *New World Review*, March/April 1979,

Soviet air forces in “War in the Air” (Episode 9) “To the East” (Episode 4) about the movement of over 1,5000 factories to beyond the Urals. The series also makes a note to showcase the depravity of the German forces during their occupation of Soviet territories in the episode “The Liberation of Belorussia,” (Episode 14) while the Holocaust is presented in several episodes with special attention given to the liberation of Auschwitz in “The Liberation of Poland” (Episode 16). Although most of the footage is on the soldiers and civilians involved in the battles or trapped between the lines, interviews are largely with the military officers and government officials. Thus, the use of interviews, a highlight of *The World at War*, is sparser and more top-down; the series instead largely relies on the archival footage, McKuen’s score, and the narration to tell the history and impart its meaning, in the manner of *The Twentieth Century*. “The Siege of Leningrad” uses no interviews, instead contrasting the footage of a bustling city population before the war with footage of destroyed buildings, people making cookies out of sawdust, children stripping buildings to make barriers, and deserted streets to show the effect of the siege.

Like his other work, Karmen relied on the power of the image to tell the story. Many segments go without narration to emphasize the images of the battle, the damage caused, and the civilians amid the action while McKuen’s score give further emotional weight to what is being shown, while at other times Karmen chooses no music just letting the silence linger over the expanses of the war. Karmen also at times incorporates dramatic footage to convey visual metaphors to further his point. In the premiere episode “June 22, 1941,” he incorporates a tracking where the camera hovers around an empty conference table as the narration details the Soviet Union’s vein attempts to reach security agreements with Britain and France to stave off the rising threat of Germany aggression in the aftermath of their 1938 annexation of the Sudetenland. Also, like The *Twentieth Century*, it makes use of its narrator as host. Every

episode begins with Burt Lancaster on location or in the editing room giving a short speech about the content of the episode, with locations ranging from the site of the Battle of Kursk to the tomb of Vladimir Lenin in Moscow.

While informing the American public of the Eastern Front, the series embodied several themes of the cult of the Great Patriotic War. While great destruction and death is present throughout, there is rarely a shot or scene that implies the tremendous psychological toll this puts on the soldiers. The impression is instead that the Soviet military is a composed of soldiers' die-hard in their resolve and willing to give their all towards total victory no matter the cost, emphasizing the strength of will as much as military might of the country. Such is a message that would have been prevalent in the presentation of this generation, to inform the young of the taciturn resolve in the face of immense sacrifice which they should pay respect to. This is highlighted in how numerous episodes cut from archival footage to freshly filmed scenes of the Soviet Union in color. In "The Siege of Leningrad," (Episode 3) beautiful aerial and street shots of the city in the late 1970s are contrasted with the shelled out, broken apart buildings of the war. These scenes alternate between family and friends commemorating those who sacrificed their lives alongside tourists visiting the memorials and the battlegrounds to pay homage. Such footage shows the memory of the Great Patriotic War was kept alive amongst the populace. They convey how the war is still with the Russian people but, on another level, bolstering Tumarkin's thesis on the power of the cult. Such importance was placed on the series that when it was shown in the Soviet Union in late 1979, under the title *The Great Patriotic War* it was given a theatrical release across the nation before its television broadcast.

The series further emphasized the ideals of détente, illustrating the viability of future collaboration by looking to the past. While the Germans are largely presented as a hegemonic

force, the allied powers of Great Britain and the United States are displayed in a remarkably positive light. "The Allies" (Episode 17) chronicles the Big Three Alliance and how despite numerous differences and difficulties in between the Big Three, shows of goodwill and common interest always won the day. "A Soldier of the Unknown War," (Episode 20) the final episode, makes the point even more clearly. After illustrating the immensity of the losses from the war, as well as the Holocaust, the message switches to that of remembrance with footage of the 30th anniversary of the victory in Moscow with parades and memorials to the graves of the fallen. Averell Harriman and Leonid Brezhnev, with his great-granddaughter in his lap, make passionate speeches about the legacy of the war as the greatest loss of life in history and how the people of all nations must now work together to ensure such a tragedy never happens again.

Premiere and Reception

Air Time had no problem selling the series. With star Burt Lancaster and the participation of known professionals like Isaac Kleinerman and Harrison Salisbury it attracted a good deal of attention before its official roll out. At the Cannes Film Festival, the international rights were sold to Germany, Austria, and Switzerland for $500,000. In New York RKO General bought the syndication rights for New York, Boston, and Memphis for a million dollars. The National Education Association (NEA) gave the series its approval and agreed to use it for classroom lessons. In the span of a few months the series was bought by television stations in nine U.S. major cities and sixteen countries in Europe, Latin America, and Asia,[436] netting Air Time a nice profit on their investment.[437] Although, the anticipation was largely laudatory the content of a

[436] G. Vasilyev, "America Learns History," *Pravda*, Sept. 10, 1978, 5.
[437] According to several articles the series cost about $3.5 million, with Air Time paying 2/3 of this. However, Weiner disputed this figure in my interview with him.

series did attract some dissidents. Weiner recalls marketing the series at the National Association of Producers and Broadcasting Executives (NAPE) convention in Los Angeles where a high-level figure from WTBS approached Air Time's booth asking, "is this where you guys are selling that commie cocksucker movie?" WTBS eventually purchased the series for syndication.[438]

Before the series television debut, the National Archives in Washington D.C. hosted a preview screening of the first two episodes. Weiner recalls the reception was enormously positive with the screening followed by a reception at the Kennedy Center with several of the Russian filmmakers, and afterwards a dope dazed *Foreigner* concert.[439] When *The Unknown War* premiered in New York City on October 7, 1978 the initial reviews for the first few episodes were mostly positive.[440] The critic Bob Foster of the *San Matteo Times* wrote, "The Unknown War is documentary history at its best." The *Ashbury Park Press* claimed, "Its historical content, educational value, and dramatic impact makes the Unknown War one of the most significant documentary series ever produced."[441] Howard Rosenberg of the *Los Angeles Times*, although criticizing the overuse of Rod McKuen's music and the series exclusion of the Great Purge under Stalin, wrote, "The word 'epic' comes to mind reflecting on 'The Unknown War.' If initial programs are indicative of the whole, it is destined to be ranked with 'Victory at Sea' and 'The World at War' as the best of World War II documentaries."[442]

Tom Buckley of the *New York Times* held a different view of the program. Having seen the first five episodes of the series, Buckley commended the series use of footage which, "bear vivid witness to the immense scale and savagery of the war." That was where the praise ended as

[438] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[439] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 6, 2018.
[440] Since it was sold to different stations the series was aired at different times on different days throughout the country. Each station, however, broadcasted it on a weekly basis.
[441] "'Unknown War' Looks at Russian War Years," Ashbury Park Press, Sept. 24, 1978.
[442] Howard Rosenberg, "World War II in Russia," *The Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 5, 1978.

Buckley chastised the series' "fairy-tale version" of history, which he claimed were shaped by Soviet editors and sold on a "take it or leave it basis." Although finding the narration factual, he claimed it "distorts by omission, oversimplification and half-truth." Buckley cites how the series justified the Soviet annexation of Polish territory as taking back land lost in 1921 and how the invasion of Finland was claimed to be a "border dispute." In the end he dubs the series "soft-core propaganda," proven in the fact that it was to premiere on Soviet television unaltered.[443]

Buckley's review would later be reprinted and used in other publications criticizing the series, many of which in areas the series hadn't played in. The *Nashville Graphic* incited the NEA for endorsing the series. Conservative historian Edward L. Shapiro went so far as to call the series, "the mass media's most important obeisance to date before the idol of détente, and comes at a time when the fabric of détente woven during the early 1970s is coming apart before our eyes."[444] Paul Greenberg, writing for the *Democrat and Chronicle,* called the series "an updated version of the propaganda that, during the Forties, taught Americans about kindly Uncle Joe and how the Soviet way of life was much like our own." Linking the series with the Carter administration's effort to pass SALT II through Congress, he asks readers not to be fooled by the hype for "the emotional sweep of this appeal in the early Forties, and the painful letdown in the later Forties, illustrate the dangers of being carried away by one's own propaganda."[445]

In the Soviet Union the series was given a theatrical release the following year, in its first run theaters. Kleinerman, in Russia during the film's release, noted that the tremendous turnout for the series amongst the populace: 'granted, you might call that an unnatural week that I was there, but the way people queued up to go into the cinemas was phenomenal. You know, like

[443] Tom Buckley, "Soviet Union's Unknown War with Germany," *New York Times*, Nov. 25, 1978.
[444] Edward Shapiro, *Clio from the Right: Essays of a Conservative Historian*, (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1983), 263.
[445] Paul Greenberg, "Will this TV series make SALT palatable?," *Democrat and Chronicle*, January 17, 1979.

here to see Star Wars.' His observation was made in February and according to Kleinerman it was still playing in theaters until the summer before it was shown on Soviet television.

Conclusion

Sadly, *The Unknown War*, like SALT II, would be sunk by the tide of the Cold War. On December 25, 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to topple the regime of Hafizullah Amin, who they had tired of providing aid to in the face of his increasingly oppressive measures. In the minds of the politburo the action was necessary to keep US influence out of Afghanistan and restitution after the United States and its NATO allies resolved to deploy new nuclear forces in Europe earlier that year. Such actions, according to Brezhnev and his advisors, violate the principle equal security was premised on. Nonetheless, the United States saw the invasion as a vicious affront to the principles of détente and the stability of world peace. In a letter to Brezhnev on December 28th When the Soviet Union refused to withdraw, Carter recalled his ambassador from Moscow, asked the Senate to suspend consideration of SALT II, cut trade and placed embargo on grain, and pulled the United States out of the 1980 summer Olympics to be held at Moscow. As historian Melvyn P. Leffler notes, "Leonid Brezhnev killed détente with the United States, the policy he had helped to launch a decade before."[446]

Very quickly the message espoused by *The Unknown War* became outdated, some would say Un-American. In response, numerous stations decided to pull the series from the air while others decided not to utilize their option to re-air the series. Weiner contends such measures were due more so to low ratings than to patriotism. Indeed, by the time of the invasion most of the metropolitan areas including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and Memphis had

[446] Melvyn P. Leffler, *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2008), 334, 335.

already aired the series to its completion. Nonetheless, the political climate was irreparably harmful to the series. Hal Erickson notes in his section on *The Unknown War* in his history of syndicated television "Thanks to the quicksilver quality of world events, Air Time International's The Unknown War was for the most part The Unseen Series."[447]

As the decades shifted and Reagan's Anti-Soviet rhetoric perforated the nation, no one seemed interested in a series claiming the communists defeated the Nazis. While the series was rerun in the Soviet Union in 1983, it was never broadcast again in the United States.[448] With the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the surge in World War II popularity in the 1990s with the 50th anniversary of the Allied Victory and the release of such popular films as *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998), there was hope of a second wind for *The Unknown War.* But this came to naught. The series' emphasis on cohabitation and collaboration, as well as its frequent inter-cutting between the war and 1970s Russia made it seem dated. At least that was the response Weiner received when he tried to bring the program to the History Channel in the early 2000s, but to no avail.[449] *The Unknown War* would remain rarely seen in the United States until its DVD release by the Shout Factory in 2011 and can now be watched on YouTube and Tubi.

Its perspective on the war and information on the Eastern Front would also be slow to spread in the West. The German perspective of the war continued to dominate in the form of German authored memoirs, personal histories, and adventure fiction throughout the 1980s and into 1990s. The brief opening of the Russian archives in the mid-1990s to Western historians did help to create less biased, more comprehensive histories of the Soviet side of the war and the

[447] Hal Erickson, *Syndicated Television: The First Forty Years, 1947-1987* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland Classics, 2001), 277.
[448] Boris Alexeyev, "Truly a Great Patriotic War," *Soviet Life*, Spring, 1983, 18.
[449] Author telephone interview with Fred Wiener, April 19, 2018.

motivations of its leaders. Nevertheless, an academic catalogue of Random House from the late 2000s included the Wehrmacht memoirs *Lost Victories*, *Panzer Battles, Panzer Leader,* and *Soldat.* Random House sent this catalogue to universities and libraries around the United States, continuing the promotion of the German version of the War in the East.[450] While the breakout of cable television and the internet has led to an enormous surge in the availability and variety of documentary and fictional programming on the Soviet side of the war, it is still far less known than the Western Front.

Developed in an atmosphere where co-existence seemed possible, the series' producers managed to create something that showed the stark losses suffered America's wartime ally. Its message of loss, remembrance, and looking towards the hope of the future remain timeless, but it could not escape the context of its creation when the politics shifted away from collaboration to consternation. Nevertheless, it succeeds as an incredible work of documentary filmmaking, an impactful telling of the Great Patriotic War, and a testament to overcoming obstacles in the goal of greater understanding.

[450] Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008), 130.

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CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION: A CONTESTED LEGACY

The Reagan Administration of the 1980s would birth the next incarnation of the American World War II narrative, pushing a return to the 1950s conception of the war to promote a wider affirmation of American strength and morality. Never seeing combat in the war, Reagan instead served in the Army AirCorps' First Motion Picture Unit in Culver City, California making propaganda and training films eventually rising to the rank of Captain, as president, Reagan was keen to look back to the war to reassure Americans of their prospects for the future. Reagan became a mouthpiece for the war generation, often utilizing invented war stories as parables, which emphasized the stoic valor of the men who won World War II, while overlooking any of the darker aspects of the war which could dilute the image of it as America's finest hour. In highlighting the men who won the war, later dubbed "The Greatest Generation," Reagan tried to lure Americans back to the moral security and idealist logic of the Cold War in order to promote his larger agenda.

Reagan's promotion of World War II as a sacred site of the strength and moral conviction of the nation was embodied at the 40th Anniversary celebration of the D-Day Landings wherein Reagan, the first sitting U.S. president to attend the commemoration, made a rousing speech to honor the U.S. Army 2nd Ranger Division, dubbed "The Boys of Pointe Du Hoc" and a more general commemoration of those who landed on Omaha Beach. His elegiac speeches which heralded the bravery and heroism displayed by these young men in the face of incredible odds pulled from the "Great Crusade" narrative of the war as a liberation fought for the ideals of freedom and self-determination. Reagan highlighted the men who had fought, praised their contribution, and summoned them to no longer keep their stories, their achievements, and their

struggles to themselves but to bring it to light for the greater benefit of the following generations. As Brinkley points out, Reagan's speeches "galvanized the World War II generation into performing one last task: reminding a nation cynical after Vietnam and Watergate that America truly was still the shining city on the hill."[451]

In resurrecting the "Great Crusade" narrative with a restored focus on the qualities which made the war and the American servicemen just and righteous Reagan was using World War II, as a lightning rod to provide a jolt of patriotism. Once again, in looking to meet policy initiatives and better promote the fight of the Cold War Reagan used World War II as an example of a virtuous battle which Americans should observe with pride and wish to take up the mantle. D-Day was the perfect encapsulation of military planning and triumph sans any dubious moral questions as had plagued the dropping of the atomic bomb which worked beautifully as an extension of his administration's military build-up and image of toughness when taking on the communist menace. "He essentially wanted to turn the clock back to an unambiguous black-and-white era" Brinkley concludes, "when, as Stephen Ambrose opined in *Citizen Soldiers*, the sight of a GI meant joyous cheers from those communities occupied by Fascist troops."[452]

Reagan's words began a renewed reverence for the World War II generation supplemented by Studs Terkel's Pulitzer Prize winning oral history *"The Good War": An Oral History of World War II.* Terkel's collection of recollections from the wartime generation ranging from the battlefields of Europe and Asia to the American Home Front was released the same year as Reagan's speeches and seemed to be a fulfillment on the president's call for stories from the veterans. Despite the variety of experiences shared in Terkel's book, it was and

[451]Douglas Brinkley, *The Boys of Pointe Du Hoc: Ronald Reagan, D-Day, and the U.S. Army 2nd Ranger Battalion* (HarperCollins: New York, 2005), 9.
[452] Brinkley, *The Boys of Pointe Du Hoc*, 10.

continues to be held as a testament to the fortitude of the wartime generation with its title a new solidifier of the purported morality of the conflict to the public. Terkel claimed the title was recommended to him by friend Herbert Mitgang, a correspondent for the army published Stars and Stripes during the war, as it was "a phrase that has been frequently voiced by men of his generation, to distinguish that war from other wars, declared and undeclared."[453] This served to further extricate the war from others the United States had gotten involved in, if World War II was "good" then the Korean and Vietnam Wars were "bad" because we lost, or at least didn't achieve American aims and did not showcase the same ideals that were heralded in the world war.

Despite these testaments, it would take roughly another decade for such interest to truly come to the fore. While the war would continue to be referenced and the people who lived through it revered, American media did not capitalize on this sentiment. During the 1980s no major films set during the war came out of Hollywood, while only a few foreign films on the war made a measurable impression on American audiences like the German U-Boat epic *Das Boot* (1981).[454] There were several factors for this, including a perceived fatigue with World War II films and the dominance of other wars in the public mind.

Early in the decade, the American public remained war-weary, preferring media made on fictional conflicts such as *Red Dawn* (1984), *Rambo II* (1985), and *Top Gun* (1987) to settle any craving for combat. Such films filled that need for action, but also served to remind audiences of the country's renewed vigor as Steve Engelhardt notes, "As Rambo, Sylvester Stallone was a

[453] Studs Terkel, *The Good War: An Oral History of World War II* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), xxi.
[454] Das Boot, directed by Wolfgang Peterson was released by Columbia Pictures through its Triumph label on February 10, 1982, in both the original German version and an English-language dubbed version. It grossed $11 million, ranking it seventh on the all-time list of foreign-language films, and earned six Academy Award nominations including Best Director and Best Adapted Screenplay for Peterson.

'pure fighting machine,' with muscles and weaponry to prove it; while in *Top Gun*, Tom Cruise played a 'maverick' on a motorcycle who was transformed from hot dog to top dog by fusing with his navy jet as he soared to victory over the evil empire's aggressor machines, Libyan MIGs."[455] Whether via muscles or superior technology and weaponry, Americans were fighting machines ready, willing, and able to topple the cartoonishly proportioned evils the nation faced.

However, by the end of 1980s, a real war from recent memory dominated the war film genre in the United States – the Vietnam War. By the late-1980s, the country had experienced something of a reckoning with the Vietnam War. Ronald Reagan had undertaken a campaign to whitewash the tarnish of Vietnam from the United States by defining the conflict as a "noble cause" and in his 1988 Veteran's Day speech at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, In doing so, Reagan, "incorporated the Southeast Asian conflict into the tribute to the soldiers undertaking a gallant effort which had pervaded the dominant public remembrance of World War II."[456] As it was becoming more accepted by the public, Vietnam War films were made to explain the tragedy of the war to American viewers including *Platoon* (1986), *Full Metal Jacket* (1987), *Hamburger Hill* (1987), and *Good Morning, Vietnam* (1987). These films helped the public grapple with the dark realities faced by the soldiers from unseen enemies to the moral conundrums they faced confronting the Vietnamese and between themselves. Yet, as noted by Tom Engelhardt. the majority of these films, while certainly visceral experiences, play into the narrative espoused by Reagan in their presentation of the "noble grunt" – the innocent soldier who is corrupted by the horrors of warfare fighting as much with themselves as against an unseen enemy. "In the 1980s, a Rambo-dreaming president, National Security Council, CIA, and

[455] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 268.
[456] John E. Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore, MY: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 239.

military establishment began to plan an agenda of intervention abroad based on a desire to wipe the memory of defeat and domestic opposition from the face of the earth" noted Engelhardt; "Developments of screen, in Vietnam comics like *Nam* and *Vietnam Journal*, in the 'grunt' novels and memoirs that flooded from publishing houses, in Vietnam snuff novels like the *M.I.A. Hunter* series, in revisionist works of history, and on TV in *China Beach* and *Tour of Duty* paralleled such off-screen governmental desires."[457]

One major exception to this drought of World War II media was the fifteen-hour television miniseries *The Winds of War* (1983) and it's more epic thirty-hour *sequel War and Remembrance* (1988-1989). These lavishly produced sagas of the Henry and Jastrow family amidst the global developments leading to and then through the war was nothing short of a spectacle taking the audience through the machinations that led to the invasion of Poland in September of 1939 through the signing of Japan's declaration of surrender in September 1945. While ostensibly the interweaving stories of two families – one a U.S. naval family, the other a Jewish, European intelligentsia – both series uphold the hallmarks of the traditional war narrative of a virtuous United States fighting for ideals, the existence of many good Germans ensnared in the madness of the *Fuehrer,* and the stoic nature of the men who led the nation to victory. While it is owed credit for opening the narrative to include the contributions of the Soviet Union, even making a sly reference to their excision from the narrative when in episode seven of *War and Remembrance* the British character Philip Rule remarks to his ex-girlfriend Pamela Tudsbury how the greatest tank battle of history in Kursk was getting no mention in the U.S. newsreels, preoccupied with the Italian campaign.[458] It nonetheless served as a restoration of the "great

[457] Tom Engelhardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 278.
[458] "April 3, 1943 - July 25, 1943" *War and Remembrance* (ABC, November 23, 1988).

crusade" war narrative, yet it stood alone in this as it remained the sole major dramatic depiction of the war to come out of the United States during this period.

Documentaries on the war were still produced in decent quantities during this period, although none garnered the viewership or controversy of their predecessors and added little to the conversation of the war. There were some interesting works like *Remembering War* (1985) which used new telecommunications technology to have American and Soviet war veterans share their experiences of the war and the meeting on the Elbe on April 1945 and *Resan* (1987), Peter Watkins incredible fourteen-and-a-half hour examination of nuclear weapons and their perceptions which highlighted the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Perhaps one of the most noteworthy products of the decade was a compilation series titled *World War II with Walter Cronkite* (1982), in which the veteran CBS News anchor and former host of *Twentieth Century* guided audiences once again through World War II. Cronkite acted as the host and narrator for this fifteen-episode series on the war which covered major events like the Battle of Okinawa and Air War Over Europe to more unique tales like the blowing of the Remagen Bridge. In fact, these episodes were largely repackaged from episodes of Cronkite's previous series *Air Power* (1956-1957) and *The Twentieth Century* (1957-1966) with new introductions by Cronkite but little else new. It is a fitting product commemorating the war during this period – a repackaging of classic themes from the triumphalist narratives of the 1950s to try and entice another generation towards the principles they stood for. It thus showcases the return to the classic dynamics of the Cold War once again perpetuated by the government and again turning the clock back for examples of American superiority.

While World War II was once again resurrected as a vanguard to fight the Cold War in the 1980s, the conflict was ultimately about to come to a close. While the multitude of factors in

the breakdown of the Warsaw Pact continue to be hotly debated, the rising influence of Western interests coupled with a general stalling of the prospects of the countries in Eastern Europe under communist rule ultimately led to a breakdown of the communist authorities. Soon the communist regimes began to fall both peacefully as in Poland, Hungary, and East German in 1989 as well as violently with the death of communist General Secretary Nicolae Ceaușescu in Romania. Soon the Soviet Union, long suffering under economic stagnation and increasing loss of influence in world affairs fell in December of 1991, breaking up its fifteen national republics into separate nations and becoming the nation of Russia. The end of the Soviet Union left the United States as the sole world superpower, basking in its victory of the Cold War.

The Cold War's end in 1991 with the fall of the Soviet Union helped to spur a new slew of laudatory works on World War II. In the mid-to-late 1990s numerous popular histories reimagined the citizen soldier as model of the past as a part of the Greatest Generation engaged in a "good war." These histories by the boomer generation like Tom Brokaw's The Greatest Generation and Stephen Ambrose's *D-Day: June 6, 1944 and Band of Brothers* highlighted the moral superiority and man-making characteristics of the war. In cinemas such sentiment was once again being displayed by films like *Saving Private Ryan* (1998), *U-571* (200) and *Pearl Harbor* (2001), albeit alongside more somber examinations of the war like *Come See the Paradise* (1990) and *The Thin Red Line* (1998). Collectively, these works validated the perception of the generation who fought and won World War II then returned to build the seemingly idyllic life of the 1950s as "the Greatest Generation," cementing the image projected by Reagan at Normandy.

On television the war also became more visible thanks to the expansion of the medium. The introduction of cable television in the 1970s led to the creation of more channels outside of

the three big networks and the local stations allowing for more content to populate the tube. While initially slow to draw subscribers, by 1989 over half of television holding households in the United States had cable while its share of television viewers had risen from 6 percent in January 1982 to 20 percent in January 1989, steadily increasing through the 1990s.[459] Cable channels tended to be niche affairs with the bulk of one's content being a specific subject like ESPN devoted to sports, and Nickelodeon to children's programming.

On January 1, 1995, the History Channel emerged as a spin-off from the Arts & Entertainment channel, playing almost exclusively historical documentaries for its first ten years with many being on World War II. [460] The cable outlet made a good number of documentary programs on the war available for the paying audience. But it is also a propagator of what historian and education scholar Jeremy D. Stoddard dubs "The History Channel Effect" wherein the increasing number of documentary series are all taken as historical truth due a disposition of the public to view documentary films as objective and neutral. The History Channel, as noted by Stoddard, can be particularly egregious in its programming's historical accuracy and bias due to, "low production budgets, use of out-of-context images and video, little or no historical oversight, and a desire to appeal to middle-aged male audiences by emphasizing warfare and patriotism."[461] Thus, the History Channel, by and large, tended to echo the Triumphalist narrative of the war which dominated much of the public at the time of the channel's launch and arguably to today.

The overall effect of these works was a validation of the war as a truly noble endeavor that raised Americans to their peak position, whilst overly simplifying or ignoring darker aspects

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[459] James L. Baughman, *The Republic of Mass Culture: Journalism, Filmmaking, and Broadcasting in America since 1941* (3rd Ed. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 213-214.
[460] Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik, *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 373.4.
[461] Jeremy D. Stoddard, "The History Channel Effect," *Phi Delta Kappan* 91, no. 4 (2009): pp. 80 https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171009100420, 80.

of the effects of warfare and the racial, ethnic, and religious prejudices which pervaded the conflict. While greater understanding of the darker aspects of the American war effort had come into the public's consciousness by the 1990s such as the nation's neglect of the contributions of African Americans and the internment of the Japanese *Nisei*. Such injustices were symbolically remedied in a number of commemorations and gestures by the federal government, including the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 which gave surviving Japanese-Americans who were interned during the war reparations and a formal apology by President Reagan and the awarding of the Medal of Honor to seven African American World War II veterans by President Bill Clinton in 1997.[462] However, there continued to be opposition to any nuance to the portrayal of the United States as the "good guy" of World War II. This is clearly exhibited in the cancellation of the Enola Gay exhibit for the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. Historian Michael J. Hogan analyzed how the museum curators claimed they had a right to provide an interpretation of the past based on their scholarly credentials and aid of professional historians in showing the unflattering carnage caused by the use of the atomic bombs and their place as a lead-in to the Cold War, American World War II veterans protested on the basis of their collective memory, claiming they were the voice of meaning for the use of the atomic bombs not the professional historians. Ultimately, the veterans won out thanks to their backing by the American Legion, the Air Force Association, and several conservative members of Congress who had much more to gain in upholding the "triumphalist," patriotic perception of

[462]Helen Yoshida, "Redress and Reparations for Japanese American Incarceration," The National WWII Museum | New Orleans (The National WWII Museum, August 13, 2021), https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/redress-and-reparations-japanese-american-incarceration.; Ken Ringle, "For Black Soldiers, an Overdue Honor," *The Washington Post*, January 14, 1997.

the war as an epitome of American strength and virtue, not to be diluted by historical inquiry and debate.[463]

By and large, the public seemed content to uphold the "Good War" narrative. John E. Bodnar concludes that: "As reports appeared almost daily about the passing of the war's veterans, younger generations looked back at honored ancestors with a sentimental gaze … the American public in general was more than ready to entertain highly laudable stories of national honor and bravery as it began to erase the more troubling legacy of Vietnam and bask in the afterglow of a Cold War victory."[464] Media scholar Debra Ramsay, utilizing a survey study conducted by Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott (1989), goes further, noting that the "Baby Boomer" generation tended to adopt the perspective of World War II as the "good war" thanks to what they read and watched in the upbringing and their unfavorable contrast between the Vietnam War, which Boomers view as divisive and morally ambiguous, and the "good war," that they yearn for the world and wars of the wartime generation. Schuman and Scott call this longing "vicarious nostalgia."[465]

Media depictions of the war seen by the boomer generation, particularly those on television, played an instrumental role in the formation of the notion of "the Greatest Generation." Television was the medium developed alongside the Boomer Generation and the Cold War which provided an outlet through which to interpret the war. Their upbringing on the narrative of the "Great Crusade" of World War II, endowed many with lofty ideals of the United States' mission in the world which would become murkier as they came into maturity and

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[463] Michael J. Hogan, "The Enola Gay Controversy: History, Memory, and the Politics of Presentation," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 200-232, 201-202.
[464] John E. Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (Baltimore, MY: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 200.
[465] Howard Schuman and Jacqueline Scott quoted in Debra Ramsey, *American Media and The Memory of World War II* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 62.

encountered the complex realities of their generation's war in Vietnam. As time passed and they sought a type of moral certainty to find comfort, many began to once again turn to the narrative born in the Cold War and saw World War II as "the Good War," and the generation before them as the "Greatest" for their victory in the war and now the triumph in the Cold War.

As this dissertation has shown, this continued a long tradition of media depictions of World War II that was deeply influenced by the shifting demands of American Cold War ideology. The initial depictions, largely documentaries, served the dual purpose of informing Americans about the war in an entertaining fashion whilst pushing a triumphalist American narrative of the conflict. *Victory at Sea* was the flagship of this effort as the first series to have widespread appeal. Made by Henry Salomon, a veteran who had helped to write the history of the war at sea, it gave a rousing, patriotic view of the war while ignoring many darker aspects as well as the role of the Soviet Union. Their upholding of the "triumphalist" narrative of the war promoted by groups like the Veterans Administration, the U.S. military, and a strand of consensus historians like Samuel Elliot Morison and drawing the war as a "great crusade" of liberation for the world and coming of age for the United States was something which played to the needs of the United States' efforts in the Cold War based on the perceptions of its creator. It sought to reaffirm American strength and virtue at a time when the class of people who guided the war effort, the upper-class intellectuals of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations, men of Salomon's mold, were being ousted in the Red and Lavender Scares. Thus, it used World War II to remind audiences of the values they stood for in this ideological conflict.

As time went on and the medium became more pervasive, more steps were taken to control the image of the war by the U.S. military as well as the networks and show sponsors. While the military sought to ensure the best image for itself possible, the networks and sponsors

strived to appeal to the most amount of people with the least objectionable material and worked collectively to "mediate" the presentation of the war. The documentary anthology *series The Twentieth Century* showcased a zenith of this mediation in the episodes which depict World War II. The series made in the late-1950s and early-1960s continues the perspective of the infallibility of the American military in the war as well as the war being a liberation of peoples eager to be democracies while expanding the narrative to address further concerns of the Cold War. Amongst these were its depiction of the Germans, which showcased the "Good German" caught in the frenzy caused by Hitler and his aides like Josef Goebbels. It also promoted a Cold War depiction of the Soviet Union as an evil entity whose people were prisoners to a corrupt, communist government. However, as the decades shifted and cultural mores changed, the series began to become more inclusive by addressing such taboo issues as the Holocaust and the American imprisonment of Japanese-Americans during the war. This shows a flexibility to adjust with changes in Cold War and societal dynamics. It would also be one of the last prominent series to showcase the war in a documentary form as wartime fiction dramas and comedies supplanted the documentary on television as the primary prism to view the war by the mid-1960s.

The 1970s were a time of great strife but also a greater realization of the horrors of war following the Vietnam conflict. While the United States was reeling from the loss in Vietnam, World War II began to be re-evaluated in light of the savagery witnessed from contemporary conflicts in Vietnam, Algeria, Malaysia and other regions. While still upholding the notion it was a just war, the landmark documentary series *The World at War* offered both a more expansive depiction of the conflict as well as a grimmer iteration of the realities of war and exhibited the pitfalls of fighting for an ideology one did not really understand. The British documentary's

reflection of the war opened the door for further reflection on the meaning of the conflict to coincide with the expanded inquiries on the meaning of the war. Furthermore, the military had lost much influence in between the mid-1960s and early 1970s as filmmakers found it easier to source archival footage from other sources without the restrictions imposed by the Department of Defense. Filmmakers were less restricted in what they could and could not show in the 1970s as American television was expanding beyond network control thanks to new fairness rules by the Federal Communications Commissions designed to create more independent content.

The twenty-part documentary series *Unknown War* represented a culmination of the break from the American Triumphalist rendition, begun at the beginning of the Cold War, while promoting theme of cooperation for a peaceful coexistence between the capitalist and communist powers posited in Cold War diplomacy of the 1970s dubbed Détente. Made by a wing of a media planning company for sale to independent stations in cooperation with the Soviet government, a prospect thought unthinkable only ten years earlier, it utilized largely unseen footage from the Soviet Union and did not need to clear its presentation with the Department of Defense as it did not need its aid in supplying footage or experts on the war. The series showcased the grim realities of war like *The World at War* emphasizing the immense loss but unbreakable will of the Soviet people. At the same time the series made a clear plea for the avoidance of another world war through cooperation and diplomacy, a message predicated on the prerogatives of the Cold War in the 1970s. It was a solution to a lack of knowledge born of the Cold War but released to criticism for its drawing of the war which seemed to some to rob Americans of their greatest victory while also whitewashing Soviet history. It would suffer from the shift again to antagonistic relations in the 1980s as its themes became outdated.

While television has now become such a varied field, with thousands of channels and new outlets from the internet to provide more content, the war lives on. Series like *Band of Brothers* (2001), *The Pacific* (2010), *The Liberator* (2020) continues to draw the public attention in their reconstruction of the war. While World War II documentaries continue to be plentiful and more informative as the mediators have been removed with the prevalence of cable and the internet providing a plethora of content from numerous perspectives no longer beholden to the line established by the government despite bias of the creators. The multitude of content, however, makes it unlikely that one will have the impact of *Victory at Sea* due to their overexposure to the public. Despite such features as colorization and even 3D graphic reconstructions, documentary depictions of the war continue to evolve and shift to reflect the cultural climate of the nation to better resonate with its viewership.

The last major attempt at a multi-part series on World War II, Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's *The War* (PBS, 2007) embodies something of a middle ground between the idea of the "Good War" and growing inclusivity reflected in American society by the mid-2000s. Burns, likely the most famous American documentary filmmaker whose previous and distinctly chronicles include *The Civil War* (1990), *The West* (1996), *Baseball* (1994), and *Jazz* (2001), crafted an engrossing, encompassing narrative of the war in the fourteen-hour, seven-part series chronicling America's role in the conflict through the eyes of those who lived through it. By grounding the war through the personal tales of citizens from four towns: Waterbury, Connecticut; Mobile, Alabama; Sacramento, California; and Luverne, Minnesota, the series draws more from the personal accounts of the "Greatest Generation" than any previous American series of its scale. The war is not presented as "good" but as necessary while the glory of the country's numerous victories is tempered by various interviews with ordinary people who

share their sorrows and grief over the loss of their loved ones or the horrifying ordeals experienced in wartime. In a break from the "Great Crusade" tradition it makes note of the staunch racism suffered by African Americans, Mexican-Americans, and Japanese-Americans. Senator from Hawaii Daniel Ionyue's story of losing his arm in combat fighting for his country only to be denied service at a barbershop in San Francisco upon his return serves as one of several personal tales of racial prejudice recounted in the series. Yet, the series nonetheless comes off as a patriotic send-up to the "Greatest Generation" as those interviewed largely espouse a patriotic and supportive view of the war effort and those who led the country through the conflict. As John Bodnar summarizes, the series praises the "quiet dignity" of the people who contributed to the war effort, displayed the Holocaust as a justification for the sacrifices of the conflict as opposed to the idealism of Roosevelt's Four Freedoms and in contrast to the savagery of the Pacific theater all while, "rerunning film footage of the war's battles, air attacks, and invasions that Americans had watched for years."[466] Thus, the series expands the narrative to cover groups historically slighted in the narrative and does address some of the darkness beneath the surface, but ultimately continues to evoke the glory of the generation who gave their all to bring about victory over evil.

[466] John E. Bodnar, The "Good War" in American Memory (Baltimore, MY: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 233.

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