

FROM EUROPE TO THE NATION

FROM EUROPE TO THE NATION:
AMERICAN JOURNALISTIC PERCEPTIONS
OF EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 1933-1941

By

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ABSTRACT

From Europe to the Nation examines how six influential American journalists - John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick, and Dorothy Thompson - viewed and interpreted for their American audience the series of European events from Hitler's ascension to power in Germany to the attack on Pearl Harbor. My study describes the interpretative frameworks through which these journalists viewed and explained what happened, namely a shared faith in the superiority of American politics and policies, a belief in the moral supremacy of the "new world" over the "old world," a view of a racially-stratified world dominated by Anglo-Saxons, and a gendered worldview based on the binary opposites of masculine and feminine. These journalists used different interpretative frameworks in response to different events, shifting, overlapping and eventually coalescing in time. As events in Europe became increasingly dire following the Fall of France and threatened directly the national security of the United States, the interplay of these guiding assumptions prompted the rise to dominance of a shared viewpoint: what was at stake was the future of a West torn between civilization and barbarism. The civilization versus barbarism discourse had a clear propaganda value, in that it was used by journalists to support American participation, if not outright intervention, in the European war. This approach pinpoints the historical process of ideology creation. This ideology was elastic and highly effective, utilized for propaganda purpose not just for American intervention, but also to rally the home-front throughout the war and to legitimize Cold War American foreign policy. This study stresses the importance of recognizing the agency of journalists in the development of the concept because of their critical role as intermediaries between the crises occurring on the other side of the Atlantic and the American public's understanding of what these events meant for the United States.

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Introduction

This study examines how six influential American journalists - John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick, and Dorothy Thompson - viewed and interpreted for their American audience the series of European events from Hitler's ascension to power in Germany to the attack on Pearl Harbor. These journalists were among the best informed commentators on European events in the United States. Their articles chronicled events in interwar Europe and, more importantly, interpreted and explained how and why what was happening across the Atlantic was significant and relevant for Americans.

My study describes the interpretative frameworks - what I refer to as "lenses" - through which these journalists viewed and explained what happened in Europe. Their assumptions about the overarching national distinctiveness or "exceptionalism" of the United States shaped their interpretations of the mounting crises in Europe. Through much of the period studied here, Gunther, Kirchwey, Krock, Lippmann, McCormick, and Thompson employed complementing and coalescing lenses to elaborate a vision of American distinctiveness: a shared faith in the superiority of American politics and policies, a belief in the moral supremacy of the "new world" over the "old world," a view of a racially-stratified world dominated by Anglo-Saxons, and a gendered worldview based on the binary opposites of masculine and feminine. While these lenses shaped these journalists' interpretation of events their usage fluctuated throughout this period

and from journalist to journalist. Gendered interpretations were most prominent in some of their early analysis of Mussolini and Hitler, especially Thompson's and McCormick's work, and racial interpretations held sway in their comparisons of the national characteristics of France and Germany during crises like the announcement of German rearmament and the remilitarization of the Rhineland. In their interpretations of diplomatic moves such as the Anglo-German naval agreement and the Hoare-Laval plan, this group of journalists criticized European diplomacy as indicative of "old world" politics. But several events - Mussolini's Ethiopian invasion, the Spanish Civil War, the *Anschluss* with Austria, the Czechoslovakian crisis, and the Nazi-Soviet Pact - caused the journalists to reassess their interpretations of the European crises as a bigger picture began to emerge.

After the Fall of France, these different interpretative lenses focused on the common civilization of English-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic. The belief in American exceptionalism did not completely disappear, but was largely overshadowed by analyses that stressed the United States' inclusion in western civilization. In fact, they believed, the United States stood as the pinnacle of the civilized world. As events in Europe became increasingly dire and threatened directly the national security of the United States, the interplay of these guiding assumptions prompted the rise to dominance of a shared viewpoint: what was at stake was the future of a West torn between civilization and barbarism.

Some brief words regarding the focus of my work. This study is not about the European events themselves. It does not seek to explain why or how Hitler came to power, or why the democracies failed to stop him. It does not discuss why the United States intervened in the Second World War. Nor is it an analysis of American foreign policy in the 1930s. It is rather a study of how a group of American journalists created knowledge for the American public about events in Europe. It reveals the heretofore hidden dimension of the process by which well-placed historical agents imagined, negotiated, changed and disseminated core ideas about Europe and, by extension, America to ordinary Americans. Its aim is to vocalize some of the “unspoken assumptions” underlying international relations and foreign policy.¹

The historiography of U.S. foreign policy from 1933 to Pearl Harbor is immense. From the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt to America’s entry into the Second World War, the period captivates historians and lay readers alike for the stunning transformation that American foreign policy underwent.² The

¹ See James Joll, “1914 – the Unspoken Assumptions,” in H.W. Koch (ed.) *The Origins of the First World War* (London: MacMillan, 1972) 307-328.

² For a conclusive listing of historiography see *American Foreign Relations since 1600: A Guide to the Literature* Vol. I. Robert L. Beisner (ed.) Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. (Santa Barbara: ABC Clío, 2003). George C. Herring, *From Colony to Superpower: U.S. Foreign Relations Since 1776* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) is a new synthesis. For general works on the foreign policy of the United States in this period see: Robert Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent: American Entry into World War II* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1965); Arnold Offner, *The Origins of the Second World War: American Foreign Policy and World Politics, 1917-1941* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Justus Doenecke and John E. Wilz, *From Isolation to War, 1931-1941* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1991); Benjamin Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period, 1918-1941: The Golden Age of American Diplomacy and Military Complacency* (Westport: Praeger, 2001); David Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor: Roosevelt’s America and the Origins of the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001). For historiographical works on American foreign policy see: Wayne S. Cole, “American Entry into World War II: A Historiographical Appraisal,” in Offner (ed.) *America and*

United States entered this period questioning its role in the First World War, and reeling from the Great Depression. After September 1939 the Roosevelt administration assisted the Allies materially, if not openly. Undeclared war gave way to open war following the attack on Pearl Harbor and the German declaration of war on the United States on 11 December 1941.

The historiography is dominated by larger-than-life personalities, especially that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Roosevelt administration remains fertile grounds for historical analysis.³ Historians have studied extensively Roosevelt's relationships with other leaders, especially Winston

the Origins of World War II (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971) 2-24.; Gerald K. Haines, "Roads to War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941," in Haines and J. Samuel Walker (eds.) *American Foreign Relations: A Historiographical Review* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981) 159-185; John Braeman, "American Foreign Policy in the Age of Normalcy: Three Historiographical Traditions," *Amerikastudien/ American Studies* 26 (1981) 125-158; Garry J. Clifford, "Both Ends of the Telescope: New Perspectives on FDR and American entry into World War II," *Diplomatic History* 13 (1989) 213-230; Brian McKercher, "Reaching for the Brass Ring: The Recent Historiography of Interwar American Foreign Relations" *Diplomatic History* 15 (1991) 565-598; Doenecke, "U.S. Policy and the European War, 1939-1941," *Diplomatic History* 19:4 (1995) 669-698; Michael Barnhart, "The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific: Synthesis Impossible?" *Diplomatic History* 20 (1996) 241-260.

³ For works on Roosevelt's foreign policy see: Charles Callan Tansill, *Back Door To War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1933-1941* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1952); Gloria J. Barron, *Leadership in Crisis: FDR and the Path to Intervention* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1973); William E. Kinsella, *Leadership in Isolation: FDR and the Origins of the Second World War* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978); Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); Waldo Heinrichs, *Threshold of War: Franklin D. Roosevelt and American entry into World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); Frank Freidel, *Franklin D. Roosevelt: A Rendezvous With Destiny* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990); Warren Kimball, *The Juggler: Franklin Roosevelt as Wartime Statesman* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Alonzo Hamby, *For the Survival of Democracy: Franklin Roosevelt and the World Crisis of the 1930s* (New York: Free Press, 2004); Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy: An Ambiguous Legacy," in Doenecke and Mark A. Stoler (eds.) *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policy, 1933-1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005) 5-89; Stoler, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy: Flawed, But Superior to the Competition," in Doenecke and Stoler, (eds) *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt's Foreign Policies*, 113-183.

Churchill.⁴ Many studies examine relations between the United States and the major European nations between January 1933 and December 1941.⁵ A number

⁴ For works about Roosevelt's relationship with other national leaders see: Joseph Lash, *Roosevelt and Churchill, 1939-1941: The Partnership that Saved the West* (New York: Norton, 1976); William R. Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt: British Foreign Policy and the United States, 1937-1940* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988); Keith Alldritt, *The Greatest of Friends: Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, 1941-1945* (London: Robert Hale, 1995); Warren Kimball, *Forged in war: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1997); David Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill: men of secrets* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 2000); Jon Meacham, *Franklin and Winston: an intimate portrait of an epic friendship* (New York: Random House, 2003); Herbert Feis, *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: the war they waged and the peace they sought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); Robert A. Nisbet, *Roosevelt and Stalin: the failed courtship* (Washington D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988); Jonathan Fenby, *Alliance: the inside story of how Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill won one war and began another* (San Francisco: MacAdam Cage, 2006).

⁵ For works on Anglo-American relations see: C.A. MacDonald, *The United States, Britain and Appeasement, 1936-1939* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1981); David Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance, 1937-1941: A Study in Competitive Co-operation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981); David Dimbleby and Reynolds, *An Ocean Apart: The Relationship Between Britain and America in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1988); Nicholas Cull, *Selling War: The British Propaganda Campaign Against American "Neutrality" in World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); John Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail: American Anglophobia between the World Wars* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Andrew Roberts, *A History of the English-Speaking Since 1900* (New York: Harpers Collins, 2007); Kathleen Burk, *Old World New World: Great Britain and America From the Beginning* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007). For works on Franco-American relations see: John McVikar Haight Jr., *American Aid to France, 1938-1940* (New York: Atheneum, 1970); Julian Hurstfield, *America and the French Nation, 1939-1945* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986); Marvin Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster: France and the United States, 1918-1940* (Westport: Praeger, 2002); John Miller and Mark Molesky, *Our Oldest Enemy: A History of America's Disastrous Relationship with France* (New York: Doubleday, 2004). For works on Soviet-American relations see: Edward Bennett, *Franklin Roosevelt and the search for security: American-Soviet Relations, 1933-1939* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1985); Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory: American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945* (Wilmington: A Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint, 1990); Mary Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union: The President's Battle over Foreign Policy* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005). For works on Italo-American relations see: John Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism: The View From America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); D.F. Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy, 1922-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). For works on relations German-American relations see: Arnold Offner, *American Appeasement: United States Foreign Policy and Germany, 1933-1938* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969); Patrick Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler: America's Entry into World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1987); Robert Edwin Herzstein, *Roosevelt & Hitler: Prelude to War* (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

of works focus as well on U.S. foreign policy responses to specific events in Europe.⁶

This study does not wade directly into these historiographical debates. It will not argue whether or not Roosevelt was a foreign policy “realist,” a purposeful and farseeing leader, or whether he made decisions in an *ad hoc* and intuitive manner.⁷ Likewise, it does not debate at which point Roosevelt was committed to American intervention in the war, or discuss the contention that the president sought a “back door” through which the United States could enter the war.⁸ This study intersects with these well-trodden historiographical debates by

⁶ See: Allen Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart: America and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962); Foster Jay Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Octagon Books, 1971); Douglas Little, *Malevolent Neutrality: The United States, Great Britain, and the Origins of the Spanish Civil War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); Dominic Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War: Neutrality and Commitment in the Struggle that Divided America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Barbara Farnham, *Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis: A Study of Political Decision-Making* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); Travis Beal Jacobs, *American and the Winter War, 1939-1940* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981); Norman Moss, *Nineteen Weeks: America, Britain and the Fateful Summer of 1940* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2003); Warren F. Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939-1941* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1969); Theodore Wilson, *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941* (London: MacDonald and Company, 1969); Thomas Bailey and Paul B. Ryan, *Hitler vs. Roosevelt: The Undeclared Naval War* (New York: Free Press, 1979).

⁷ Dallek and Kinsella describe Roosevelt as farseeing, purposeful and a realist in his foreign policy. Kimball argues that Roosevelt was a “juggler” and master manipulator in his administration, but also notes that “the generally accepted picture of Franklin Roosevelt as a chaotic, haphazard, almost impulsive administrator is largely upheld.” (*The Most Unsordid Act*, 232). Doenecke frequently portrays Roosevelt as either indecisive or impulsive.

⁸ Historians have designated certain policies as Roosevelt’s “point of no return” in aiding Britain at the risk of war. For example Kimball argues that Lend-Lease represented “the point of no return for American policy regarding Hitler’s Germany.” (*The Most Unsordid Act*, 9) On the other hand Heinrichs argues the start of convoy escorts after the *Greer* incident, in combination with other activities at the same time, “marked the point when Roosevelt crossed over from benevolent neutrality to belligerency and risk of war.” (*Threshold of War*, 179). The revisionist or “back door” to war argument, as encapsulated in defining works like Tansill, *Back Door To War*, accuses FDR of foolishly thrusting the Poland guarantee on Chamberlain and of resisting accommodation with Japan so he could open his “back door to war.” Tansill’s work, as well as many others in this “conspiracy theory” vein, have largely been discredited and are not part of the serious current historiographical debate.

examining how journalists like Lippmann and Thompson evaluated and understood Roosevelt's leadership and policies, to what extent they believed the United States should intervene in the European crisis, and at what point they were convinced that the United States was committed to the war. In terms of Roosevelt's leadership the crucial role of American journalists as influential informers to the American public is particularly relevant given historians' consensus on the president's sensitivity to public opinion and his efforts to "persuade" the press to cover his policies favourably.⁹

⁹ Most historians examining Roosevelt's foreign policies note the president's sensitivity to domestic public opinion. Richard Steele examines Roosevelt's relationship to public opinion in his article "The Pulse of the People: Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Gauging of American Public Opinion," *Journal of Contemporary History* 9:4 (1974) 195-216. Dallek describes Roosevelt as a committed internationalist who was frequently constrained by isolationist public opinion. Stoler argues that Roosevelt was constantly "testing the waters" of American public opinion, and was therefore overly cautious in his foreign policy. According to Theodore Wilson many within Roosevelt's administration believed the president had become "so dependent upon the vagaries of polls and pollsters that he could not act decisively." (*The First Summit*, 2-3). Barron's study, *Leadership in Crisis: FDR and the Path to Intervention*, specifically analyzes the restraints of public opinion on Roosevelt, and documents his strategy, consistent except for the quarantine speech, of leading public opinion by lagging behind it. Michael Leigh, *Mobilizing Consent: Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, 1937-1942* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976) also faults Roosevelt for following public opinion rather than leading it. Ian Kershaw's recent work, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940-1941* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), notes Roosevelt's "sensitivity towards public opinion." (313). Roosevelt's relationship with the press is well documented, and relevant works include: Richard W. Steele, "Preparing the People for War: Efforts to Establish a National Propaganda Agency, 1940-41," *American Historical Review* 75 (1970) 1640-1653; Graham J. White, *FDR and the Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Betty Houchin Winfield, "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Efforts to Influence the News During his First Term Press Conferences," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 11 (1981) 189-199; Steele, "The Great Debate: Roosevelt, the media and the coming of the war, 1940-1941," *Journal of American History* 71 (June 1984) 69-72; Winfield, "The New Deal Publicity Operation: Foundation for the Modern Presidency" *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (Spring 1984) 40-48; Steele, "News of the 'Good War': World War II News Management," *Journalism Quarterly* 62 (1985) 707-716; Steele, *Propaganda in an open society: The Roosevelt Administration and the media, 1933-1941* (1985); Winfield, "F.D.R. Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends In the Rising Age of News Interpretation," *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (1987) 698-706; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media* (1990); Thomas J. Johnson, Wayne Wanta, John T. Byrd and Cindy Lee, "Exploring FDR's Relationship with the Press: A Historical Agenda-Setting Study" *Political Communication* 12 (1995) 157-172; Michael G. Carew, "The Power to Persuade: F.D.R.,

In that sense, my study is outside the politico-economic details of isolation and war, but contributes to a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural dimensions of American foreign relations. This study belongs to the “cultural turn” in international relations, foreign policy, and diplomatic history. Several historians have pursued a cultural approach to American foreign relations, notably Akira Iriye and Emily Rosenberg.¹⁰ Their works examine the roles of non-governmental groups, private individuals, and cultural expansion through vehicles like film, radio and media in international affairs, rather than focusing just on the traditional actors: diplomats, policy makers and national leaders. Iriye and Rosenberg’s approach is particularly useful in examining the interactions between cultures: how one culture has influenced, spread, and frequently dominated another, and how groups view others in contrast to how they view themselves.

the Newsmagazines and Going to War, 1939-1941,” *SHAFR Newsletter* (Dec. 2002). The relationship between Roosevelt and the press will be discussed in detail in Chapter 1.

¹⁰ Akira Iriye, *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967); Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Hopkins University Press, 1997); Iriye, “Culture and International History,” in Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.) *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 241-256; Emily S. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Rosenberg, “Cultural Interactions,” in Dennis Merrill and Thomas G. Paterson (eds.) *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations, Volume II: Since 1914* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005) 7-12. The “cultural turn” in international history has also been criticized and attacked by historians who question the relevance of cultural approaches, the relation of culture to actual foreign policy and events, and how cultural approaches appear to overshadow human agency and causality. For critiques of the “cultural turn” see: Melvyn Leffler, “New Approaches, Old Interpretations, and Prospective Reconfigurations,” *Diplomatic History* 19:2 (1995) 173-196; David Reynolds, “International History, the Cultural Turn and the Diplomatic Twitch,” *Cultural and Social History* 3 (2006) 75-91; Peter Jackson, “Pierre Bourdieu, the ‘cultural turn’ and the practice of international history,” *Review of International Studies* 34 (2008) 155-181.

Most of the secondary works consulted for this study include components of this cultural approach.¹¹

Culturalist international history includes studies focusing on the significance of ideology in foreign policy, and other sub-fields, especially race and gender. Historian Michael Hunt's *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* describes several ways in which these approaches are useful in the study of American foreign relations. Hunt emphasizes the centrality of ideology, which he defines as "an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms and suggests appropriate ways of dealing with that reality." According to Hunt ideology is inseparable from culture, as culture "not only inspires but also sustains and constrains" ideology. In his study Hunt defines a set of "core ideas" of U.S. foreign policy that constituted an American ideology, including "visions of national greatness," a "hierarchy of race" dominated by Anglo-Saxons, and the "perils of revolution" or the fear of excessive democratic instability associated with European revolutionary movements. Hunt draws several examples from the American press that represent the expression of these core ideas and the means by

¹¹ In his essay "Culture and International History," Iriye discusses several examples of the cultural interaction approach. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht's essay "Cultural Transfer" in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 257-278, also discusses forms of cultural interactions. Diggin's *Mussolini and Fascism* is an early example of a tacit cultural approach to relations between states. Other examples that include a "cultural approach" are Moser's *Twisting the Lion's Tails*, Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, and Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster*.

which these ideas were most clearly disseminated to the American public.¹² My study deepens Hunt's analysis by focusing strictly on American journalists and their writings.

Central to the discussion of ideology, culture, and American foreign relations is the concept of nationalism. Cultural approaches to nationalism began with historian Benedict Anderson's contention that a nation is an imagined construction, which is created, maintained, constrained and altered by people over time in much the same ways that culture or ideology are mutable social entities.¹³ Americanism has been dominated by the chauvinist belief in the inherent distinctiveness or "exceptionalism" of the United States. The belief in American exceptionalism has deep roots in American history. It was shaped through the merger of millennial and republican traditions, and further elucidated by foreign observers like Alexis de Tocqueville.¹⁴ In his critique of historians' use of American exceptionalism as an explanatory tool, historian Ian Tyrrell defines American exceptionalism as "the emphasis on the uniqueness of national

¹² Michael Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi, 12. See also Hunt, "Ideology," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 221-240. For Hunt's definition of ideology see the Preface to *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*.

¹³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Editions, 1983). Iriye discusses Anderson's work in relation to the cultural approach in "Culture and International History," 245-246. See also Hunt's "Ideology," 229-230. Susan Jeffords argues that "National identity – the narratives and symbols through which the people of a nation see themselves as a nation and in terms in which they elaborate how they want the people of other nations to see them – is the crucial aspect of this activity. Understanding how national identity is constructed is an essential part of understanding foreign policy." Jeffords also notes that the "public narrative," especially the media, is an essential part of constructing and maintaining this sense of national identity. (Susan Jeffords, "Culture and National Identity in U.S. Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 18:1 (1994), 93).

¹⁴ Dorothy Ross, "Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Historical Review* 89 (1984) 909-928.

traditions...the idea of the United States as a special case “outside” the normal patterns and laws of history...the liberal worldview [that] the United States avoided the class conflicts, revolutionary upheaval, and “authoritarian” governments of Europe and presented to the world an example of liberty for others to emulate.”¹⁵ Another tenet of American exceptionalism is the separation between the “new world” represented by the United States, and the European nations of the “old world.” In this simplified system Americans viewed critically “old world” diplomacy as governed by power politics, and “old world” states as rigidly stratified societies. The “new world,” on the other hand, was viewed as a classless and open society, that dealt with other nations through unbiased and “free” commercial and legal mechanisms.¹⁶ Because of its propensity to obscure more than illuminate, the use of American exceptionalism as a way of explaining American history has generally been discarded by historians. The study of the historical construction of this ideology, however, is a critical issue in contemporary historiography. It illuminates how Americans viewed themselves

¹⁵ Ian Tyrrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History,” *American Historical Review* 96:4 (1991), 1031. For other definitions of American exceptionalism see: Jace Weaver, “Original Simplicities and Present Complexities: Reinhold Niebuhr, Ethnocentrism, and the Myth of American Exceptionalism,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63:2 (1995) 232; Joseph Leggold and Timothy McKeown. “Is American foreign policy exceptional? An empirical analysis.” *Political Science Quarterly* 369:16 (Fall 1995).

¹⁶ Leggold and McKeown. “Is American foreign policy exceptional?”; Cushing Strout, *The American Image of the Old World* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963) 207. There are several works that describe this sense of Americanism, the perceived dichotomy between the “new world” and the “old world,” and Roosevelt’s own sense of Americanism and worldview. See: Strout, *The American Image of the Old World*; John Lamberton Harper, *American Visions of Europe: Franklin D. Roosevelt, George F. Kennan, and Dean G. Acheson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) 18-76; Kimball, *The Juggler*, 3, 128, 130, 156, 185; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 23-25; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 4, 35-36; Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 131; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 9; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 115-117.

as measured against the rest of the world; it provides insight into how American actions were justified to the American public and the rest of the world.¹⁷

American exceptionalism was also an important lens through which this group of American journalists understood, presented and interpreted European events. But it was an elastic concept which meant different things to different people over time. One component of American exceptionalism was the belief in the special and morally superior character of the “new world” epitomized by the United States, which became sharply defined in the interwar years when measured against American views about the causes of the First World War and the growing belief that American intervention in that war had been a mistake. Some Americans blamed imperial rivalries, the armaments race, “back room” diplomacy, and old world power politics for the outbreak of the First World War. Others came to believe that the United States was pushed into entering the war by a conspiracy of bankers and munitions producers (the so-called “merchants of death”) and the sympathy engendered by British propaganda.¹⁸ American

¹⁷ For historians' critiques of American exceptionalism as an explanatory tool see: Tyrrell, “American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History”; Michael Kammen, “The Problem of American Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration,” *American Quarterly*, 45:1 (March 1993) 1-43; John Higham, “The Future of American History,” *Journal of American History* 80:4 (1994) 1289-1309; Leggold and McKeown. “Is American foreign policy exceptional?”; Stephen Tuck, “The New American Histories,” *Historical Journal* 48:3 (2005) 811-832; Jay Sexton, “The Global View of the United States,” *Historical Journal* 48:1 (2005) 261-276. For examples of the historical nature of American exceptionalism see: Weaver, “Original Simplicities and Present Complexities,” and John Braeman, “Charles A. Beard, the Economic Interpretation of History, and Idea of American Exceptionalism,” *Continuity* 25 (2001) 43-69. Leggold and McKeown argue that American foreign policy was infrequently legitimized through geopolitical arguments or “reasons of state.” Instead, policymakers justify American foreign policies through exaggerated and “oversold” general formulas and slogans which refer to domestic values, especially “Americanism.” (Leggold and McKeown. “Is American foreign policy exceptional?”).

¹⁸ Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 115.

perceptions of the old world were also soured during the interwar years by revisionist views of the Versailles Treaty as an overly harsh and dictated peace, and the failure of the former allies to pay their war debts to the United States. American foreign policy makers in the 1920s and 1930s shunned binding international commitments like the League of Nations, but pursued independent internationalism, or involvement without commitment.¹⁹ This independent foreign policy of the interwar years was viewed as a necessary retreat from the corrupt and morally suspect power politics of the “old world,” to heed again George Washington’s warnings against foreign, specifically European, entanglements.²⁰

In their interpretations of European events and nations, journalists roundly criticized Anglo-French policies that appeared indicative of “old world” society and diplomacy. Measured against what they assumed to be the moderate, stable, and liberal democratic institutions of the United States, these journalists looked with disdain on a British political system viewed as “undemocratically dominated by antiquated class divisions,” and a French political system characterized by rapid turnover and a “Helter-skelter” nature.²¹ They viewed the European

¹⁹ Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 436-483.

²⁰ In his farewell address Washington warned: “The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none; or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendship or enmities.” (1796)

²¹ Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1991) 51; Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster*, 33.

dictatorships as the antithesis of cherished American political values. Yet after war broke out in Europe, and especially after the shock of the Fall of France, this group of American journalists exchanged their critique of other “lesser” democracies for a worldview in which the United States became the “arsenal of democracy.” While not entirely relinquishing their critique of “old world” political systems or their belief in American exceptionalism, they found common cause and community of values with Britain in their common “civilization.” American journalists called on the United States to assist Britain and fulfill its hallowed mission as the world leader of democracy and western civilization against the forces of barbarism.

The journalists’ belief in values and civilization shared with Britain was part of a racist worldview. Hunt denotes the “hierarchy of race” as one of the core ideas of American ideology that had significant implications for the making of American foreign policy. According to Hunt, Americans, like other North American and European nations, developed a highly stratified understanding of race. This racial hierarchy was dominated by Anglo-Saxons, “Americans of the old stock,” with well defined steps in the ladder descending neatly from the poles of white to black. Every “race” had its own distinct position in the hierarchy. To the dominant Anglo-Saxons the Germans appeared next on the racial ladder. The greatest defect of the Germans was their “Prussianized” character, their militarism

and failure to appreciate liberty.²² The French and Italians were grouped with the “Latin” peoples of Europe, and characterized as lacking vigour, and “sentimental, undisciplined, superstitious.” Russians, or Slavs, were assigned a particularly low position on the hierarchy of white races, viewed as more “Asiatic” than white, and described as possessing positive attributes like “endurance, patience, and strength,” but also “Oriental” characteristics like being crafty, unscrupulous, cunning, decadent, and generally untrustworthy.²³ Hunt argues that this racial hierarchy “carried over into American foreign policy.”²⁴ By its grip on the policy makers, through its influence on the press, and through its hold on the electorate, race influenced the ways the United States dealt with other nations and peoples. The belief in a racial hierarchy was closely connected to Social Darwinian theories that posited the competition between groups of people, especially races, as the motor of human history. In that estimation races were inherently unequal. The most “civilized” race, the Anglo-Saxon, was naturally superior and progressive. The less “civilized,” more barbaric and backward races, required

²² Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78-79; Strout, *The American Image of the Old World*, 206-207; Kimball, *The Juggler*, 199.

²³ The Japanese were praised for appearing to follow the Anglo-Saxon “march of civilization.” However, Americans often underestimated the imperialistic ambitions and military threat of Japan, in part due to their racial views of the Japanese and “the national habit of viewing Asians with paternalistic contempt.” Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 71, 79-80; Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 129.

²⁴ Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 48-52. For other theoretical discussions of race and foreign relations see Gerald Horne, “Race to Insight: The United States and the World, White Supremacy and Foreign Affairs,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 323-335 and “Race and the American Century,” in *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, 16-23. John Dower’s *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986) argues that racism influenced the conduct of war in the Pacific between the United States and Japan. Hunt argues that race was frequently used to publicly justify American foreign policies. In *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the Culture of U.S. Imperialism, 1915-1940*, Mary Renda argues that race was used as a justification for the colonial paternalism of the American occupation of Haiti.

assistance and stewardship so they might someday progress to a likeness of civilization. According to historian Gail Bederman the concept of civilization therefore was an explicitly racial concept, “Human races were assumed to evolve from simple savagery, through violent barbarism, to an advanced and valuable civilization. But only white races had, as yet, evolved to the civilized stage. In fact, people sometimes spoke of civilization as if it were itself a racial trait, inherited by all Anglo-Saxons and other ‘advanced’ white races.”²⁵ My study specifically examines the role of the American press in the formulation and dissemination of the relationship between race and foreign policy, and most importantly the evolution of the belief that the United States represented the epitome of western civilization, and had a mission to defend and spread these values throughout the world.

In their interpretations of European nations and actions, this group of American journalists used a racial lens. They frequently contrasted the “racial” or national characteristics of European nations, especially France and Germany. They portrayed the French as “difficult, uncooperative, parochial, and hysterical,” compared to the vigorous and industrious Germans. This racial contrast was especially marked following the Fall of France, after which they frequently interpreted the roots of French collapse as inherent in the national character. The sense of Anglo-Saxonism also became more pronounced after the Fall of France, as they played up the “belief that Americans and the British were one people

²⁵ Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) 25.

united by uncommon qualities and common interests” to argue for American assistance and alliance with Britain.²⁶ The journalists discussed here shared Roosevelt’s belief in the Anglo-Saxon “civilizing mission,” the “responsibility for ordering and civilizing the world.”²⁷

Gender was another important lens through which Thompson and her colleagues viewed and interpreted European events. Several useful articles analyze the ways that gender can be used as an important analytical tool in the study of international history, diplomatic history, and American foreign relations.²⁸ Beginning with Joan Scott’s seminal essay “Gender: A Useful Tool of Historical Analysis,” which argues that gender is “one of the recurrent references by which political power has been conceived, legitimated, and criticized,” historians have examined the relationships between gender and foreign policy.²⁹

²⁶ Zahniser, “Rethinking the Significance of Disaster: The United States and the Fall of France in 1940,” 255; Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 77.

²⁷ Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 35.

²⁸ Emily S. Rosenberg, “Gender. A Round Table: Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations” *Journal of American History* 77 (1990) 116-24; Rosemary Foot, “Where are the Women? The Gender Dimension in the Study of International Relations” *Diplomatic History* 14:4 (1990) 615-622; Rosenberg, “Culture, Gender and Foreign Policy: A Symposium” *Diplomatic History* 18:1 (1994) 71-124; Elaine Tyler May, “Commentary: Ideology and Foreign Policy: Culture and Gender in Diplomatic History” *Diplomatic History* 18:1 (1994) 71-78; Jeffords, “Culture and National Identity in U.S. Foreign Policy”; Kristin Hoganson, “What’s Gender Got to Do with It? Gender History as Foreign Relations History,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 305-322; Craig Murphy, “Seeing women, recognizing gender, recasting international relations,” *International Organization* 50:3 (1996) 513-538; Robert Ferrell, “Gender and Foreign Policy,” *Reviews in American History* 25:2 (1997) 499-503; Robert Shaffer, “Race, Class, Gender and Diplomatic History” *Radical History Review* 70 (1998) 156-168; Andrew Rotter, “The Gendering of Peoples and Nations,” in *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations*, 12-14. See also the recent *American Historical Review* Forum “Revisiting Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” 113:5 (2008) 1344-1430. Joanne Meyerowitz’s contribution to the *AHR* forum, “A History of ‘Gender,’” specifically addresses the impact of gender in the study of American foreign policy, and provides examples from Rosenberg, Rotter, Hoganson, and Renda.

²⁹ Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” *American Historical Review* 91 (1986), 1967, 1073.

Historians Emily Rosenberg and Kristin Hoganson have been at the forefront of these discussions. Rosenberg argues that gender discourses reveal the “cultural assumptions” from which foreign policy was conceived and justified. Feminine gendered symbolism became “code words” for “weakness, defeat, and even treason.” In her work Rosenberg noted the intersection between race, gender and the “civilizing mission” of the United States.³⁰ Hoganson also argues that race, gender, and the concept of Anglo-Saxon civilization were closely related, if not at times inseparable. She contends that American politics and the western conception of civilization were understood in distinctly gendered and racial ways, and “ultimately rested on manly character, something defined in different ways but generally in reference to contrasting ideas about womanly attributes.”³¹

Several other historians have commented on and investigated the interconnectedness between race, gender, and the American concept of

³⁰ Rosenberg. “Gender. A Round Table,” 119, 121. According to Rosenberg, “Whether advocating formal imperialism or rejecting it, the leading policymakers in the [Theodore] Roosevelt administration shaped their views of the civilizing mission within the professional-managerial outlook that envisioned progress as the spread of markets and monetary exchanged through scientific application of economic laws. These themes also intermingled with presumably scientific thinking about gender and race. Notions of gender and racial hierarchy would reinforce the civilizationist justifications for dollar diplomacy.” (Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930*, 33).

³¹ Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 3, 8, 204. Hoganson argues that the discourse of “white manliness” was espoused by political leaders and the popular press as the impetus and justification for American involvement in the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars. See also Hoganson’s essay “What’s Gender Got to Do with It?” 305-322. Renda’s *Taking Haiti* explains the colonial paternalism of the American invasion and occupation of Haiti through the interrelation of gender, sexuality, racism, and the civilizing mission. See also Hoganson’s discussion of Renda’s work in “What’s Gender Got To Do With It?” 312.

civilization and the civilizing mission.³² Gail Bederman argues that the American discourse of civilization was intrinsically both a gendered and racial concept: “Ideologies of manliness were thus similar to – and frequently linked with – ideologies of civilization. Just as manliness was the highest form of manhood, so civilization was the highest form of humanity.”³³ Gender discourse was used to distinguish and separate the United States, depicted as the manly “Uncle Sam,” from lesser nations characterized as dependent and feminine. The gendered depiction of the manly and heroic “Uncle Sam,” combined with the racial concept of the Anglo-Saxon civilizing mission created a potent set of symbols for constructing, moralizing and legitimizing American foreign policy.³⁴

This group of American journalists interpreted European people and events through a gendered lens. They evaluated national leaders through appraisals of the masculine attributes and characteristics of those leaders. They

³² Andrew Rotter studies the gendering of nations, “the assignment of certain characteristics based on prevailing ideas of masculinity and femininity to a people and nation by another people and nation,” especially western nations towards eastern nations. According to Rotter the discourse on India’s relationship with the West - “the West is man, the East is woman” - translated into gendered and racial stereotypes of Indian men as effeminate, passive, servile, and cowardly, and therefore served as justification for western domination in colonial and post-colonial relationships. (Andrew Rotter, “The Gendering of Peoples and Nations,” 13. See also Rotter, “Gender Relations, Foreign Relations: The United States and South Asia, 1947-1964,” *Journal of American History* 81 (1994) 518-542 and “Saidism without Said: Orientalism and U.S. Diplomatic History,” *American Historical Review* 105:4 (2000) 1205-1217); Cynthia Enloe also argues that many of the defining terms of American foreign policy - like civilization, progress, and security – are linked to discourses of gender. (Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) 200);

³³ Bederman argues that gender was essential to the concept of civilization: “Civilized women were womanly – delicate, spiritual, dedicated to the home. And civilized white men were the most manly ever evolved – firm of character; self-controlled; protectors of women and children. In contrast, gender differences among savages seemed to be blurred. Savage women were aggressive, carried heavy burdens, and did all sorts of “masculine” hard labor. Savage men were emotional and lacked a man’s ability to restrain their passions.” (Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization*, 25, 27, 29).

³⁴ Jeffords, “Culture and National Identity in U.S. Foreign Policy,” 95.

presented European events as melodramas with a cast of distinctly gendered characters: manly, heroic and “knightly” protagonists; the feminine, weak and dependent “damsel in distress” victim, and the dark, evil, sexually aggressive villain. They not only contrasted masculine and feminine characteristics, but also contrasted two competing discourses of masculinity. According to Gail Bederman the white, middle-class ideal of “manliness” encapsulated classical notions of *virtus*, including: temperance (moderation and self-restraint), prudence, fortitude, justice, reason, and independence. These characteristics of manliness also epitomized civilized characteristics. A competing concept of “masculinity” emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The characteristics of this “masculinity” included: instinctual, irrational aggressiveness, the primacy of physical force, and male virility. This concept of “masculinity” appeared less civilized and almost barbaric.³⁵ While these journalists praised national leaders and nations that appeared to exhibit “manly” ideals, they criticized and degraded leaders and nations for appearing either too “feminine” or for behaviour indicative of barbaric masculinity.

As the war in Europe turned dire for the Allies in mid-1940, Thompson, Lippmann and the others gradually combined their national, racial, and gendered interpretative lenses into one overriding discourse: civilization versus barbarism. The ease with which this hybrid explanation of the European war became common interpretive currency confirmed the elastic and resilient meaning at the

³⁵ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 12, 18-19.

core of American exceptionalism; that if “we” do something, it is the right thing to do. They argued that the United States had a “manifest duty” to intervene in the world crisis on the side of civilization against the forces of barbarism. Henry Luce argued in his famous editorial “The American Century” that: “it now becomes our time to be the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels.”³⁶ The civilization versus barbarism discourse had a clear propaganda value, in that it was used by journalists to support American participation, if not outright intervention, in the European war. Similar language and arguments were used in British propaganda in American newspapers during the First World War to push for American intervention, and also by the Axis powers during the Second World War to garner support on their home-fronts.³⁷

My study contributes to the field of culturalist international history and American foreign policy as practiced by Iriye, Rosenberg, Hunt, Hoganson, and others. It examines the intersection and interplay of many different “core ideas” that shaped American understanding of international relations and foreign policy: the belief in American exceptionalism and the distinction between the “old world” and the “new world,” a racial understanding of the world dominated by Anglo-Saxons, and a gendered view of the global politics defined by the binary opposites

³⁶ Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Life* February 1941, 61-65.

³⁷ Jessica Bennett and Mark Hampton, “World War I and the Anglo-American Imagined Community: Civilization vs. Barbarism in British Propaganda and American Newspapers,” in *American Media Interactions, 1850-2000* (ed.) Mark Hampton and Joel Weiner (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007). 155-175.

of masculine and feminine. More importantly, this approach pinpoints the historical process of ideology creation. It shows how the different lenses were used interchangeably, and how they combined together to form a dominant explanation for American intervention. Where it differs from other works is the explicit concentration on journalists as intermediaries who interpreted American foreign policy and international relations based on these “core ideas” for the American public.

There are few works that concentrate on journalists as a way to understand the relationship between ideology and foreign policy. Morrell Heald’s *Transatlantic Vistas* is a notable exception. He argues that American foreign correspondents in Europe “serve as antennae, as interpreters and expositors of a more realistic assessment of what America’s international status and role actually had become.”³⁸ However, Heald examines foreign correspondents exclusively. Angus Culbert’s study of six radio broadcasters also emphasizes the significance of the news media in bringing foreign affairs to the American public and the role of journalists as “intermediaries between current events and the average person’s understanding of what happened in the rest of the world.”³⁹ Likewise Philip Seib’s *Broadcasts from the Blitz* highlights the role of one journalist, Edward R. Murrow, in helping Americans to “rouse themselves, recognize the menace of Adolf Hitler, and come to the rescue of Britain, the last bulwark against Nazi

³⁸ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, xii.

³⁹ Culbert, *News For Everyman*, 5.

conquest.”⁴⁰ However, like many works in the field of journalism history, Culbert’s and Seib’s works are largely biographical, and limited in chronological scope. This thesis is not a biographical treatment of American journalists or a history of American journalism in the 1930s. It integrates American journalism history firmly in the context of European international relations and American foreign policy in the period from 1933 to 1941.

From a different perspective Margaret Paton-Walsh’s work *Our War Too* uses the work of Thompson, Kirchwey and McCormick, along with several other interventionist women, to tell the story of American intervention in the Second World War “through the eyes of women.” Like Culbert’s and Seib’s studies, *Our War Too* concentrates on the period from the outbreak of war in Europe to American intervention in December 1941.⁴¹ Finally, Robert Young’s two articles examine American journalists’ perceptions of France and Germany in 1939 and 1940. More than the others mentioned above, Young’s works examine the relationship between journalists, events in Europe, the role of ideology and American foreign policy. His articles and Paton-Walsh’s study, however, are also limited in their chronological scope.⁴² With its longer time-frame my thesis does more to explain the development of these American perceptions of Europe and the United States’ role in world affairs.

⁴⁰ Seib, *Broadcasts from the Blitz*, ix.

⁴¹ Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 5.

⁴² Young, ““In the Eye of the Beholder: The Cultural Representation of France and Germany by the *New York Times*, 1939-1940.” *Historical Reflections* 22:1 (1996) 189-210; Young, “Forgotten Words and Faded Images: American Journalists before the Fall of France, 1940.” *Historical Reflections* 24:2 (1998) 205-229.

The chapters begin with a broad contextual overview of American journalism in the 1930s. The four chronological chapters reveal the shifting lenses that American journalists used to view events in Europe from Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in January 1933 to the December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Chapter one discusses the rise of interpretative journalism, described as the most important press development in the 1930s and 1940s. Biographical sketches are provided of the individual journalists in this study: John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick, and Dorothy Thompson. This chapter establishes the crucial significance of interpretative journalists and political columnists to the edification of ordinary Americans in this most tumultuous decade.

Chapter two begins with Hitler's ascension to power in Germany in January 1933. The events that followed - the collapse of the Geneva Disarmament conference, the murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and the attempted Nazi coup in Austria, the announcement of German rearmament, and Mussolini's planned invasion of Ethiopia - took time to capture the attention of an American public preoccupied by the Great Depression. Using the shifting lenses of American exceptionalism, race and gender, these journalists explained Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy as growing menaces to peace in Europe, and they criticized the leading League nations, Britain and France, for failing to address the challenges posed by the aggressive fascist dictatorships.

Gendered interpretations were prominent in the journalists' evaluations of Hitler and Mussolini, and in their explanations of events like the murder of Dollfuss and the invasion of Ethiopia.

Chapter three opens with Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935. The German remilitarization of the Rhineland, the outbreak of civil war in Spain, the *Anschluss*, and the crisis over the Sudetenland, appeared to bring Europe to the brink of another war. McCormick and her colleagues interpreted the actions of the fascist dictatorships as evidence of their aggressive and expansionist intentions, and questioned the appeasement policies of Britain and France, and their inability to stand up to the dictators. The hesitancy and outright passivity of the western European democracies laid bare the problems of their internal political structures, gradually hardening domestic opinions concerning the superiority of the American political system, and for many strengthened the attractiveness of American neutrality laws. The actions of the dictators added to the emerging view that they were a breed apart, the antithesis of all that the United States represented and cherished. This chapter reveals the attenuation of gender as a lens as the journalists began using the discourse of civilization versus barbarism in response to events like the bombing of Guernica and the loss of Austria to Nazi Germany.

The six journalists' reactions to the Munich agreement is the starting point for chapter four. The "fruits of appeasement" seemed harvested in *Kristallnacht*, Franco's fascist victory in the Spanish Civil war, Hitler's annexation of

Czechoslovakia, Mussolini's invasion of Albania, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, and the outbreak of war in Europe. While these journalists applauded the Franco-British 'line drawn in the sand' for Poland, they were dismayed at the German and Soviet military victories in Europe. By the spring of 1940 and the surrender of Paris, the journalists eschewed their earlier critical stance and openly aligned the struggles of the western European democracies with the superior culture and leadership of the United States. According to them the United States was the leading state in the world of civilized nations threatened by the barbaric forces of fascist aggression. From the Munich agreement to the Fall of France the journalists' opinions changed from disparate and contrasting, as revealed in their various opinions concerning appeasement, to unity of purpose and interpretation when with the Fall of France western civilization appeared on the brink of collapse in Europe.

The final chapter begins with the shock of the collapse and defeat of France. The subjects of my analysis now saw Britain as the lone bastion of western democracy in Europe, the last outpost between barbarism and western civilization. From the Battle of Britain, to the undeclared naval war in the Atlantic, these journalists came to interpret the war in Europe as their war too, and espoused Anglo-American solidarity and co-operation. As the menace widened with the Tripartite pact and the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the United States appeared surrounded by hostile forces, aiming to destroy the "arsenal of democracy." Finally, for these journalists the invasion of Pearl Harbor ended the

frustrating domestic debate between interventionists and isolationists as the United States entered the war.

Before historians sifted through the archives, and before the politicians and primary actors penned their memoirs, journalists like John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick, and Dorothy Thompson actively pieced together the story with the aim of making what was happening across the Atlantic relevant to an isolationist and distracted American public. These journalists did not merely chronicle the news, but provided interpretations of European events through a worldview coloured by American exceptionalism, race, and gender. Their interpretations changed as the European crises mounted as they believed the forces of the European dictatorships might overwhelm the democracies in Europe. Eventually, their disparate views coalesced to form an argument for American intervention in the European war based on the belief that the United States had a mission to defend and spread the values of western civilization throughout the world.

Chapter 1: American Print News Media in the 1930s

During the 1920s the print news media shared in the general prosperity and optimism of the United States. Following the experience of American intervention in Europe in the First World War, the American public became increasingly interested in European events and culture. The American print news media responded by expanding their foreign correspondence services and covering more European news in their papers. But with the onset of the Great Depression the American public focused its attention on the devastating domestic crisis, and the American print news media was forced to cut foreign news coverage as part of their general retrenchment efforts. In the 1930s the newspaper industry in the United States underwent significant structural changes, such as the growth of newspaper chains and the corresponding decline of independent dailies, a decline in foreign correspondents and increasing reliance on news wire services, competition from radio for the delivery of foreign news, and the rise of interpretative journalism corresponding to the decline of the editorial authority of newspapers. During the 1930s a handful of interpretative journalists, whose columns were often syndicated across the immense newspaper chains, became the primary interpreters of foreign news for the newspaper reading American public. The six journalists of this study: John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick and Dorothy Thompson, were among the best informed and most influential commentators on European events in the United States. Their contemporaries regarded them as leaders in informing

public opinion as their articles did not simply chronicle events in Europe, but interpreted and explained how and why what was happening across the Atlantic was significant and relevant to their American audience.

Many contemporary observers voiced concern about two related developments in the newspaper industry: the rise of large newspaper chains and the relationship between newspapers and big business. Journalist and frequent critic of the press George Seldes lamented these developments in his 1938 book *Lords of the Press*. He described the *Chicago Daily News*, for example, as being “directed by the men of big business.” According to Seldes the *New York Herald Tribune* was also dominated by class and business interests, so much so that he argued it was “hardly a newspaper at all.” Of all the newspapers and “press lords” that he criticized, Seldes singled out William Randolph Hearst and Colonel Robert McCormick as the two most notorious examples of what was wrong with the American print news media in the 1930s.¹

Within the Roosevelt administration Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes wrote two scathing indictments of the news media: *America's House of Lords* (1939) and *Freedom of the Press Today* (1941). Ickes held press meetings twice a week and his personal views often echoed the administration's general frustrations with the press. According to Ickes the growth of large newspaper

¹ George Seldes, *Lords of the Press* (New York: Julian Messner, Inc., 1938) 52, 184, 187, 227. Seldes began his journalistic career as a foreign correspondent in Europe during the First World War. In the 1920s he worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*. Seldes became a freelance journalist in the 1930s, reporting on the Spanish Civil War for the *New York Post* and gaining recognition for his negative portrait of Benito Mussolini in his 1935 book *Sawdust Caesar*. In the 1940s Seldes' began publishing the political newsletter *In fact*, which reached a circulation of 176,000.

chains under “press barons” was dangerous because it limited the diversity of newspaper opinion available to the public. The connections between big business, advertising and newspaper publishing appeared equally dangerous, as Ickes argued that the press was “becoming more and more a spokesman for special interests,” namely the interests of corporations.²

In his 1944 work, *The Disappearing Daily*, Oswald Garrison Villard echoed Ickes. Villard feared that the decline in daily newspapers had led to the standardization of news opinion and a corresponding decline in the diversity of information and opinions available to the American public. He was also fearful of the growing relationship between big business and newspaper publishing. As the “profit-motive” of newspaper owners increased, he argued, the influence of advertisers threatened the newspaper’s freedom of action and opinion. According to Villard the number of papers had declined from 2042 in 1920, to 1933 in 1930, and by 1944 there were only 1754 daily English-language newspapers in the United States.³

William Randolph Hearst was perhaps the most powerful media baron of the 1930s, operating the largest newspaper chain the United States had yet seen. In many ways Hearst characterized these troubling developments in the American

² Harold L. Ickes, *America’s House of Lords: An Inquiry into the Freedom of the Press* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939) 14, 19.

³ Oswald Garrison Villard, *The Disappearing Daily: Chapters in American Newspaper Evolution* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1944) 7. Oswald Garrison Villard was owner of the liberal magazine the *Nation* from 1918 to 1935, and served as editor of the magazine from 1918 to 1933. In 1930 eight cities in the United States with populations over 100,000 were served by only one paper. By 1940 the number of cities with populations of over 100,000 with single newspaper ownerships had increased to twenty-five. (Mott, *American Journalism*, 636).

newspaper industry. His news empire peaked in revenue and circulation in 1928. While the Great Depression hit Hearst hard, in the mid-1930s his media empire still included 13.6% of all American daily newspapers and 24.2% of Sunday papers, two news agencies, the news syndicate King Feature, thirteen magazines including *Cosmopolitan* and *Harper's Bazaar*, eight radio stations, and two motion picture companies. The Hearst chain of newspapers had a circulation of over 5 million for daily papers and nearly seven million with Sunday papers in the mid 1930s.⁴ Within this media empire Hearst was the undisputed "Chief," extending extensive personal control over the newspapers' editorial opinions. Hearst frequently published signed editorials and statements that appeared on the front pages of his newspapers.⁵

While Hearst endorsed Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential campaign, the relationship quickly soured as he summarily opposed both Roosevelt's New Deal domestic policies, and as the 1930s waned, the new internationalism of Roosevelt's foreign policies.⁶ In terms of domestic policies, Hearst split with Roosevelt in 1933, vocally opposing the National Recovery Act (NRA), which he described as "a menace to political rights and constitutional liberties."⁷ Hearst's

⁴ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 21. Ian Mugridge, *The View From Xanadu: William Randolph Hearst and United States Foreign Policy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995) 18.

⁵ Mugridge, *The View From Xanadu*, 18, 20-21; Rodney Carlisle, "The Foreign Policy views of an Isolationist Press Lord: W.R. Hearst and the International Crisis, 1936-1941." *Journal of Contemporary History* 9 (1974) 217.

⁶ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 22. Carlisle, "The Foreign Policy Views of an Isolationist Press Lord," 217. Hearst was a major benefactor of the vocal American Liberty League, which consistently opposed all facets of the New Deal (Hamby, *For the Survival of Democracy*, 261-262).

⁷ "Hearst calls NRA Menace to Nation," *New York Times* 29 October 1933, 24.

opposition to Roosevelt's foreign policies largely stemmed from his virulent anti-communism and his support for the appeasement of Germany.⁸ While Hearst controlled much of the American news media in the 1930s, he and his newspapers were not well respected by peers in the newspaper industry. A poll of Washington correspondents conducted in 1937 called the newspapers of Hearst and Colonel Robert McCormick's *Chicago Tribune* the "least fair and reliable" newspapers in America.⁹

Colonel McCormick's *Chicago Tribune* was a significant force in the American newspaper industry, and frequently surpassed Hearst's papers in its animosity to the Roosevelt administration. Colonel McCormick consistently and virulently opposed Roosevelt's domestic and foreign policies. By the mid-1930s the *Tribune* was the leading newspaper in Chicago, and indisputably the leading isolationist paper in the Mid-West, if not in the United States, boasting the second largest circulation in the country. By 1941 the circulation of the *Chicago Tribune* was over one million. Like Hearst and his chain of newspapers, Colonel McCormick enjoyed full control of his newspaper's editorial opinion, and the *Tribune* appeared as an extension of his "formidable personality."¹⁰ Like Hearst,

⁸ For Hearst's views of American foreign policy and international relations see: Carlisle, "The Foreign Policy views of an Isolationist Press Lord"; Mugridge, *The View From Xanadu*; Ben Proctor, *William Randolph Hearst: The Latter Years, 1911-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁹ Survey of Washington correspondents conducted by Leo Rosten in 1937. Leo Rosten, *The Washington Correspondents* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

¹⁰ Jerome E. Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune, 1929-1941* (Reno: The University of Nevada Press, 1971) 21, 32; Thomas R. Maddux, "Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s," *The Historian* 40 (1977) 87; Hamby, *For the Survival of Democracy*, 319; James C. Schneider, *Should America Go to War?*

Colonel McCormick voiced his public opposition to the NRA, which he viewed as a threat to the freedom of the press. He consistently denounced Roosevelt's New Deal programs as "un-American," linking the increasing regulation of the economy to the infiltration of socialist values into the United States.¹¹ Like Hearst, Colonel McCormick not only opposed Roosevelt's domestic policies, but vehemently attacked the president's foreign policies as well.¹² Yet in Ickes' estimation the *Chicago Tribune*, about which he dedicated two chapters in *America's House of Lords*, was by far the primary example of what was wrong with the press. Ickes had a long history of confrontation with Colonel McCormick and the *Tribune* from his pre-First World War days as a newspaper reporter in Chicago. Ickes criticized the "unsavory" *Tribune* for its "unceasing attacks on President Roosevelt" and the "personal vindictiveness" of its publisher.¹³ According to Ickes, both Hearst and Colonel McCormick used their newspapers as "personal organs," to present biased and distorted versions and interpretations of events and issues. While the *Chicago Tribune* was heavily criticized by others in the newspaper industry, it was well-known for its extensive

The Debate over Foreign Policy in Chicago, 1939-1940 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989) 8.

¹¹ "Freedom in Peril, Press is warned," *New York Times* 29 October 1933, 1; Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*, 37.

¹² For discussions of Colonel McCormick's views of American foreign policy see: Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*; James C. Schneider, "The Battle of the Two Colonels." *Chicago History* (1989) 4-33; Schneider, *Should America Go to War?*

¹³ Ickes, *Freedom of the Press Today*, 6; Ickes, *America's House of Lords*, 63, 55.

foreign service, excellent foreign correspondents including Vincent Sheean, William Shirer, and Sigrid Schultz, and extensive coverage of European news.¹⁴

Like many businesses newspapers looked for ways to cut costs during the Great Depression. Foreign news services and foreign correspondents were frequently the targets of retrenchment.¹⁵ Wire services like the Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service grew considerably during the Depression, and frequently replaced the dedicated work of foreign correspondents who had supplied foreign news to American newspapers. However, many journalists recognized the danger of relying too heavily on news agencies, objecting to the “calculated emasculation of tone” and lack of any interpretation in their stories. Unlike foreign correspondents, the news agencies did not attempt to interpret foreign news or demonstrate to the American public how foreign events were relevant to the United States.¹⁶

Radio also began to challenge newspapers as the primary source of foreign news in the 1930s. The growth of the radio industry was rapid in this period. While Americans owned only 3 million radios in 1924, the number increased to 33 million by 1936, and 50 million by 1940. Newspaper publishers reacted to the threat of radio broadcasting in what has been deemed the “Press-Radio War of

¹⁴ Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*, 27-28; Schneider, *Should America Go to War?* 7.

¹⁵ Morrell Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas: American Journalists in Europe, 1900-1940* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1988) 111-112.

¹⁶ Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 42; Rosten, *Washington Correspondents*, 121. The overseas wire service of the Associated Press was founded in 1901. The United Press began its foreign service in 1907. The third great American news agencies overseas was the International News Service established by Hearst in 1910 (Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 3, 98).

1933-1935.” The American Newspaper Publishers’ Association attempted to prevent radio from being used as a news source, but was ultimately unsuccessful. In 1935 the International News Service and the United Press acquiesced and began selling news stories to radio. The Associated Press held out until 1940. Newspaper publishers decided to stop directly competing with radio broadcasters, and instead added radio broadcasters and stations to their media empires.¹⁷ While foreign news was not the immediate focus of radio broadcasts, events like the murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss, the Italian-Ethiopian war, and the abdication of Edward VIII proved popular subjects for radio foreign news broadcasts. Historian David Culbert argues that after the Munich crisis radio became the major source of foreign news for the American public.¹⁸ Several studies have recognized Roosevelt’s ability to use the medium of radio, especially in his popular fireside chats, thus reaching the American public directly.¹⁹ Roosevelt also found radio broadcasters to be far more responsive to administration direction in the presentation of foreign news. Historian Richard Steele argues that radio’s “sensitivity to government regulation and the possibility

¹⁷ David Holbrook Culbert, *News for Everyman: Radio and Foreign Affairs in Thirties America* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1976) 15, 16-17. By 1940 newspaper publishers owned one-third of the airways in the United States. (Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 110).

¹⁸ Culbert, *News for Everyman*, 14, 17-18. Richard Steele also agrees that radio supplanted newspapers as the primary source of foreign news in this period. Steele argues that by mid-1941 “more Americans relied upon radio for their understanding of current affairs than upon any other medium.” (Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 135). Calder’s *Myth of the Blitz* and Philip Seib’s *Broadcasts from the Blitz: How Edward R. Murrow Helped Lead America Into War* (Washington D.C.: Potomac Books, 2007), both emphasize the significance of American radio broadcasts from London during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz as the primary source of American news about Britain and a highly effective medium for creating sympathy and support for Britain in the European war.

¹⁹ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 104-110; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 21-22.

of hostile government actions” accounted for radio broadcasters’ close relationships with the Roosevelt administration.²⁰

The reality of the Depression, the existence of wire services, and competition from radio, meant that the American foreign correspondent was threatened with extinction. By 1930 only seven papers –the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *New York Times*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York World*, and the *New York Evening Post* had a dedicated service of foreign correspondents. With the collapse of the *World* in 1931, that number was further reduced. Of all the newspapers published in the United States only two Chicago papers, one paper from Boston, and three New York papers were able to maintain their own staff of foreign correspondents throughout the 1930s.

The *Chicago Daily News* established its foreign service in 1899, and by the 1920s it was credited as having the “ablest corps of European correspondents then available to any American newspapers.” Despite the Depression and the sale of the *Daily News* to Colonel Frank Knox in 1931, the paper maintained its important reputation as a source of foreign news.²¹ The *Chicago Tribune* also had a considerable reputation for excellent foreign correspondents, and in competition with the *Daily News* in Chicago the *Tribune* maintained its foreign service. The *Christian Science Monitor*, based out of Boston, established early on an excellent

²⁰ Steele, “The Great Debate,” 75; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 135-136. See also Michael Socolow, “‘News is a Weapon’: Domestic Radio Propaganda and Broadcast Journalism in America, 1939-1944,” *American Journalism* 24:3 (2007) 109-131.

²¹ Morrell Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas: American Journalists in Europe, 1900-1940* (Kent: The Kent State University Press, 1988) 3.

reputation for foreign news. Having its own corps of foreign correspondents distinguished the *Christian Science Monitor* from the commercialized and mass marketed foreign news supplied by the wire services.²² Under Adolph Ochs the *New York Times* relied heavily on European correspondents for its foreign correspondents. After Ochs' death in 1935 his successor, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, expanded the *Times*' foreign service, which included distinguished correspondents Herbert L. Matthews and Frederick T. Birchall.²³ In their ongoing competition with the *New York Times*, the Reids expanded the roster of foreign correspondents of the *New York Herald Tribune* in the late 1920s and early 1930s with a group of young journalists that included Leland Stowe, John T. Whitaker, and Ralph Barnes.²⁴ In the tight New York newspaper market the *New York Evening Post* maintained its foreign service in an attempt to compete with the *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*.²⁵ These newspapers recognized the importance of foreign news in the 1930s and their journalists, both foreign correspondents and

²² Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: A History, 1690-1960* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1962) 559. The *Christian Science Monitor* was founded in 1908 by Mary Baker Eddy, founder of the Christian Science movement.

²³ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 4, 19, 109.

²⁴ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 98.

²⁵ The *New York Evening Post* experienced a great deal of turmoil in the interwar period. Originally founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton, the *New York Evening Post* had been owned by the Villard family since 1881. In 1918 Oswald Garrison Villard sold the paper to Thomas W. Lamont of the J.P. Morgan bank. The paper was again sold in 1923 to Cyrus H.K. Curtis, publisher of the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *Philadelphia Evening Ledger*. Following Curtis' death the *Evening Post* was sold to J. David Stern in 1934, who transformed the paper into a tabloid, increased the circulation to 250,000 and dropped the word "Evening" from its name. Dorothy Schiff purchased the paper in 1939 and her husband, George Backer, became editor and publisher. (Mott, *American Journalism*, 654-655).

columnists writing on foreign affairs, were important interpreters of European news for the American public.

The *Chicago Daily News* had eight foreign correspondents spread throughout Europe, and featured extensive reports on European international relations on page two of the paper.²⁶ The *Daily News* boasted a circulation of nearly half a million by 1941. While the *Daily News* was highly influential in Chicago, it had limited circulation outside the Chicago metropolitan area unlike the *Tribune*.²⁷ Like Hearst and Colonel McCormick, Knox maintained strict control over the editorial position of his paper, personally writing many of its editorials.²⁸ Knox's early anti-Roosevelt stance frequently conflicted with the opinions of the *Daily News*' foreign correspondence staff, whose eye-witness viewpoints of European events often supported a more interventionist American foreign policy. For example, in early 1933 Edward Price Bell, general manager of the Foreign Service for the *Chicago Daily News* resigned his post, arguing that "it was wholly impossible for a man of my experience, feeling, and settled judgment relative to international affairs to take orders from the new management."²⁹

²⁶ Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*, 27. Edgar Ansell Mowrer, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1933 for his reports on the rise of Hitler, and Leland Stowe, Pulitzer Prize winner in 1930, were two of the influential and award-winning correspondents on the foreign staff of the *Chicago Daily News*. (Schneider, *Should America Go to War?*, 11).

²⁷ Maddux, "Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism," 87; Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*, 32.

²⁸ Letter Carroll Binder to Paul Mowrer, 11 January 1933: "The Col. directs every phase of editorial as well as business policy in decisive manner." Folder "Out-going letters, 1933-1936." Carroll Binder Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago.

²⁹ Letter Edward Price Bell to Mr. Davis, 2 January 1933, Folder "Bell, Edward Price Letters 1933", Edward Price Bell Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago. John Gunther, who worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Daily News* from Vienna than London, resigned from the paper in June 1936 on the heels of the success of his book *Inside Europe*. Gunther's resignation was

Unlike Hearst and McCormick, the editorial position of the *Daily News* did not remain stridently anti-Roosevelt, as Knox increasingly supported Roosevelt's foreign policy following the president's Quarantine Speech of October 1937, and joined the Roosevelt administration as Secretary of the Navy in 1940. Ickes, who had damned Knox as a "Roosevelt-hater" during the 1936 campaign, revised his views of Knox and the *Chicago Daily News* in his 1939 book, *America's House of Lords*: "If [the *Chicago Daily News*] is not the forthright, independent paper that it used to be, it is still one of the best in the country, and in Chicago it is far in the lead of the newspapers in the fight for local decency." Ickes also credited the *Chicago Daily News* for its excellent foreign news reporting.³⁰ Villard similarly praised the *Daily News*, especially its foreign service and foreign correspondents.³¹

The poll of Washington correspondents that voted the Hearst papers and the *Chicago Tribune* as the "least fair and reliable" named the *New York Times* as the "most fair and reliable." By the 1930s the *New York Times* was undoubtedly the most influential and well-read daily newspaper in New York City, with a daily circulation over 400,000 and Sunday circulation over 700,000.³² Under publisher Adolph Ochs, who bought the struggling paper in 1896, the *New York Times*

prompted by the financial success of his book, but also, as he explained to Knox, "I cannot see eye to eye with the paper on American politics." (Letter John Gunther to Knox, 20 June 1936, ADD Box 26: Folder "Letters about resignation from *Chicago Daily New*," John Gunther Papers, University of Chicago Library, Chicago).

³⁰ Ickes, *America's House of Lords*, 72, 205. Frank Knox, publisher of the *Chicago Daily News*, had appeared as the third member of Ickes' triumvirate of "Roosevelt haters," which also included Hearst and Colonel McCormick.

³¹ Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 145-146.

³² Maddux, "Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism," 87; Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 84; Diamond, *Behind the Times*. 40.

became an internationally respected and admired newspaper. Ochs attempted to distance the *New York Times* from the flamboyant “yellow” papers of Hearst and Colonel McCormick’s *Tribune*, his vision encapsulated in the *Times* slogan “All the News that’s Fit to Print.”³³ Villard praised Ochs for creating “the greatest newsgathering journal in the world.”³⁴ Arthur Hays Sulzberger, Ochs’ son-in-law, became president and publisher of the *New York Times* following Ochs’ death in 1935, and managed the paper through the years of international crises preceding America’s entry into the Second World War. Sulzberger found himself at the helm of the paper at a time in which the Jewish ownership of the *Times* became an increasingly contentious issue. While Ochs denied previous charges that the *Times* was “owned” by either the British or the J.P. Morgan bank, the Jewish ownership of the *Times* was never denied.³⁵ Yet Ochs was always conscious of any “appearance” of Jewish favouritism in his paper. Under both Ochs and Sulzberger the position of managing editor and other prominent positions among editors and leading correspondents were occupied by men “with unmistakably Anglo-Saxon names.”³⁶ Although it was the intention of the

³³ “Adolph Ochs,” *New York Times*, 9 April 1935, p.20.

³⁴ Villard, “Issues and Men: Adolph S. Ochs,” *Nation* 24 April 1935, 471.

³⁵ Edwin Diamond, *Behind the Times: Inside the New York Times* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993) 42; Harrison E. Salisbury, *Without Fear or Favor: The New York Times and its Time* (New York: Times Books, 1980), 28-29. Ochs’ wife was the daughter of Rabbi Isaac Wise, a prominent proponent of Reform Judaism that stressed assimilation, opposed a Zionist state, and stressed Judaism as a religion, rather than a national identity.

³⁶ Diamond, *Behind the Times*, 42-43; Salisbury, *Without Fear or Favor*, 28-29. Krock, for example, was of Jewish descent but was a convert to the Episcopal church. He believed that he was never promoted to the head of the editorial page of the paper because of his Jewish background. (James Allen Saylor, “Window on an Age: Arthur Krock and the New Deal Era, 1929-1941” (PhD Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1978) 99, 349; Letter Joseph P. Kennedy to

publishers of the *New York Times* to avoid any association of the paper with public opinions concerning Jews, it was this very disassociation that provoked criticisms of the paper. Although generally evaluating the *Times* highly, Villard described the “unfortunate trait” of the paper’s position regarding “handling of matters relating to the Jews.”³⁷

While the *New York Times* frequently criticized aspects of the government’s domestic policies, as demonstrated by the paper’s bitter attacks on Roosevelt’s plan to “pack” the Supreme Court, the *Times* increasingly supported Roosevelt’s foreign policy initiatives as crises in Europe mounted.³⁸ Ickes described the political position of the *Times* as “Independent Democratic,” and praised the paper “for general and continuous all-around excellence and fullness of news reporting.” The influence of the *Times*, as both Villard and Seldes pointed out, went far beyond its own circulation. According to Seldes, “The *Times* not only influences its million readers but many more millions through newspapers which follow its policies.” The *Times* maintained an extensive

Krock, 10 October 1941, Box 56, Folder “Sulzberger, Arthur Hays,” Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University, Princeton).

³⁷ Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 86. Historians have also frequently criticized the *Times* for its general reluctance to report stories concerning anti-Semitic activities in Nazi Germany or news of the Holocaust. They argue that the insistence of the *Times*’ publishers to divorce the presentation of the news in the *Times* from association with its Jewish ownership influenced the treatment (or lack thereof) of stories related to Jewish persecution in the paper. Since the *Times* acted as a barometer of which news was important, the position of the *Times* in relation to stories involving Jews frequently set the tone for other newspapers. See Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (New York: MacMillan Inc., 1986); Laurel Leff, “News of the Holocaust: What FDR didn’t tell and the Press didn’t ask,” *Hakirah* (2005) 1-22; Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³⁸ The *New York Times* printed fifty separate editorials attacking Roosevelt’s court-packing plan. (Meyer Berger, *The Story of the New York Times, 1851-1951* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1951) 530; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 133-134.

foreign service throughout the 1930s, and had a reputation as an excellent source of foreign news.³⁹

The *Herald Tribune* was the chief competitor of the *New York Times* in the New York City newspaper market and had a circulation over 300,000 in 1934.⁴⁰ The influence of the *Herald Tribune* also went beyond its circulation. Sixty-five percent of Washington correspondents polled in 1937 regularly read the paper. The *New York Herald Tribune*, characterized by Ickes as an “Independent Republican” paper, was praised in *America’s House of Lords* “for occasional enterprise and good writing.” Throughout the 1930s the *Herald Tribune* was viewed “as a spokesman for and guardian of mainstream Republicanism” and “the most prominent and respectable right-wing newspaper in America.” Seldes criticized the *Herald Tribune* as a “class newspaper,” which represented a “small, powerful, and rich minority.”⁴¹ As such the *Herald Tribune* consistently opposed Roosevelt’s policies as a matter of party politics. The *Herald Tribune*’s publisher Ogden Reid and his wife Helen Reid maintained editorial opposition to Roosevelt’s presidential campaigns in 1932, 1936 and 1940. The *Herald Tribune* consistently opposed Roosevelt’s domestic policies, joining the *New York Times* and several major newspapers in the fierce campaign against Roosevelt’s court-

³⁹ Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 204; Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 86; Seldes, *Lords of the Press*, 364.

⁴⁰ Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 205; Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 87.

⁴¹ Richard Kluger, *The Paper: the Life and Death of the New York Herald Tribune* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986) 269; Loretta Stec, “Dorothy Thompson as ‘Liberal Conservative’ Columnist: Gender, Politics and Journalistic Authority,” *American Journalism* 12:2 (1995) 164; Seldes, *Lords of the Press*, 187.

packing attempt in 1937.⁴² In terms of foreign policy, however, editorials in the *Herald Tribune* frequently highlighted the growing threats from dictatorial regimes in Germany, Italy, the Soviet Union and Japan.

There were several important and influential newsmagazines in the 1930s that competed with daily newspapers as sources of foreign news. Newsmagazines emphasized interpretative reporting, and many grew in popularity and circulation in the 1930s.⁴³ Magazines like *Collier's*, *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and the *Nation* were all founded in the last half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ *Collier's* reached a circulation of 2.4 million by the mid-1930s, and frequently published articles by journalist George Creel favourable to the Roosevelt administration.⁴⁵ *Harper's* was considered a “moderate” political magazine and had a circulation over 100,000 in the mid-1930s. It featured foreign news articles by a wide range of respected journalists including Dorothy Thompson and John Gunther. The *Atlantic Monthly* was also described as politically “moderate” and its circulation was nearly equivalent to *Harper's* in this period. The *New Republic* was a “liberal” magazine launched in 1914 by Walter Lippmann and Herbert Croly.

⁴² Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 133.

⁴³ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 53.

⁴⁴ The general interest monthly magazine *Harper's* was founded in 1850. The *Atlantic Monthly* was published since 1857. The *Nation* was a weekly newsmagazine first published in 1865. *Collier's* was a weekly newsmagazine known for its investigative journalism and was first published in 1888.

⁴⁵ Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 88. George Creel worked as a freelance journalist in the 1930s. He had been head of the Wilson administration's Committee on Public Information during the First World War. Creel wrote a number of articles for *Collier's* during the 1930s describing New Deal policies and institution. (Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 42-43).

The *New Republic* had a far smaller circulation, reaching only 25,000 subscribers in the mid-1930s.⁴⁶

Like the *New Republic* the *Nation* was a self-proclaimed “liberal” magazine, and its circulation was only a third of either *Harper’s* or the *Atlantic Monthly*. Unlike the titles in Luce’s magazine empire, the *Nation* experienced financial turmoil throughout the 1930s. Villard, owner and editor of the magazine since 1918, passed editorial and management control of the magazine to a board of four editors, including Freda Kirchwey, in 1933. He lamented the harsh economic realities of the Depression that caused newspaper publishers to become even more “careful than ever not to go counter to the prevailing currents of opinions,” to avoid upsetting big business and advertisers.⁴⁷ In 1935 Villard sold the magazine to banker Maurice Wertheim, who then sold the *Nation* to Kirchwey two years later. Kirchwey was unable to resolve the financial problems of the *Nation* and sold the magazine to a non-profit foundation, the *Nation Associates*, in 1943. Kirchwey recognized in 1943, as Villard had in 1933, that liberal, outspoken and “crusading” journals like the *Nation* could not attract sufficient advertisers and were “stubbornly unprofitable.”⁴⁸

Though the *Nation*, with a circulation of around only 37,000 in the 1930s, had a limited circulation when compared to newspapers like the *New York Times*

⁴⁶ Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 87.

⁴⁷ Villard, “Issues and Men,” *Nation* 11 January 1933, 34.

⁴⁸ *Nation* 8 May 1935, 521; Villard, “Issues and Men,” *Nation* 3 July 1937, 18; “Notice to our Readers,” *Nation* 20 February 1943, 253; “We Render an Accounting,” *Nation* 8 May 1943, 649-650; “A Letter From the Editor,” *Nation* 8 May 1943, 684;

or the *New York Herald Tribune* it had a far greater impact than its size.⁴⁹ In his study of Washington correspondents Leo Rosten noted that 34% of polled correspondents regularly read the magazine, indicating the indirect influence of the publication.⁵⁰ The *Nation* was generally supportive of Roosevelt's New Deal, and when it criticized the president's domestic policies, the criticisms were generated from the left. Ickes responded to one of these criticisms as he personally rebuked the *Nation's* attack on the Federal Housing Administration in 1937. In a letter to Kirchwey Ickes described her "personal spitefulness" and "vindictiveness," and threatened to discontinue reading the journal. Although the *Nation* criticized the New Deal as not going far enough, for it Roosevelt's active domestic policies were far better than Hoover's inaction.⁵¹ Several prominent and respected American journalists contributed frequently to the *Nation*, including columnists Heywood Broun and Max Lerner. The *Nation* also featured extensive foreign news features by foreign correspondents like Louis Fischer and John Gunther.⁵² After the outbreak of war in Europe the *Nation* advertised the work of

⁴⁹ Maddux, "Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism," 88.

⁵⁰ "The large number of correspondents who read the *Nation*...is worth noticing. Here they find weekly syntheses of news and interpretations of events of a pronounced "liberal" color. The *Nation*...to which some members of the press corps contribute, provide a corrective balance and an integrating perspective to the news of the daily press. They also emphasize news which newspapers do not always feature. It would be interesting to evaluate the influence which the *Nation*...with numerically small circulation figures, exert upon public opinion by virtue of their influence upon writers, reporters and other symbol specialists." (Delbert Clark, *Washington Dateline* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1941)172, 174).

⁵¹ Sara Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey: Woman of the Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987) 104.

⁵² Louis Fischer began his career as a foreign correspondent in Germany for the *New York Evening Post*. In 1923 he went to Moscow and wrote for the *Nation*. Fischer exposed the Ukrainian famine in the pages of the *Nation* in 1932 and 1933. During the Spanish Civil War Fischer wrote articles for the *Nation* and was a member of the International Brigade fighting against Franco's forces. In 1941 he became a contributing editor to the *Nation*. (Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 137).

its foreign correspondents as providing foreign news to the American public.

According to the *Nation* their foreign correspondents “give meaning to the facts” of the European war.⁵³

Several new magazines were launched in the 1930s, appealing to the American public’s growing interest in international affairs and interpretative news reporting. *Newsweek* was first published in 1933. The politically moderate magazine gained a wide readership in the 1930s, from less than 50,000 in 1934 to more than 400,000 by 1941. Throughout the 1930s *Newsweek* competed directly with the established *Time* magazine for leadership of the weekly newsmagazine market. Henry Luce began his media empire in partnership with Briton Hadden, launching *Time* magazine in 1923. *Time* was the first weekly newsmagazine in the United States, and grew in popularity and circulation throughout the 1930s. By 1941 *Time* had a circulation of nearly 800,000 and led the movement towards more interpretative journalism in newsmagazines in the 1930s, prompting the American Society of Newspaper Editors to urge more of its members to explore interpretative reporting. Luce and *Time*’s relationship with the Roosevelt administration fluctuated widely in this period. While *Time* criticized several aspects of Roosevelt’s domestic and foreign policies, especially the recognition of the Soviet Union, Luce came onside after viewing firsthand the Nazi *blitzkrieg* in

Gunther began writing articles for the *Nation* in the early 1930s, based on his work as a foreign correspondent in Vienna and London. Gunther once wrote to Freda Kirchwey about his work for the *Nation*: “My little pieces for you mean more to me than all my [*Chicago Daily News*] work. I would rather slave a week for the *Nation* for \$20 than for a big magazine for \$200.” Letter Gunther to Kirchwey, 14 May 1934, Box 10, Folder 167 “John Gunther,” Freda Kirchwey Papers, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University.

⁵³ *Nation* 7 October 1939, 389.

Europe in spring 1940. After this Luce used *Time* and the *March of Time* news films to warn the American public about the dangers of Nazi Germany. He was also an influential member of the Century Group, a pro-Britain interventionist organization, and a founding member of the Council for Democracy formed in the summer of 1940.⁵⁴ The success of *Time* prompted Luce to expand his magazine publishing empire, even in the midst of the Great Depression. He began publishing *Fortune*, a bi-weekly global business magazine in 1930. The politically conservative magazine quickly rose in circulation from 75,597 in 1934 to 155,623 by 1941. Luce launched the weekly magazine *Life*, which focused on photojournalism, in 1936. *Life* also quickly became a success, reaching a circulation of nearly 3 million by 1941 by taking advantage of new technology that allowed picture transmission by cable and radio.⁵⁵

Interpretative Journalism and Columnists

Press historians describe the development of interpretative journalism as “the most important press development of the 1930s and 1940s.” Contemporaries and historians alike noted the rise of political columnists in the 1930s as “the most important force, by and large, in American journalism.”⁵⁶ In 1932 the college

⁵⁴ Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 88; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 41, 79; White, *FDR and the Press*, 52; Carew, “The Power to Persuade.” The Council for Democracy sought to confront isolationism by educating the American public on the meaning and importance of democracy, and the dangers posed by Nazi-Fascist ideology. The Council included other prominent members of the media such as editor of the *Nation* Kirchwey, journalist Gunther and radio commentator Raymond Swing.

⁵⁵ Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 88; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 16.

⁵⁶ Winfield, “F.D.R. Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends,” 698; Herbert Brucker, *The Changing American Newspaper* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937) 11; Clark, *Washington Dateline*, 188. Seldes also recognized the growing power of columnists: “it is generally agreed

journalism textbook *Reporting for Beginners* and the scholarly journal *Journalism Quarterly* used the term “interpretative journalism” to describe the type of news articles that did not simply present the “objective” reporting of events, the “who, what, where, and when.” Instead, interpretative journalists analyzed the factual accounts of events and presented to readers explanations and interpretations based on their own viewpoint, emphasizing *why* events occurred and what they meant for Americans.⁵⁷

There are various explanations for why the 1930s was the “golden age for columnists.”⁵⁸ Herbert Brucker’s 1937 study of American newspapers argued that interpretative reporting was necessary given the complex domestic and foreign political climate of the 1930s: “Nowadays, what with the WPA, sit-down strikes, fascism, dust storms, wars that are not wars...import quotas, Father Coughlin, cosmic rays, nonintervention agreements to screen intervention, and unemployment, news is different. There must be interpretation.”⁵⁹ In his 1944 study of columnists, Charles Fisher credited the Pulitzer newspaper, the *New York World*, for recognizing the potential of the “Op Ed Page,” the page opposite the editorial page. According to Fisher the *New York World* established the tradition of by-lined columnists.⁶⁰ In his 1965 study of political journalism William Rivers

that their power increases at a time the editorial page influence decreases, and that people have more faith in columnists than in most molders of public opinion.” (*Lords of the Press*, 335).

⁵⁷ Winfield, “FDR Wins and Loses Journalist Friends,” 698-699; Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 41-42.

⁵⁸ Winfield, “FDR Wins and Loses Journalist Friends,” 699; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 53.

⁵⁹ Brucker, *The Changing American Newspaper*, 11.

⁶⁰ Charles Fisher, *The Columnists* (New York: Howell, Soskin, 1944) 11.

agreed with Brucker that the political complexity of the New Deal demonstrated the inadequacy of straight news reporting. Journalists could not make events like the American abandoning of the gold standard in 1933 accessible and understandable to most Americans without some explanation and interpretation. Similarly, *New York Times*' Washington bureau chief Arthur Krock defended the need for news interpretation in light of the volume of news produced by New Deal agencies.⁶¹

Rivers also suggested that it was the foreign correspondents who pioneered interpretative reporting.⁶² Presenting foreign events to the American public from frequently strange and faraway lands, foreign correspondents naturally provided some interpretation of the unfamiliar events, to tell their American readers the significance of the foreign news.⁶³ John Gunther, who worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* first in Vienna and then in London, stated the work of the foreign correspondent was to provide “color, judgment, [and] interpretation” of the events. While the American press agencies, the Associated Press and the United Press, gathered the essential facts of

⁶¹ Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 42; Krock, “Diverse Official Views at Capital are Confusing,” *New York Times* 25 November 1934, E1. In his sweeping history of American journalism Frank Mott agrees that “the increasing complexity of the economic, social, and international news forced, by the thirties, some retreat from the ideal of purely factual news which had prevailed in American reporting for over fifty years.” (Mott, *American Journalism*, 688).

⁶² Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 42.

⁶³ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, xii-xiii.

foreign news, Gunther argued that as a foreign correspondent, “I am free to interpret...I am permitted to be fairly ‘editorial’.”⁶⁴

Others have pointed to the rise of another important news media in the 1930s, radio broadcasting, for the development of interpretative print journalism. In the 1930s radio was quickly eclipsing newspapers as the primary source for up-to-date, on the spot, news reporting. Radio broadcasts, especially foreign news broadcasts, essentially made the “newspaper extra” obsolete. Furthermore, the very nature of the radio medium allowed radio commentators to be more expressive in communicating the news. Interpretative journalism concentrated on in-depth analysis of events rather than reporting the news first, and allowed columnists to compete with the more expressive radio broadcasters. Interpretative print journalists frequently crossed the line between the two mediums, and also often served as very successful radio commentators.⁶⁵ Newspaper columnists also had an advantage over radio commentators. The American government created the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1934, to regulate the licensing and operation of American radio broadcasters. According to Villard radio was not only “government-controlled, but is itself directly supported by the great enterprises whose rise and control have more and more dominated the American political and economic scene.” Villard praised newspaper columnists

⁶⁴ Gunther, 17 December 1936, ADD 1, Box 9, Folder “Clips, Category: Writing/Journalism,” Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago; Hal O’Flaherty, “Sun Never Sets on Foreign Service of the Daily News,” *Chicago Daily News* Souvenir Edition, March 1935.

⁶⁵ Culbert, *News for Everyman*, 4-5; Takashi Mogi, “The Changing Role of Columnists in American Journalism,” 70-71.

for making the American public more aware of what was going on throughout the world.⁶⁶

Contemporaries and historians agree with Villard that interpretative journalism became a significant force in American news media in the 1930s, and also a force in shaping American public opinion. Seldes bluntly stated that “people have more faith in columnists than in most molders of public opinion.”⁶⁷ In the 1930s many commentators on the American press noted that political columnists, whose by-lined articles generally appeared on the Op-Ed page, were replacing the “authority” of the editorial writers.⁶⁸ Unsigned newspaper editorials once represented the “voice” of the newspaper, but by-lined columnists, whose work was frequently syndicated to papers across the United States, appeared as educated and authoritative personal voices. Fisher described the columnist as “the voice beside the cracker barrel amplified to transcontinental dimensions. He is the only non-political figure of record that can clear his throat each day and say ‘Now, here’s what I think...’ with the assurance that millions will listen.”⁶⁹ In the introduction to his 1945 book *Moulders of Opinion*, David Bulman called columnists “the Delphic Oracles of today,” and stated that columnists “have more influence than any other factor in molding the opinions of adult Americans. What these oracles think represents in a very large measure what the great American

⁶⁶ Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 17-20; Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, v, 72-73; Villard, “Issues and Men: The Columnist in Journalism,” *Nation* 5 February 1936, 147.

⁶⁷ Seldes, *Lords of the Press*, 335.

⁶⁸ Clark, *Washington Dateline*, 187-188; Margaret Marshall, “Columnists on Parade,” *Nation* 26 February 1938, 246-247.

⁶⁹ Fisher, *The Columnists*, 3.

public thinks.”⁷⁰ Press historians agree that the rise of interpretative journalism and columnists in the 1930s corresponded with the decline in the authority of newspaper editorials.⁷¹

Ickes also recognized that political columnists had generally replaced editorial writers as the interpretative voice of newspapers. While Ickes noted that many columnists were “high-minded individuals and fine commentators,” he also criticized the various guises of columnists: “He has to be crusader, critic, pundit, wit, iconoclast, or, even at times, a clown.” In *America’s House of Lords* Ickes commented in verse on the apparent influence and political role of the best-known columnists of his day: “Who runs the earth and sun and moon? Just Thompson, Lawrence, Franklin, Broun; Just the columnists... When FDR you want to sock; Page Lippmann, Johnson, Kent, or Krock; Page a columnist.”⁷²

Press historians have also discussed Roosevelt’s love-hate relationship with columnists and interpretative journalists. Roosevelt frequently dismissed

⁷⁰ David Bulman (ed.), *Moulders of Opinion* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1945) vii.

⁷¹ Stec, “Dorothy Thompson as ‘Liberal Conservative’ Columnist,” 164; Lynn D. Gordon, “Why Dorothy Thompson Lost Her Job: Political Columnists and the Press Wars of the 1930s and 1940s,” *History of Education Quarterly* 34:3 (1994) 285. Some historians contend that the “emasculatation” of the editorial page was in response to business and advertising pressure to limit strong opinion and controversy from the “official voice” of the newspaper. Columnists represented “independent voices,” which could voice stronger opinions than the editorials that were tied more directly to the newspaper itself.

⁷² Ickes, *Freedom of the Press Today*, 13; Ickes, *American’s House of Lords*, 98, 101; White, *FDR and the Press*, 136-137. In his poem Ickes refers to *New York Herald Tribune* columnist Dorothy Thompson, founder of weekly newspaper *United States News* David Lawrence, author of syndicated column “We the People” Jay Franklin, Heywood Broun who wrote the syndicated column “It Seems to Me” for the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain, columnist Walter Lippmann of the *New York Herald Tribune*, former head of the National Recovery Administrator and syndicated columnist for Scripps-Howard General Hugh Johnson, author of syndicated column “The Great Game of Politics” Frank R. Kent, and columnist and head of the *New York Times’* Washington Bureau Arthur Krock.

interpretative news reporting, defining the role of the journalist as simple reporter of facts.⁷³ Through his regular press conferences, plus the numerous government “hand-outs” to the press, Roosevelt fought to control the dissemination of the news to the press and therefore to the public. Roosevelt held 998 press conferences throughout his presidency, a marked difference from the Hoover administration, which had all but abolished the practice of White House press conferences. Furthermore, Roosevelt altered the nature of the press conference, ending the requirement of having correspondents submit written questions beforehand. Journalists generally welcomed the seemingly new openness in White House press relations. Echoing many of his contemporaries’ opinions, influential columnist Heywood Broun described Roosevelt as “the best newspaperman who has ever been President of the United States.”⁷⁴

The president read several newspapers daily, including the *New York Times*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Washington Post*. Roosevelt also paid close attention to many political and foreign affairs columnists.⁷⁵ Some, like Arthur Krock, refused to attend Roosevelt’s press conferences. He explained to the president his absence: “I lose my objectivity when I’m close to you and watch you in action. You charm me so much that

⁷³ Gordon, “Why Dorothy Thompson Lost Her Job:,” 291; White, *FDR and the Press*, 27-28; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 54-55, 64-65; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 103-104.

⁷⁴ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 2, 27-29, 32-33; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 5, 12; White, *FDR and the Press*, 6-7.

⁷⁵ Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism,” 102; “High Haste, Low Speed,” *Time* 8 July 1935; Krock, “In the Nation: What Goes Read and Unread at the White House,” *New York Times* 3 March 1938, 20; White, *FDR and the Press*, 22.

when I go back to write comment on the proceedings, I can't keep it in balance." Krock feared that Roosevelt's well-known "charm and force of his personality" was leading to the colouration of the Washington news stories as correspondents were likely to soften their portrayal of the Roosevelt administration.⁷⁶ While journalists like Krock recognized Roosevelt's astute ability in news management, "to get promptly and accurately before the public his own version of what he has done or thinks," they also criticized the Roosevelt administration's "publicity machine."⁷⁷

Journalists viewed the administration's "hand-outs," advance copies of addresses, public announcements, official reports, and statistics from various government offices, as double-edged swords. By the end of 1933 the Roosevelt administration was producing nearly one thousand press releases a month, most of them written by the new and growing New Deal agencies and institutions. Most journalists found the government's hand-outs nearly "indispensable" for keeping up with and accurately reporting the "manifold activities of the government." Yet many also recognized the problems associated with basing their news on government hand-outs: "The danger to the press, and through it to the public, is in the possibility that the correspondents will accept handouts...at their face value, and prepare their budget of news entirely from these official and naturally biased

⁷⁶ Krock, "In Washington," *New York Times* 2 February 1934, 16; White, *FDR and the Press*, 9-10; Saylor, "Window on an Age," 244; Winfield, "FDR Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends," 705.

⁷⁷ Krock, "In Washington: Press Conferences a Factor in Roosevelt's Popularity," *New York Times* 2 February 1934, 16.

statements.”⁷⁸ Krock questioned the “suppression” of news through government hand-outs and restrictions placed on interviews between members of the press and government officials. He described the administration’s hand-outs as “propaganda mills,” and the president’s off the record remarks in his press conferences as the “most evil development” of the administration’s publicity machine.⁷⁹

While Roosevelt attempted to control the flow of news from the government to the press, and frequently criticized interpretative journalists, he also found use for columnists on occasion. Roosevelt had a close relationship and granted special access to columnists who were favorable to the administration, including Raymond Clapper of the *United Press*, radio commentator and newspaper columnist Walter Winchell, George Creel of *Collier’s Magazine*, and Joseph Alsop (a cousin of Eleanor Roosevelt), whose column appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune*.⁸⁰ Anne O’Hare McCormick also enjoyed privileged access to the president. Between 1936 and 1942 McCormick of the *New York Times* met

⁷⁸ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 88; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 15; Clark, *Washington Dateline*, 121; Winfield, “The New Deal Publicity Operation,” 43.

⁷⁹ Krock, “In Washington: Access of Newspaper Men to Officials Regulated,” *New York Times* 3 April 1934, 20; “New Deal is Chided on Publicity Ideas,” *New York Times* 27 January 1935, N2; Krock, “In Washington: Informality of Roosevelt’s Talks to Press Maintained,” *New York Times* 9 May 1935, 20. Thompson also criticized the Roosevelt administration’s hand-outs to journalists, which she described as “government propaganda.” (Thompson, “On the Record: Government and Propaganda,” *New York Herald Tribune* 20 January 1937, 19).

⁸⁰ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 61-63; Winfield, “FDR Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends,” 794; White, *FDR and the Press*, 29-31; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 42. Joseph Alsop and Robert Kintner’s 1940 pamphlet “The American White Paper,” was based on exclusive information from the White House and caused an uproar among the press.

with the president at least once a year, and those informal conversations were recorded without direct quotations in several articles.⁸¹

Like other agencies in Roosevelt's administration the State Department, nominally in charge of foreign policy, held its own regular press conferences to communicate with the American press. Secretary of State Cordell Hull provided government "hand-outs" of important foreign policy news, and regularly conversed with reporters.⁸² Hull maintained relationships with several key reporters, notably *Times* Washington bureau chief Krock, who frequently met with Hull and used their conversations as the basis for his column. However, Roosevelt's frequent personal interventions in foreign policy were well known. Hull complained "the President runs foreign affairs; I don't know what's going on."⁸³ Contemporaries and historians also note the rivalry between Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles. According to Dallek, Roosevelt favoured Welles over Hull.⁸⁴ While Hull maintained regular, and in the case of Krock, personal contact with reporters and columnists, Roosevelt personally handled foreign affairs and the publicizing of foreign affairs developments to the American press.

⁸¹ There are several telegrams and memos detailing appointments between Roosevelt and McCormick between 1936 and 1941. See: PPF Folder 675 "New York Times, 1936-1937" and "New York Times, 1938-1941," FDRL, Hyde Park.

⁸² Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 89.

⁸³ Quoted in Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 159-160. George Herring summed up the relationship between Roosevelt and Hull over foreign policy: "The State Department continued to be the key player, although on major issues Roosevelt usually took control...Cordell Hull remained in office a record twelve years, but his influence was limited." (Herring, *From Colony to Superpower*, 493). Steele also commented on the "differences between FDR and [Hull] on various aspects of foreign policy." (Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 57).

⁸⁴ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 149, 419, 421.

Whether as a response to the volume of complex news generated by the New Deal, the “emasculatation” of the editorial page in response to business and advertising pressures, or competition from the new media of radio broadcasting, contemporaries and historians alike agree that interpretative journalism became a significant force in the American news media in the 1930s. The sheer circulation of the syndicated columns, appearing nationwide in hundreds of newspapers, reaching upwards of ten million readers, made interpretative journalism a force to be reckoned with. Although the nature of the connection between the columnists and the formation of public opinion is nebulous, contemporary commentators on the press believed there was a link between the powerful opinions of the columnists and the American public who read them. Roosevelt was also painfully aware of the influence of columnists and interpretative journalists. While he attempted to control the dissemination of the news and publicly sparred with journalists over their interpretation of the news, Roosevelt was particularly sensitive to the news media. From his reading of daily news papers and the examination of press clippings the president paid close attention to columnists and editorials.⁸⁵

The Journalists

⁸⁵ Roosevelt received newspaper clippings from associates, and also consulted a clipping service that monitored 350 newspapers and 43 magazines. The president also received regular summaries of press opinions from government agencies like the Treasury Department. (Steele, “The Pulse of the People,” 196-198). For Roosevelt’s sensitivity to the press and his belief in the press as a source of public opinion see: Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 5, 8-9, 62; Winfield, “FDR Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends,” 699; Steele, “The Pulse of the People,” 196-197).

Unlike the other journalists included in this study, Arthur Krock was a Washington based correspondent. His articles concerning Europe concentrated on what the events meant to the United States, and the related American politics and policies. Krock was raised in Kentucky, and although he was of Jewish descent his family had converted to the Episcopalian church. He attended Princeton briefly, but was forced to leave owing to a lack of funds, and pursued a career in journalism. Like Lippmann, Krock was a Wilsonian liberal in his youth, but over time became increasingly conservative. He began writing editorials for the *New York World* in 1923. After a falling out with Lippmann at the *World*, Krock joined the *New York Times* in 1927, becoming chief of its Washington bureau in 1932, and a member of the editorial board in 1933. In April 1933 Krock began his own by-lined political column, initially titled “In Washington,” and later renamed “In the Nation.” As head of the Washington bureau Krock coordinated newsgathering in the capital. As a member of the editorial board he had influence over the final selection and point of view of news stories, especially those concerning news from Washington. Finally, Krock’s political column presented observations and summaries of the administration’s domestic and foreign policies, similar in style to Lippmann’s column in the *New York Herald Tribune*.⁸⁶ His column often set the tone for other Washington correspondents, and Roosevelt paid close attention to Krock’s reporting.

⁸⁶ Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 10, 20, 34, 55-56, 72-73, 99, 137, 157-158, 334, 336.

Although Krock did not attend Roosevelt's press conferences he often framed questions for *Times*' correspondents, thereby in effect directing the *Times*' participation at the press conferences. Roosevelt frequently used his press conferences to admonish Krock's work.⁸⁷ On occasion Roosevelt personally wrote to the publishers of the *New York Times* to criticize columns by Krock.⁸⁸ Ickes also took exception to Krock's news stories, describing him in *America's House of Lords* as "the *New York Times* omniscient columnist," who is "an able and straight-forward commentator when he sticks to his last," but also "takes on the character of Mr. Hyde." He voiced his disapproval of Krock in several published letters to the editor in the *New York Times*. In one of these letters he wrote "I have always thought that the chief characteristic of your Washington correspondent, Arthur Krock, was his diabolical slyness," and described Krock's stories as "pipe-dreams...half-truths...weasel words." Ickes attacked the *New York Times* for permitting Krock to "wage personal vendettas from within the

⁸⁷ Winfield, "F.D.R. Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends," 705. For example see: Press Conference #12, 14 April 1933 (Vol. 1, 1933); Press Conference #19, 10 May 1933 (Vol. 1, 1933), Press Conference #563, 18 July 1939. *Complete Presidential Press Conferences of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972). There is no published biographical monograph about Arthur Krock. Saylor's dissertation, based largely on Krock's papers at Princeton University, is the best source on Krock's journalistic career in this period.

⁸⁸ For example, Roosevelt responded strongly to Krock's column of November 21, 1934, concerning the British at the naval conference. (Krock, "In Washington: Patience Wanes as British Dicker with Japan," *New York Times* 21 November 1934, 18; Letter FDR to Ochs, 26 November 1934, PPF Folder 29 Folder "Ochs, Adolph", FDRL, Hyde Park; Letter Ochs to FDR, 30 November 1934, Series II Box 52 Folder "Roosevelt, Franklin," Arthur Krock Papers, Princeton University, Princeton).

sacred columns of its editorial page,” and accused Krock in his attacks on the administration of venting “personal spleen even to the injury of his country.”⁸⁹

While Krock sparred publicly with members of the Roosevelt administration, including Press Secretary Stephen Early and Harry Hopkins, federal relief administrator and one of Roosevelt’s closest advisors, he also maintained strong personal connections with Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Ambassador to Britain Joseph P. Kennedy.⁹⁰ Roosevelt had mixed feelings towards Krock. The *Times* Washington Bureau chief was too important and influential for the president to ignore, but Roosevelt once said that Krock was someone who “never in his whole life said a really decent thing about any human being without qualifying it by some nasty dig...a social parasite...a cynic who has never felt warm affection for anybody – man or woman.”⁹¹ Contemporaries noted both Krock’s professional influence, and his “crusty demeanor.” He was the

⁸⁹ Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 115, 132-133; Ickes, “Letter to the Editor,” *New York Times* 29 October 1940, 24; Ickes, “Letter to the Editor,” *New York Times* 20 June 1941, C20; Krock, “Letter to the Editor,” *New York Times* 29 October 1940, 24; Krock, “Replying to Mr. Ickes,” *New York Times* 21 June 1941, 16.

⁹⁰ Early frequently berated Krock for stories about Washington that Early deemed “untrue,” especially a story published in the *Times* on April 28, 1939, regarding a meeting proposed by Roosevelt with Hitler. (Letter Early to Krock, 8 May 1939. Series II Box 25 Folder “Early, Stephen,” Arthur Krock Papers, Princeton University, Princeton; Krock, “Roosevelt Plan Disclosed,” *New York Times* 28 April 1939, 1; Krock, “Background of story published in the *New York Times* on Friday, April 28, 1939,” Series II Box 25 Folder “Early, Stephen,” Arthur Krock Papers, Princeton University, Princeton; Letter Krock to Roosevelt, 1 May 1939, Series II Box 52 Folder “Roosevelt, Franklin,” Arthur Krock Papers, Princeton University, Princeton). Krock and Harry Hopkin’s carried out a very public dispute through the pages of the *New York Times* in 1938. (Krock, “Revolt of the Electorate Ends One-Party Rule,” *New York Times* 13 November 1938, 73; Krock, “Letter to the Editor,” *New York Times* 24 November 1938, 26; Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 401; “Hopkins Repeats ‘Spend-Tax’ Denial,” *New York Times* 26 November 1938, 6; “Hopkins Repeats ‘Spend-Tax’ Denial,” *New York Times* 26 November 1938, 6; Letter United States Senate Committee on Claims to Krock, 9 January 1939. Series II Box 29 Folder “Hopkins, Harry,” Arthur Krock Papers, Princeton University, Princeton; Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 382). I elaborate on Krock’s relationship with Joseph P. Kennedy and Cordell Hull in Chapter 3.

⁹¹ Quoted in Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 43.

“grand old man of The Times Washington bureau,” known for his conservative and gruff nature. Despite this reputation among the president and his advisers Leo Rosten’s 1937 survey of Washington Correspondents ranked Krock fourth in the list of “most fair and reliable columnists,” following Raymond Clapper, Paul Mallon, and Walter Lippmann. Villard praised Krock’s objectivity: “It is his calm statement of the facts upon which he bases his reasoning and the absence of emotion in his deductions that make his letters so effective.” Krock also won two Pulitzer Prizes in the 1930s for his articles in the *New York Times*.⁹²

Krock’s chief rival for most of his career, and without a doubt the most influential political columnist of his day was Walter Lippmann.⁹³ Lippmann became a household name in the 1930s. His writing reached an enormous

⁹² Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 43; Salisbury, *Without Fear or Favor*, 86-87; Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 81-82. Paul Mallon wrote a column syndicated with King Features that appeared in over 200 newspapers, reaching an audience of nearly 25 million. (White, *FDR and the Press*, 28).

⁹³ The “bad feeling” between Krock and Lippmann began when Lippmann accused Krock of moonlighting for Wall Street while Krock worked for the *New York World*. Lippmann removed Krock from the editorial page of the paper, and not long afterwards Krock took a job with the *New York Times*. (Ronald Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980) 201). After the *New York World* disappeared in 1931 Adolph Ochs considered Lippmann for a position on the *New York Times*. Krock warned the publishers of the *New York Times* against hiring Lippmann. (Letter Arthur Hays Sulzberger to Adolph Ochs, 21 February 1931, Subject 108, “New York World,” Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers, *New York Times Archives*, New York City). There are several published biographical treatments of Walter Lippmann. Steel’s *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* is the most comprehensive account of Lippmann, based largely on Lippmann’s papers at Yale University. For other accounts and studies of Walter Lippmann see: James Beston, “His Thought and Writings Are Very Much Alive Today,” *New York Times* 15 December 1974, 66; “Headliner: Walter Lippmann, An Appreciation,” *New York Times* 15 December 1974, 237; Frederick Schapsmeier, and Edward L. “Walter Lippmann, Critic of American Foreign Policy,” *Midwest Quarterly* 7:2 (1966) 123-137; Michael Blayney, “Walter Lippmann, foreign policy, and the Russians. 1914-1920,” *Research Studies* 37:4 (1969) 274-284; Robert Lee Zuercher, “Walter Lippmann and His Views of American Foreign Policy, 1914-1935,” PhD Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1974; Louis Buttino, “The Intellectual and Foreign Affairs: The Experience of Walter Lippmann,” *Journal of Political Science* 7:2 (1980) 81-94; Geoffrey Smith, “Walter Lippmann, the Fourth Estate, and American Foreign Policy,” *Queen’s Quarterly* 89:1 (1982) 2-14.

audience, and he was universally respected by his colleagues. Contemporaries and historians alike noted Lippmann's influence in American journalism. Lippmann was "the first truly influential Washington pundit," a term coined and first applied to Lippmann by Henry Luce in *Time* in 1931. He has also been called "the only American philosopher who has committed himself to journalism."⁹⁴ By the early 1930s Lippmann had already built an esteemed public service and journalism career. Lippmann was invited by Colonel House to collect information for President Wilson for the Paris Peace Conference. He served as a speechwriter and advisor to Wilson, and was directly involved in drafting Wilson's Fourteen Points.⁹⁵ From 1920 to 1931 Lippmann served on the editorial board and wrote editorials for Pulitzer's acclaimed liberal paper the *New York World*. Contemporaries and journalism historians praised the *New York World's* editorial page as the best of its time, largely reflecting Lippmann's guidance and vision.⁹⁶ Following the demise of the *World* Lippmann entertained several significant job offers. Ochs of the *New York Times* wanted Lippmann to run the Washington bureau; Hearst offered Lippmann a column in the *American*; Roy Howard asked Lippmann to run the editorial page of the *World-Telegram*;

⁹⁴ Eric Alterman, *The Sound and Fury: The Washington Punditocracy and the Collapse of American Politics* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992) 13; "Piano vs. Bugle," *Time* 30 March 1931; Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 60. Lippmann wrote many books concerning his political philosophy: *A Preface to Politics* (1913), *Drift and Mastery* (1914), *Public Opinion* (1922), *A Preface to Morals* (1929), and *The Good Society* (1937).

⁹⁵ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 107, 134, 169; Kluger, *The Paper*, 257; Fisher, *The Columnists*, 81.

⁹⁶ Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 64-66; "Piano vs. Bugle," *Time* 30 March 1931.

Harvard University offered Lippmann a professorship in government, and the University of North Carolina wanted Lippmann to become its president.⁹⁷

However, the offer by Ogden and Helen Reid at the *New York Herald Tribune* ultimately held the most appeal to Lippmann. The Reids offered Lippmann a signed column to run four times a week on the Op-Ed page. They guaranteed him freedom over subjects and content, and promised, “We would never restrict you.” Despite their promise, many wondered how much freedom Lippmann, “of the late arch-Democratic anti-Wall Street *World*,” would truly have in the highly partisan “staid citadel of Hooversism,” the Republican *Herald Tribune*. Lippmann’s column “Today and Tomorrow” debuted in September 1931, and press historians have described it as the first independent column of political opinion.⁹⁸ His column soon became an enormous success, syndicated to over 140 newspapers, and reaching an audience of approximately ten million. Lippmann was also one of the highest paid journalists of his day, bringing in over \$60,000 yearly from his writing.⁹⁹ Many had described Lippmann as “a boy socialist at Harvard,” as he co-founded the liberal journal the *New Republic*, and

⁹⁷ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 177, 272, 274-275; Kluger, *The Paper*, 258-259.

⁹⁸ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 275; “Lippmann’s Job,” *Time* 6 April 1931; “Lippmann to Write for Herald Tribune,” *New York Times* 28 March 1931, 28; Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 66; Bulman, *Moulders of Opinion*, 37. Lippmann’s endorsement of Roosevelt in the 1932 presidential election brought him into conflict with the publishers of the *Herald Tribune*, who requested Lippmann cut out parts of his column attacking Hoover. The Reid’s also published several letters to the editor criticizing Lippmann’s endorsement of Roosevelt. (Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 275, 296; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *New York Herald Tribune* 7 October 1932; “What Other Voters Think,” *New York Herald Tribune* 10 October 1932, 12).

⁹⁹ Bulman, *Moulders of Opinion*, 37; Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 96, 111; Fisher, *The Opinionmakers*, 76, 86.

as a progressive democrat enthusiastically supported Woodrow Wilson. Yet Lippmann's relationship with the Roosevelt administration revealed his growing conservatism as he retreated from his idealistic Wilsonian world-view, becoming a political realist and an influential and vocal critic of several aspects of president's New Deal.¹⁰⁰ However, unlike Krock, Lippmann's relationship with Roosevelt never reached the same level of animosity. Yet like Krock, Lippmann's reputation and his wide readership made his columns highly influential and required reading in the White House.

In contrast to Krock and Lippmann, John Gunther's experience and influence in American journalism began with his work as a foreign correspondent and he vaulted to national prominence with the publication of his best-selling interpretative journalism book *Inside Europe*. Raised in Chicago, Gunther studied creative writing at the University of Chicago, while writing for campus newspapers. Although he had literary career ambitions Gunther started his working life as a cub reporter with the *Chicago Daily News* in 1922. In 1924 Gunther went to London and began reporting for the overseas bureau of the *Chicago Daily News*. He also worked briefly for the United Press in London. While Gunther continued to dabble in fiction, his by-lined foreign correspondence for the *Chicago Daily News* became the mainstay of his career until the mid 1930s. Throughout the 1920s Gunther traveled throughout Europe writing

¹⁰⁰ See Frederic Krome, "From Liberal Philosophy to Conservative Ideology: Walter Lippmann's Opposition to the New Deal," *Journal of American Culture* 10:1 (1987) 57-64. The biographical chapter in Bulman's *Moulders of Opinion* is titled "Lapsed Liberal," and Fisher's chapter on Lippmann in *The Opinionmakers*, "Lippmann, Ex-Liberal," also reflects Lippmann's political change in the 1930s.

foreign news, as well as participating in a few “on-the-spot” news reports for radio broadcast back to the United States.¹⁰¹ He was finally given a permanent post with the *Chicago Daily News* bureau in Vienna in 1930. Gunther’s position in Vienna gave him an excellent vantage point to report developments in international affairs in Europe. He became acquainted with the leading American foreign correspondents in Europe, including Dorothy Thompson, H.R. Knickerbocker, William L. Shirer, and Vincent Sheean.¹⁰² For Gunther, as well as many other American foreign correspondents working from Vienna, the city may have been too pleasant an assignment, clouding objectivity concerning the increasingly conservative and autocratic state of Austrian politics.¹⁰³ But from Vienna Gunther could easily travel throughout Central Europe, including a visit to the Turkish island of Prinkipo in 1933 to interview Trotsky. Gunther’s profile of Trotsky published in *Harper’s* revealed a very human side to one of the architects of the Russian Revolution.¹⁰⁴ His article about Trotsky was his first prominent example of powerful, psychological portraits of important figures that he would include in his interpretative journalistic work *Inside Europe*. From his vantage point Gunther was also sensitive to the threats posed by Hitler’s resurgent Nazi

¹⁰¹ Ken Cuthbertson’s *Inside: The Biography of John Gunther*, is the only full-length biography based on Gunther’s papers held at the University of Chicago. Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 5, 24, 45, 79; Ronald Weber, *News From Paris: American Journalists in the City of Lights Between the Wars*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006) 172-174; Rivers, *The Opinionmakers*, 54-55.

¹⁰² Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 71, 84; Robert von Gelder, “John Gunther, Who Wrote ‘Inside Europe,’” *New York Times* 26 October 1941, BR2; Albin Kribs, “John Gunther Dead; Wrote ‘Inside’ Books,” *New York Times* 30 May 1970, 1; Weber, *News of Paris*, 178;

¹⁰³ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 63; Ronald Weber, *News of Paris: American Journalists in the City of Light Between the Wars* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006) 178-179; Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 88-89. In Chapter two I expand on Gunther’s views of Vienna.

¹⁰⁴ Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 87, 89-90; Gunther, “Trotsky at Elba,” *Harper’s* April 1933, 587-597;

Germany. Gunther frequently supplemented his work for the *Chicago Daily News* with articles for magazines including *Harper's*, the *Nation*, *Vanity Fair* and *Foreign Affairs*. In 1935 Gunther was promoted by the *Chicago Daily News* and earned the coveted position in London. While in London Gunther began work on *Inside Europe*.¹⁰⁵

The 1931 publishing phenomenon *Washington Merry-Go-Round*, an insider's view of the Washington political elite written anonymously by political journalists Drew Pearson and Robert S. Allen, paved the way for Gunther's *Inside Europe*. In 1934 Gunther was contracted to write a similar book, this time an insiders' view of Europe, with a particular emphasis on the personalities of the European leaders to reveal "the personal sources of their power, the reason for their impact on history."¹⁰⁶ Based on his own knowledge and experience gathered as a foreign correspondent in Europe, as well as information shared by generous colleagues, *Inside Europe* was released in early 1936 to critical acclaim and commercial success. Quickly advancing up the best-seller lists in the United States, the book reached number six on the nonfiction lists, and sales soon reached half a million in the United States, and 100,000 overseas. It was translated into seventeen languages, and in order to keep up with the fast pace of changing events in Europe, Gunther reworked the book six times between its initial release and 1941. The book appealed to an American public whose interest in European affairs was reawakening. In his study of American foreign

¹⁰⁵ Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 119; Weber, *News of Paris*, 173; Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ John Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 1938 edition (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938) ix.

correspondents in Europe, Morrell Heald describes the success of *Inside Europe*, “the first work of international analysis by a foreign correspondent to win an enthusiastic public reception in the United States.”¹⁰⁷ According to Heald the popularity of Gunther’s book was due to its timing, as the American public was increasingly interested in European events, and Gunther’s interpretative journalistic style, which “offered exactly the mixture of information, explanation, gossip, and glamour for which curious American readers were evidently ready.” *Inside Europe* launched Gunther to international success and influence. Gunther quit his job as a foreign correspondent with the *Chicago Daily News* to concentrate on promoting the book through lecture tours, interviews and articles, and to plan further books along the “inside” theme. Gunther’s books represented a powerful new form of “book journalism,” recognized by journalism historians as belonging firmly in the field of interpretative reporting.¹⁰⁸

Like Gunther, Dorothy Thompson and Anne O’Hare McCormick began their journalistic careers writing from Europe. They were also prominent examples of female journalists who successfully participated in an area of journalism traditionally perceived as a male domain.¹⁰⁹ During the interwar

¹⁰⁷ Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 122-123, 140-142; Weber, *News of Paris*, 173-174; Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 184-187;

¹⁰⁸ Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 186-197; Weber, *News of Paris*, 173-174; Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 127; Winfield, “FDR Wins (and Loses) Journalist Friends,” 698; Krebs, “John Gunther Dead,” *New York Times* 30 May 1970, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Press historians documenting the rise of women journalists in the United States frequently take biographical approaches to their studies. See: Barbara Belford’s *Brilliant Bylines: A Biographical Anthology of Notable Newspaperwomen in America* (New York: Columbia Press, 1986); Marion Marzolf, *Up from the Footnote: A History of Women Journalists* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1977); Julia Edwards, *Women of the World: The Great Foreign Correspondents* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988); Linda Lumsden, “You’re a Tough Guy, Mary – and

period both the government and the news media sought to introduce women readers to international relations and American foreign policy. Eleanor Roosevelt referred to women journalists as “interpreters to the women of the country,” and in 1934 publicly commented that “women of the United States are reading the entire newspaper, rather than just the women’s pages today.” While not all women agreed with the First Lady’s statement that “women had deserted the women’s pages,” newspaper publishers were beginning to address a more widespread female readership.¹¹⁰

a First-Rate Newspaperman’: Gender and Women Journalists in the 1920s and 1930s,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 72:4 (1995) 913-921; Maurine Beasley, “Women and Journalism in World War II: Discrimination and Progress,” *American Journalism* 12:3 (1995) 321-333; Linda Steiner, “Gender at Work: Early Accounts of Women Journalists,” *Journalism History* 23:1 (1997) 2-12; Jan Whitt, *Women in American Journalism: A New History*, (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 2008). While women worked sporadically in journalism during the last half of the nineteenth century, they were usually employed with small town newspapers, and rarely had by-lined articles. In the late nineteenth century women journalists found higher-profile work with larger urban newspapers and magazines as many publishers began explicitly “women’s pages” and sections in newspapers, and more women’s magazines. (Dustin Harp, *Desperately Seeking Women Readers: Newspapers and the Construction of a Female Readership* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2007) 1). Other developments in journalism that emphasized the “women’s angle” in news reporting, like the rise of “yellow journalism,” “stunt girl” reporters and “sob sisters,” also lead to the increase in women journalists. (Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote*, 32; Patricia Bradley, *Women and the Press: the Struggle for Equality* (Northwestern University Press, 2005) 120-123; Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 3-4). According to Ishbel Ross’ 1936 study there were over 300 women regularly employed as newspaper reporters throughout the United States by 1903. (*Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women In Journalism by an Insider* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936) 22). Steiner’s article states that by 1930 there were nearly 12,000 women working as editors or reporters in the newspaper and magazine industry. (“Gender at Work,” 4). Both contemporaries like Ross, and historians like Marzolf and Bradley denote McCormick and Thompson as two women journalists who successfully broke out of the narrow “women’s angle” journalism by concentrating on foreign events and politics. (Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 360; Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote*, 54-55; Bradley, *Women and the Press*, 185).

¹¹⁰ Maurine Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media: A Public Quest for Self-Fulfillment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987) 45; “President’s Wife Sees New News Trends,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 April 1934, 1, 9. Following Eleanor Roosevelt’s statements in the *New York Herald Tribune* several women wrote letters to the papers insisting that the women’s pages of the paper were still relevant for women who took care of their own homes, “as a wife and mother should,” and had no servants to help around the house like the First Lady had. (Letters to the Editor of the *New York Herald Tribune* 3 May 1934 and 5 May 1934).

Eleanor Roosevelt's all female press conferences, which began in March 1933, were a conspicuous example of this effort to reach more women through the media. During the Great Depression newspaper publishers cut one third of their salaried reporters, and women journalists, who wrote primarily "soft news" like society features, were frequently the targets for these cut-backs. The First Lady's all-women press conferences were an effort to help maintain employment for women journalists. However, male colleagues frequently criticized the exclusivity of these news conferences.¹¹¹ In his 1941 book *Washington Dateline* Delbert Clark suggested that the First Lady's press conferences were detrimental to women journalists:

There is reason for grave doubt whether the ultimate professional stature of women as newspaper writers has not been retarded rather than advanced by Mrs. Roosevelt's kindness... If the women correspondents has to compete on equal terms with the men, they will not be able to do it through the medium of chit-chat press conferences for ladies only.

While many of the women journalists who participated in the First Lady's press conferences were grateful for their access and their ability to maintain their positions with newspapers, others consciously avoided the exclusive meetings. Neither Thompson nor McCormick attended the First Lady's press conferences. Eleanor Roosevelt personally arranged McCormick's initial access to the

¹¹¹ Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media*, 43, 47; Betty Houchin Winfield, "Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association: The First Lady Shines a Light," *Journalism History* 8:2 (1981), 54; For works on Eleanor Roosevelt's relationship with the press, especially her press conferences see: Beasley, "Lorena A. Hickok: Journalistic Influence on Eleanor Roosevelt," *Journalism Quarterly* 57:2 (1980) 281-286; Beasley, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Press Conferences: Symbolic Importance of Pseudo-Events," *Journalism Quarterly* 61:2 (1984) 274-279, 338; Beasley, "Eleanor Roosevelt's Vision of Journalism: A Communications Medium for Women," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 16:1 (1986) 66-75; Beasley, "The Women's National Press Club: Case Study in Professional Aspirations," *Journalism History* 15:4 (1988) 112-121; Beasley, *First Ladies and the Press: The Unfinished Partnership of the Media Age* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005).

president, and confided to her friend Lorena Hickok that she felt snubbed by McCormick's failure to attend her press conferences. Historian Maurine Beasley notes that McCormick's boycott of the First Lady's press conferences illustrated a common tendency among some successful women journalists: "Women who succeeded in journalism often identified with male figures, both in terms of news sources and their own professional mentors." Thompson also eschewed the entrapments of "women's journalism" by focusing her career on foreign correspondence.¹¹²

Thompson began her career as a freelance writer in Europe shortly after the end of the First World War. She worked as a correspondent for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post* in Vienna from 1920 to 1924, and headed the Berlin bureau of the *Public Ledger* from 1924 until 1928.¹¹³ In the late 1920s Thompson became known in the United States from her journalistic activities and developments in her personal life. Thompson

¹¹² Clark, *Washington Dateline*, 217-218. Bess Furman was the top woman reporter with the Associated Press's Washington bureau, and became a close friend and ally of Eleanor Roosevelt. (Beasley, *First Ladies and the Press*, 15-17). See also Bess Furman, *Washington By-line: The Personal History of a Newspaperwoman* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949). Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media*, 58; Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 317; Beasley and Sheila J. Gibbons, *Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism* (Washington, The American University Press, 1993) 41; Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote*, 14, 55; Winfield, "Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association," 55.

¹¹³ *New York Times* 26 August 1934, "Cartwheel Girl," *Time* 12 June 1939. Marzolf claims that Thompson was the first American woman to head a news bureau in Europe, while Heald claims this distinction belongs to Sigrid Schultz, head of the Berlin bureau of the *Chicago Tribune*. (Marzolf, *Up From the Footnote*, 54; Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, 47, 65). There are two full-length biographies of Thompson based largely on her personal papers at Syracuse University: Marion K. Sanders, *Dorothy Thompson: A Legend in Her Time* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973) and Peter Kurth, *American Cassandra: The Life of Dorothy Thompson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990). Thompson's close friend and fellow journalist Vincent Sheean wrote *Dorothy and Red*, a highly personal account of Thompson's marriage to novelist Sinclair Lewis.

visited the Soviet Union in 1927 to write a series of articles for the *Saturday Evening Post* about the ten year anniversary of the Russian Revolution. She published *The New Russia* in 1928 based on her observations of the Soviet state. In an article about her visit to Russia *Time* magazine described Thompson as “clever...penetrating” and the “curt, mannish newshawk.”¹¹⁴ Thompson’s book was well received in the United States, and there were even suggestions that noted American novelist Theodore Dreiser plagiarized portions of her book in his 1928 book *Dreiser Looks at Russia*.¹¹⁵ Thompson’s profile in the United States rose considerably higher after she married American novelist Sinclair Lewis in 1928. She quit her position with the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and settled with Lewis back in the United States.¹¹⁶ From 1928 to 1936 Thompson sporadically continued her journalistic career, writing freelance articles for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger-Post* syndicate, articles for the *Nation*, a series about Germany for the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Cosmopolitan* magazine, and lecturing across the United States following her expulsion from Germany in 1934. From her experience working in Central Europe Thompson, like Gunther, was keenly aware of the dangers posed by Hitler’s Nazi state. By 1936 Thompson’s reputation as a journalist was firmly established in the United States, and the debut of her column

¹¹⁴ “Sovietdom Penetrated,” *Time* 2 April 1928.

¹¹⁵ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 143-144; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 94.

¹¹⁶ “Sinclair Lewis to Wed Journalist,” *New York Times* 24 April 1928, 17; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 94; Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 221; Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 126.

with the *New York Herald Tribune* marked her emergence as an interpretive columnist of national prominence and prestige.¹¹⁷

Helen Rogers Reid, vice-president of the *New York Herald Tribune* and wife of the publisher, was recognized as a champion of women's rights and advanced the employment of women within the *Herald Tribune's* staff. Under Helen Reid the *Herald Tribune* boasted an impressive staff of female journalists including reporter Ishbel Ross, journalist Marguerite Higgins, literary editor Irita Van Doren, and reporter Emma Bugbee, who frequently covered Eleanor Roosevelt's activities.¹¹⁸ In 1936 Helen Reid hired Thompson to write "a women's commentary, for women, on the news." The column would discuss world affairs "so that even women could understand them." It was envisioned as "a way for wives to understand events without having to ask their husbands." While Helen Reid's original intention for Thompson's column was specifically directed at women it soon became an unqualified success, attracting a considerable following of both sexes. In its cover story of June 1939 *Time* magazine described her appeal: "She appealed to women because she wrote like a woman. She appealed to men because, for a woman, she seemed surprisingly intelligent."¹¹⁹ At the height of her career with the *Herald Tribune*, Thompson's

¹¹⁷ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 139, 158, 159, 204, 218; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 94.

Thompson's expulsion from Germany is discussed in Chapter 2.

¹¹⁸ Kluger, *The Paper*, 221, 286-287, 325-326; "Mrs. Reid Honored for Public Service," *New York Times* 19 November 1935, 3; "Women of Press Receive Awards," *New York Times* 27 June 1939, 19; Beasley, *Eleanor Roosevelt and the Media*, 45; Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, xi; Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 25, 128; Bradley, *Women and the Press*, 217.

¹¹⁹ "Reflective Reporter," *Time* 30 March 1936; Bulman, *Moulders of Opinion*, 20; Fisher, *The Columnists*, 43-44; Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 226; "Cartwheel Girl," *Time* June 12, 1939.

column was syndicated to over 170 newspapers, reaching an estimated 8 million readers. Thompson's column went far beyond its intended audience of women serving as "a force in shaping American public opinion." *Time* magazine's 1939 cover story concluded that she and Eleanor Roosevelt were "undoubtedly the most influential women in the U.S."¹²⁰

While prior to 1920 Thompson had been engaged in advancing the suffragist cause, contemporaries and historians alike comment on her conservative views concerning women's roles in society and her general preference for the company of men. In her article about women journalists Lumsden comments on this: "Aspiring professional women jockeyed to exhibit characteristics white men claimed as their sole province...That dilemma helps explain the puzzling (and hypocritical) aversion for feminism displayed by...Dorothy Thompson."¹²¹

Contemporaries praised Thompson's journalistic activities, but frequently noted and often criticized the "feminine" qualities of her work which they deemed at times as overly emotional, hysterical, and inconsistent. Margaret Marshall's 1938 profile of Thompson published in the *Nation* described her as "our self-appointed anti-fascist Joan of Arc." While Marshall praised Thompson's virulent anti-fascism, she frequently pointed to Thompson's "highly volatile expression"

¹²⁰ Dorothy Thompson Obituary, *New York Times* 1 February 1961; *New York Times*, 13 March 1941; "Cartwheel Girl," *Time* 12 June 1939.

¹²¹ Bulman, *Molders of Opinion*, 15; Fisher, *The Columnists*, 22; Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 226; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 90; Lumsden, "Gender and Women Journalists," 913-915, 918-919. See also Stec's article, "Dorothy Thompson as 'Liberal Conservative' Columnist." Thompson worked for the New York State Women Suffrage Party as an organizer out of Buffalo starting in 1914.

and “red-baiting” as faults in her journalism.¹²² From her upbringing as the daughter of a Methodist minister Thompson was imbued with fundamentally conservative beliefs, especially the belief in the United States as a Christian nation, the importance of family, individual self-sufficiency, and an unflinching confidence in the principles of republican democracy. These beliefs frequently emerged in her hostility to organized labour, her rejection of Roosevelt’s New Deal, and her aversion to the totalitarianism of both the Nazi and Soviet states.¹²³

Time held up Thompson as the embodiment of the “new woman” in the United States: “emancipated, articulate and successful.” Yet in the same article *Time* emphasized Thompson’s macho feminism: “She is a plump, pretty woman...bursting with...sex appeal...she likes men better than women, and when she takes a train she rides in the smoking car.”¹²⁴ Ickes characterized Thompson as the “Cassandra of the Columnists...a sincere and earnest lady who is trying to cover too much ground by setting herself up as a final authority on all social, economic, governmental, national and international questions.”¹²⁵ Yet Ickes’ appraisal was not wholly negative, for he commended her “courage and intelligence” concerning her vigilant stand against the European dictatorships, a

¹²² Margaret Marshall, “Columnists on Parade: Dorothy Thompson,” *Nation* 25 June 1938, 721-723.

¹²³ See Stec, “Dorothy Thompson as ‘Liberal Conservative’ Columnist,”; Stephen Sniegowski, “Unified Democracy: An Aspect of American World War II Interventionist Thought, 1939-1941,” *Maryland Historian* 9:1 (1978) 33-48.

¹²⁴ “Cartwheel Girl,” *Time* 12 June 1939.

¹²⁵ Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 112; “News Columnists Draw Ickes Fire,” *New York Times*, 12 April 1939.

view that Ickes shared with Thompson.¹²⁶ In his 1944 study of columnists Fisher described Thompson as “one of the most overwhelming American females,” and “the archetype of the American woman rampant,” but also praised her journalistic work as “critical” and penetrating.¹²⁷ Bulman’s 1945 book on interpretative journalists praised Thompson’s journalistic qualities, “a penetration in analysis, a soundness in judgment, a grasp in history, psychology, and even philosophy,” but also stressed her more “feminine” faults: “philosophical haziness or eclecticism...emotionalism...inconsistencies.”¹²⁸ Thompson also recognized the dualistic gendered discourse associated with working women. While she frequently advocated traditional, conservative, maternal roles for women in society, Thompson’s own career was both extraordinary and atypical for women of her time.¹²⁹ Thompson once commented that “the educated female is in general, dewomanized,” and described the dilemmas facing working women: “She can be sure that if she is chaste, men will call her cold; if she is brilliant, men will call her ‘like a man’; if she is witty they will suspect her virtue; if she is beautiful they will try to annex her as an asset to their own position; if she has executive abilities they will fear her dominance.”¹³⁰ Thompson faced criticisms and contradictions as she successfully “moved the women’s angle into national

¹²⁶ Gordon, “Why Dorothy Thompson Lost Her Job,” 299; “News Columnists Draw Ickes Fire,” *New York Times* 12 April 1939; Ickes, *America’s House of Lords*, 112.

¹²⁷ Fisher, *The Columnists*, 12, 16-17;

¹²⁸ Bulman, *Molders of Opinion*, 14-15, 20, 24.

¹²⁹ For Thompson’s views on working women see Stec, “Dorothy Thompson as ‘Liberal Conservative’ Columnist,” 167; Dorothy Thompson, “The World – and Women,” *Ladies Home Journal* March 1938; Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 366.

¹³⁰ “Cartwheel Girl,” *Time* 12 June 1939; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 100-101.

commentary in ways that were so far beyond the original boundaries that the women's angle was forgotten." Thompson, along with McCormick who was frequently described by contemporaries and historians as Thompson's "antithesis," represented the most influential and respected women journalists in the United States during the 1930s.¹³¹

McCormick also began her career as a freelance writer in Europe, submitting articles to the *New York Times* in the early 1920s while accompanying her husband on his frequent business trips to Europe, including a series of articles on her observations of the rise of Mussolini in Italy.¹³² She became known as one of the first American journalists to draw attention to the rising Fascist movement in Italy and to correctly predict in 1921 while listening to a speech by Mussolini that "Italy was hearing its master's voice." Like Thompson, McCormick also visited the Soviet Union on the tenth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. However, unlike Thompson, McCormick interviewed the Soviet leader, Joseph Stalin. McCormick published her account of the Soviet state in her 1928 book *The Hammer and the Scythe*.¹³³

It was not until after the death of the *Times* publisher Adolph Ochs, who once commented "we have almost a prohibition against the employment of women on our editorial staff," that the new publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger was

¹³¹ Bradley, *Women and the Press*, 185; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 90.

¹³² Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 169. There is no published biography of Anne O'Hare McCormick, but there are several short biographies published in works like Edwards' *Women of the World* and Belford's *Brilliant Bylines*.

¹³³ McCormick, "The Revolt of the Youth" *New York Times* 5 June 1921, 37; McCormick, "The Swashbuckling Mussolini" *New York Times* 22 July 1923; McCormick, "The Man the World Watches" *New York Times* 1 Sept. 1935; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 78-80;

able to provide McCormick a salaried post on the *Times*.¹³⁴ In reaction to the *New York Herald Tribune*'s acquisition of Thompson as a political columnist, the owners of the *New York Times* appointed McCormick to the editorial board of the paper in June 1936, and she began writing her own column on foreign affairs entitled "In Europe" starting in February 1937. While the *New York Times* was proud to boast that McCormick was the "first woman to serve as a regular contributor to the editorial page," in her letter of acceptance McCormick voiced her concern to Sulzberger regarding her position as a token *female* journalist on the editorial board:

It gives me immense satisfaction to break a precedent, and even more to know that the *Times* at last wants me where I have long felt I belong...I am quite willing to do as much, or as little, public speaking, etc, as necessary to show that the *Times* has a woman on the staff, [but] I hope you won't expect me to revert to "woman's-point-of-view" stuff.¹³⁵

Unlike Helen Reid at the *Herald Tribune*, Sulzberger did not present McCormick with a specific mandate for her editorial work or her column, and her writing for the *Times* continued in its previous vein of reporting and interpreting world affairs.¹³⁶ Judging from considerable published and unpublished letters to the editor, her column in the *Times* attracted a substantial readership of both men and

¹³⁴ Nan Robertson, *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* (New York: Random House, 1992) 14; Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 25. According to the memoir of Ochs' daughter, Iphigene Sulzberger, Iphigene was partially responsible for Arthur Hays Sulzberger's decision to promote McCormick to the editorial board and provide her a salaried post with the *New York Times*. (Susan Dryfoos, *Iphigene: Memoirs of Iphigene Ochs Sulzberger of the New York Times* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1979) 162).

¹³⁵ Edwards, *Women of the World*, 81; Letter from McCormick to Sulzberger, 16 May 1936, Box AHS Bio-44, Folder "McCormick, Anne O'Hare," Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers, *New York Times* Archive, New York. McCormick's column was originally titled "In Europe," then changed to "Affairs in Europe," and eventually called "Abroad."

¹³⁶ Memo by Sulzberger, 27 Nov. 1936. "that broadly speaking, the column would be devoted to international affairs". Box AHS Bio-44, Folder McCormick, Anne O'Hare, Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers.

women. The *New York Times* advertised McCormick's column as "trenchant and penetrating comments and observations that make readily understandable what is going on abroad."¹³⁷ In her 1936 book journalist Ishbel Ross called McCormick's appointment to the editorial board of the *New York Times* a "landmark for women in journalism." McCormick's work was praised by many of her contemporaries, including Villard who said, "few can write so thoughtfully and painstakingly as Anne O'Hare McCormick." Her work was recognized by several awards in the journalism community, including the 1937 Pulitzer Prize for foreign correspondence, the first awarded to a woman.¹³⁸

Journalism historian Barbara Belford stresses McCormick's Catholicism in her biographical entry about McCormick. According to Belford McCormick was raised in a devoutly Catholic family and was educated in Catholic schools. Before she became a writer for the *New York Times* McCormick worked along with her mother writing for the *Catholic Universe Bulletin*, and became the associate editor for the publication. McCormick also wrote articles praising the Pope's intervention in international crises, and in May 1940 the Pope received McCormick and her husband in a private audience.¹³⁹ McCormick's conservative Catholicism emerged in her early articles about Mussolini, whom she praised for

¹³⁷ Memo from AHS, 27 November 1936, Box AHS BIO-44 "McAnery-McDonald, James," Folder "McCormick, Anne O'Hare," *New York Times* Archive, New York; "What's Behind the News From Europe?" *New York Times* 21 February 1937, 13.

¹³⁸ Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 150; Villard, *The Disappearing Daily*, 74-75; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 82.

¹³⁹ Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 169; Edwards, *Women of the World*, 76; McCormick, "Vatican Disturbed by Geneva Moves," *New York Times* 15 October 1935, 15; McCormick, "Europe: Vatican Move May be a Sign Danzig Talks are Near," *New York Times* 29 May 1939, 8; "Pope Receives the McCormick's," *New York Times* 4 May 1940, 4;

saving Italy from the atheism of a communist revolution. She was also strongly critical of the anti-religious stance of Soviet Russia.

Like Thompson, McCormick was well aware of her precarious position as a female journalist in the crowded world of male egos at the *New York Times*. As she once said of herself and other newspaperwomen:

We had tried hard not to act like ladies or to talk like ladies are supposed to talk – meaning too much – but just to sneak toward the city desk and the cable desk, and the editorial sanctum and even the publisher’s office with masculine sang-froid.¹⁴⁰

In order to be taken seriously in the “masculine” domain of “hard” journalism McCormick, like Thompson, avoided the First Lady’s press conferences and concentrated her work on politics and foreign affairs. Before she became a salaried member of the *Times* editorial board McCormick wrote to *Times* publisher Sulzberger concerning an offer from the *Ladies Home Journal* for a series of monthly articles which McCormick described as “woman’s-point-of-view stuff, which I dislike heartily and wouldn’t even consider if it conflicted with the *Times* work.”¹⁴¹ Publicly McCormick appeared conservative in her views of women and gender roles and never actively supported feminist causes. Yet privately McCormick frequently encouraged women to seek careers.¹⁴²

Freda Kirchwey’s career followed a very different path from either Thompson or McCormick. Kirchwey was brought up in a family of reformers, influenced by her father, George Kirchwey, who worked as a lawyer,

¹⁴⁰ Robertson, *The Girls in the Balcony*, 42.

¹⁴¹ Letter McCormick to Sulzberger, 28 Dec. 1934. Box AHS Bio-44, Folder McCormick, Anne O’Hare, Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers.

¹⁴² Belford, *Brilliant Bylines*, 167.

criminologist, prison reformer, and world peace advocate.¹⁴³ While in college Kirchwey joined protests over working conditions for factory workers and actively supported the suffragist cause, speaking out for the cause in her early journalism career with the *New York Morning Telegraph* in 1916. She began her long involvement with the *Nation* in 1918, a relationship that continued until 1955.¹⁴⁴

In 1919 Kirchwey became editor of the *Nation's* new International Relations Section, and quickly established her mark on its political outlook by being one of the first American publications to print the new Soviet constitution. She also started writing unsigned editorials in the *Nation*, frequently criticizing Allied intervention in the Russian civil war and presenting a pro-Bolshevik perspective of the new Soviet state.¹⁴⁵ Throughout the 1920s Kirchwey continued to support social reform movements through her work with the *Nation*, including the improvement of working conditions and the right to unionize and strike, campaigns against infant mortality, and for the dissemination of birth control information.¹⁴⁶ Kirchwey was promoted to Acting Managing Editor of the *Nation* in 1922, and in 1928 became the *Nation's* literary editor. However, Kirchwey was forced to take a leave of absence from the *Nation* from 1930 to 1932 to care

¹⁴³ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 10; "Dr. Kirchwey Dies; Criminologist, 86," *New York Times* 5 March 1942, 23.

¹⁴⁴ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 11-12, 20-27, 30; "Freda Kirchwey, 82, Dies; Long Editor of The Nation," *New York Times* 4 January 1976, 47.

¹⁴⁵ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 33-34;

¹⁴⁶ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 37, 40-41.

for her ailing son.¹⁴⁷ Soon after her return in 1932 Villard handed editorial control of the journal to a board of four that included Kirchwey. Although Kirchwey did not write signed articles or editorials for the *Nation* until 1939, her personal views and beliefs became increasingly apparent in the change of tone of the journal following Villard's resignation as editor. Kirchwey increasingly used the *Nation* as a "propaganda journal" in the active fight against fascism. Unlike her work in the 1920s, Kirchwey no longer concentrated primarily on social reform and women's issues, instead emphasizing international affairs and the role of the United States in the world.¹⁴⁸

Kirchwey criticized American Neutrality legislation, especially during the Spanish Civil War, and believed that fascism must be actively resisted through collective action, including American participation. Her crusading interventionist views expressed in the editorial tone of the *Nation* increasingly conflicted with Villard's strident belief in pacifism. After the outbreak of war in Europe Kirchwey used the *Nation* to call for active American support for the Allies fighting against the fascist forces in Europe, and became an out-spoken supporter of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies.¹⁴⁹ Kirchwey was praised by her contemporaries for promoting "international liberalism," and for making the *Nation* a "potent force in influencing those who influence others – newspaper writers, liberal college professors and leaders of community discussion

¹⁴⁷ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 46, 79, 83.

¹⁴⁸ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 99; Elizabeth Perry, "When Gender Makes a Difference: Three Approaches," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 20 (1989) 224-225.

¹⁴⁹ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 131; "Isolationism Held a Menace to U.S.," *New York Times* 30 August 1940, 9; "Ex-Pacifists Favor War if Necessary," *New York Times* 29 April 1941, 9;

groups.”¹⁵⁰ While her influence and significance was frequently hidden behind unsigned editorials, historians have also recognized Kirchwey’s impact on American journalism in the decade leading up to American intervention in the Second World War. In her study of American women and intervention historian Margaret Paton-Walsh uses Kirchwey, along with Thompson and McCormick, as the most prominent and significant examples of interventionist American women journalists.¹⁵¹ Like Thompson and McCormick Kirchwey was among the key figures working in “hard” journalism, frequently viewed as the domain of male writers and readers. Her personal beliefs made a lasting impact on the editorial tone of the *Nation*, and like Thompson and McCormick she had a significant voice in interpretative journalism in the United States.

These six journalists came from different backgrounds and followed different career paths on their way to becoming influential and respected interpreters of European events. Their personal beliefs and ideological predispositions were frequently apparent in their interpretations of the events they reported. Their ideological beliefs placed them throughout the political spectrum. Thompson and McCormick, for example, shared fairly conservative and anti-communist beliefs. Lippmann was far more cautious and moderate in his views of the Soviet Union, and was an early advocate for American recognition. Kirchwey appeared on the opposite end of the spectrum from Thompson and

¹⁵⁰ “1,300 Here Honor Freda Kirchwey,” *New York Times* 28 February 1944, 11; Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 160-161.

¹⁵¹ Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 18-20. See also Perry, “When Gender Makes a Difference,” 225.

McCormick, and never hid her admiration and support for the Soviet state. In 1933 there was little reason to believe that Gunther, Kirchwey, Krock, Lippmann, McCormick or Thompson were predisposed to support American intervention in a European war. Lippmann and Krock, for example, had both been supporters of Wilsonian internationalism in their youth, but by the early 1930s they shared more conservative beliefs and were hesitant to endorse American involvement in another European war. Kirchwey's background, raised in the household of a prominent peace advocate and working for Villard's pacifist *Nation*, also made her unlikely to support American military intervention in Europe. Thompson and Gunther, on the other hand, shared experiences as foreign correspondents in Central Europe, and were more suspicious in 1933 of the Nazi regime in Germany, but at the same time were willing to overlook the undemocratic aspects of Dollfuss' regime in Austria. In contrast, McCormick's Catholicism and her belief that Mussolini's 'March on Rome' prevented a communist state in Italy, resulted in her outspoken admiration for the fascist leader and his state.

American news journalism in the decade before American intervention in the Second World War was marked by several interrelated developments. Independent daily newspapers were disappearing as large newspaper chains and media empires grew. The economic pressures of the Depression resulted in more direct business, advertising, and corporate control of newspapers and newsmagazines. The constraints of the Depression led to a decrease in newspaper foreign services, as the work of foreign correspondents was replaced by wire

services. Radio also posed significant competition to print news media. While the editorial tone of many newspapers became “emasculated” during this period, interpretative journalism and syndicated newspaper columnists rose to national prominence. Krock, Lippmann and Gunther represented three of the most prominent interpreters of European events and American policy. Thompson, McCormick and Kirchwey were rare examples of women journalists who successfully competed with their male colleagues in interpreting foreign affairs for the American public. Together this group of interpretive journalists interpreted European events through lenses based on their own beliefs, and shared frameworks, eventually calling for American intervention in the European war. Their journalism was read by policy makers, and an American public increasingly alarmed by the actions of the fascist dictators in Europe. But in January 1933 the American public was largely disinterested in European events, their attention focused on the domestic problems of the Depression and the upcoming inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. And so when Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany, many in the American press reported the event as little reason for alarm in the United States.

Chapter 2 – The “little man” Hitler to Mussolini’s “sword rattling” January 1933 to October 1935

From Hitler’s appointment as chancellor of Germany in January 1933 to Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935, American journalists attempted to present to the American public the series of complex events that transpired in Europe. This was not an easy task. The Depression and domestic economic problems consumed the attention of the public, leaving only a small group of Americans, mostly bankers and businessmen concerned with issues of foreign debts, currency and trade, who paid much attention to European affairs. Yet a series of crucial events – Hitler’s appointment as chancellor and the beginnings of the National Socialist dictatorship in Germany, the collapse of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, the murder of Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss and the attempted Nazi putsch in Austria, the announcement of German rearmament, and Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia – eventually captured the attention of the American press and public as Europe again appeared to teeter on the brink of war.

From 1933 to 1935 John Gunther, Freda Kirchwey, Arthur Krock, Walter Lippmann, Anne O’Hare McCormick and Dorothy Thompson were far from unified in their interpretations of these events. Though an amalgam of factors coloured reporting – American exceptionalism, belief in Anglo-Saxon community, Social Darwinism – several of these journalists emphasized gendered explanations in their descriptions of the personal qualities and characteristics of European national leaders. Thompson and McCormick in particular frequently

presented personal portraits of Hitler and Mussolini, judging them by their leadership qualities instead of their undefined and yet undemonstrated foreign policies. This is particularly evident in the early reports of Hitler as chancellor, in which journalists underestimated him partly because his appearance did not conform to dominant masculine conceptions of a leader. On the other hand, these journalists portrayed Mussolini favourably precisely for this reason – his bellicosity and evident masculinity was in keeping with the idealized image of a leader. Elsewhere the struggle to maintain Austrian independence and the murder of Dollfuss was played out in the American press as a highly gendered melodrama. Dollfuss was the tragic masculine hero David, who along with the virile knightly protector of Austria Mussolini, fought to protect the soft, helpless, and feminine damsel in distress Austria from the Goliath of Nazi Germany. Such notions were also extended to Britain and France which were seen as weak and vacillating, pacific and pessimistic, unable to stand firmly against the increasingly aggressive and militaristic Germany.

Yet gender was only one factor that shaped these journalists' interpretations of European events. Throughout this period they viewed events through a variety of interpretative lenses, at times emphasizing race or American exceptionalism, demonstrating the nuanced and overlapping nature of these interpretative frameworks. In this period we also see early examples in their reports of the attempted Nazi coup in Austria, of what becomes the dominant and unifying paradigm for their explanations of European events: the European

dictators represented the forces of barbarism bent on the destruction of western civilization.

Germany and Hitler

When the “son of poor parents in Austria” became chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933, Americans were looking hopefully towards the debut of the Roosevelt administration. This is not to say that the press ignored Hitler’s appointment as chancellor. The *New York Times*, for example, published over four hundred news items during February and March 1933 concerning political events in Germany.¹ Major newspapers and news magazines reported Hitler’s appointment to chancellor in subdued, almost muted tones. The American press initially downplayed the threat of political radicalism in Germany. The excessively optimistic American faith in democracy, coupled with praise of President Paul von Hindenburg, who was personified in the press as a strong and faithful leader, coloured journalists’ interpretations and misinformed the American public.²

Historian Gary Klein singles out the *New York Times* for misleading the American public in its coverage of Hitler’s first few months in office. According to Klein, although most newspapers and political commentators in America reported Hitler’s appointment as chancellor with “a lack of alarm,” the *Times* was

¹ Gary Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit: The *New York Times* and Hitler’s First Two Months In Office, February/March 1933,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 71:1 (2001) 127.

² George Herrmann, “American Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany, January 1932-March 1933,” (PhD Dissertation, Carnegie Mellon University, 1979) 2, 33, 49; Ronnie Faulkner, “American Reaction to Hindenburg of the Weimar Republic, 1925-1934,” *Historian* 51:3 (1989) 419.

particularly guilty for “both the degree and, more important, the *duration* of its rosy views.”³ On 31 January the *Times* front page declared that Hitler, by leading the new coalition government as chancellor, “puts aside aims to be dictator.” That day’s issue discussed the factional disputes within the Nazi party, the influence of powerful industrialists and Vice Chancellor Franz von Papen on Hitler’s actions, and the general decrease in the support of the Nazi party apparent in the recent elections.⁴ The story stressed the dominance of Conservatives in the coalition government, and how the minority position of the National Socialists would circumscribe Hitler’s “dictatorial ambition.”⁵ In sum, the *Times* reacted to Hitler’s appointment as chancellor by questioning his power within the new government. “Compromise” became the operative word used to describe Hitler’s ascension to power.⁶

Klein argues that the *Times*’ editorials presented an overly optimistic picture of Hitler constrained by the coalition government.⁷ The *Times* deliberately downplayed disturbing reports from Germany – especially stories describing the National Socialists’ anti-Semitic activities. The publishers of the *Times*, Adolph Ochs and his successor Arthur Hays Sulzberger, were Jews of German descent. But as Anti-Zionists who believed that Judaism was a religious, not a racial category, they sought to deflect criticisms that the *Times* was a

³ Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit,” 128.

⁴ “Hitler Puts Aside Aim to Be Dictator,” *New York Times* 31 January 1933, 1.

⁵ Guido Enderis, “Group Formed By Papen,” *New York Times* 31 January 1933, 1, 3.

⁶ “Leading Figures in the New Compromise Government Which Took Office in Germany,” *New York Times* 31 January 1933, 3; Emil Lengyel, “Hitler at the Top of His Dizzy Path: At Last He Receives the Chancellorship but not Without Compromise,” *New York Times* 5 February 1933, SM3, SM16.

⁷ Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit,” 134.

“Jewish newspaper” by frequently suppressing stories that appeared to focus attention on Jews.⁸ Even in March 1933, when most American newspapers strongly criticized the Nazi persecution of Jews, the *Times*’ editorial board continued to downplay events in Germany, convincing their readers that there was little cause for alarm regarding Adolf Hitler.⁹ As a result, the *Times* minimized and underestimated the threat of Hitler as chancellor during his first few months in office.

The *Times*’ initial underestimation of Hitler as chancellor was not an isolated opinion in the American press. Dorothy Thompson, who would become one of the most outspoken American critics of the Nazi regime, interviewed the Nazi leader in December 1931. In *I Saw Hitler!*, Thompson surmised that Hitler would never really amount to much.¹⁰ From her post in Berlin as correspondent and Central European bureau chief for the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and the *New York Evening Post* from 1925 to 1928, Thompson witnessed the optimistic years of the Weimar Republic, and after her departure from the Berlin bureau she watched with dismay the rise of the National Socialists and the corresponding decline of the Weimar Republic. Although she had attempted to interview the Nazi leader as early as 1923 following the abortive Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler did not agree to speak with Thompson until 1931, after she had established her

⁸ Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit,” 142; Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 20.

⁹ Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit,” 134.

¹⁰ “Cartwheel Girl,” *Time* 12 June 1939.

reputation as an informed observer of German affairs by publishing magazine articles and conducting a lecture tour in America.¹¹

As she waited for her audience with Hitler Thompson believed she was meeting “the future dictator of Germany.” Yet upon their first meeting she immediately dismissed Hitler, the man who “set the world agog,” as insignificant.¹² Throughout a slim volume published in 1932, Thompson repeatedly described Hitler as “the very prototype of the Little Man,” and a “drummer-boy.” In gender-charged language clearly meant to emasculate the “probable dictator,” Thompson swiftly and deftly belittled Hitler, the self-proclaimed “Man of Destiny.” Of his physical countenance, Thompson described Hitler as “inconsequent and voluble, ill-poised, insecure...awkward, almost undignified and most un-martial...ungainly, insignificant, with his awkward figure, and ridiculous little moustache.” She derided Hitler’s appeal as “the soft, almost feminine charm of the Austrian!” Repeatedly Thompson attacked Hitler’s character, speeches and program as “hysterical.” She noted that “in moments of extreme emotion he weeps,” and that his own followers believed Hitler to be “emotionally unstable.” According to Thompson, Hitler possessed neither the physical or personal characteristics of a great leader, or a great man. In *I Saw Hitler!* Thompson exposed the would-be dictator as a “Little Man.”

Privately, Thompson continued her attack on the masculinity of Hitler and his Nazi followers. In a diary entry written just days before Hitler became

¹¹ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 158-159; Dorothy Thompson, *I Saw Hitler!* (New York: Farrar and Rhinehart, 1932), 3.

¹² Thompson, *I Saw Hitler!* 12-14, 38.

chancellor, she described the dubious virility (and sexual orientation) of the National Socialists as “a lot of many-haired bugger boys.”¹³ Thompson contrasted Hitler’s questionable masculinity and leadership qualities with other German leaders, including the late foreign secretary Gustav Stresemann, and the present president of the republic Paul von Hindenburg. She described the deceased Stresemann, the architect of the Locarno Pact, as tactful, intelligent, tenacious, optimistic, and the man responsible for “enormously restoring Germany’s prestige in Europe.” Thompson portrayed Hindenburg as a soldier first and foremost, who was driven by “a soldier’s sense of duty and loyalty to his oath.” According to Thompson, the “Little Man” Hitler had none of the leadership qualities or characteristics possessed by either Stresemann or Hindenburg.

I Saw Hitler! had ramifications. In August 1934 Thompson returned to Austria and Germany to report on the consequences of the “Night of the Long Knives” and the murder of Dollfuss. Her visit to Germany revealed the German government’s reaction to her unflattering portrait of Hitler published years earlier. Since the advent of Hitler as chancellor Thompson had visited Germany five times without complications, but on 25 August 1934, she was officially expelled from Germany by order of the German government.¹⁴ In his front page story *New York Times*’ correspondent in Berlin Frederick Birchall announced that Thompson “has been expelled – politely, it is true, but nevertheless expelled.” According to

¹³ Thompson diary entry, 5 January 1933, Series IV, Box 1, Diaries, Folder 3 “1931-1932, 1935-1936,” Papers of Dorothy Thompson, Syracuse University, Syracuse.

¹⁴ Sheean, *Dorothy and Red.*, 249.

Birchall and Thompson, her expulsion was a result of the “detrimental” and “not flattering” portrait of Hitler written *before* he was Chancellor of Germany.¹⁵ Her expulsion was related to Hitler’s personal offence at her portrayal of him, “I really was put out of Germany for the crime of blasphemy...My offense was to think that Hitler is just an ordinary man, after all.”¹⁶

Other journalists and news stories reiterated the view that *I Saw Hitler!* was the reason for Thompson’s expulsion from Germany. William Shirer, stationed in Berlin for the Universal News Service, recorded in his diary on 26 August 1934 that Thompson had been expelled “for the book *I Saw Hitler*, which, at that, badly underestimated the man.”¹⁷ A story in *Time* titled “Little Man” concluded that Thompson’s expulsion from Germany was a result of “the thin booklet that resulted from that interview, [which] has made Brownshirts see red ever since.”¹⁸ An editorial in the *Nation* also concluded that Thompson was expelled for a crime against Hitler’s “vanity,” and her inability to be “impressed by *der schone Adolf*.”¹⁹ Vincent Sheean, a personal friend of Thompson and fellow foreign correspondent, concluded that Thompson’s expulsion from Germany “made Dorothy into a heroine.”²⁰

¹⁵ Frederick Birchall, “Dorothy Thompson Expelled by Reich for ‘Slur’ on Hitler,” *New York Times* 26 August 1934, 1, 3; “Ousting Mystifies Dorothy Thompson,” *New York Times* 27 August 1934, 8.

¹⁶ “Dorothy Thompson Tells of Nazi Ban,” *New York Times* 27 August 1934, 8.

¹⁷ William Shirer, *Berlin Diary: The Journal of a Foreign Correspondent, 1934-1941*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941) 15.

¹⁸ “Little Man,” *Time* 3 September 1934.

¹⁹ “Editorial Paragraphs,” *Nation* 5 September 1934, 255.

²⁰ Sheean, *Dorothy and Red*, 251.

Thompson was not the first American journalist forced to leave Berlin. Edgar Ansel Mowrer – foreign correspondent in Berlin for the *Chicago Daily News* – left Germany abruptly in September 1933, fearing “that he was in danger of physical violence had he stayed in the country.”²¹ According to news reports the German government regarded Mowrer’s book, *Germany Puts the Clock Back*, as an attack on the National Socialist government.²² However, Thompson’s expulsion was a result of a book published in 1931, *before* Hitler became head of the present German government. The question is why Thompson was so clearly and explicitly targeted by the German government? The suggestion made in the news articles was that Hitler was personally offended by her “mocking depiction” of himself. Thompson’s biographer states that Hitler was offended by both the content of her portrait of the Nazi leader, and also by the fact that the portrait was written by a woman. Her emasculation of the Nazi leader in the 1931 interview “had ridiculed Hitler in a way no gentleman would.”²³

If Hitler’s intention was to silence Thompson, the opposite resulted. Thompson became a celebrity in her own right, a heroine bravely standing up to the tyrannical Nazi government. She became a household name, not just for her marriage to American novelist Sinclair Lewis, but as the “dramatic embodiment of the nascent war against fascism.”²⁴ Thompson’s new esteem became evident

²¹ Gunther, “Mowrer Tells How he Left Post in Berlin,” *Chicago Daily News* 5 September 1933, 2.

²² “Hitler Snubs Foreign Press Correspondents,” *Chicago Daily News* 8 June 1933, 2; “Kickbacks and Shakeups,” *Time* 18 September 1933.

²³ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 202.

²⁴ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 202-204.

with the impending publication of her article “Farewell to Germany,” the account of her trip to Austria and Germany just before her expulsion from Germany. Thompson originally sold the article to *Cosmopolitan* for \$1,800, but press lord William Randolph Hearst – who owned *Cosmopolitan* – personally prevented her story from being published in the magazine. Hearst had a reputation for being pro-German and had just returned from Germany where he met Hitler. In the end Thompson sold the article to *Harper’s* where it was published in December 1934.²⁵

The episode demonstrates the effectiveness of Thompson’s explicitly gendered criticisms of Hitler in *I Saw Hitler!* The German government’s expulsion seemed to suggest that there was something personally offensive and threatening to the prestige and esteem of Hitler in Thompson’s dismissal of the Nazi dictator as a “Little Man.” Hitler had recently demonstrated through the “Night of the Long Knives” his willingness to use violent methods to consolidate power. Thompson’s expulsion demonstrated that the Nazi regime would not tolerate such criticisms, especially from a woman, but it was also clear evidence of the repressive nature of Hitler’s Germany.

John Gunther, Thompson’s good friend and colleague from her days as a foreign correspondent in Europe, did not share her assessment of Hitler’s potential. While the *New York Times* and other American newspapers reported Hitler’s rise to power calmly, Gunther’s articles for the *Chicago Daily News*

²⁵ Gunther Diary Entry, 24 October 1934, ADD 1, Box 9, Folder “Famous People,” Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago, Chicago.

presented a far more menacing picture of political events. From his post in Vienna as foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News* since 1930, Gunther viewed the rise of the National Socialists in Germany with increasing anxiety and trepidation. Gunther reported on Hitler's ascension to chancellor, and his story appearing in the *Daily News* on 6 February detailed the repressive acts of the new regime as clear indications of Hitler's dictatorial plans. He described the "steel muzzle" of the new government as "comparable only to the gag laws of fascist Italy and soviet Russia."²⁶ In contrast to early reports in the *New York Times* and the "caged Hitler" theory that had wide currency in the American press, Gunther warned that rather than being constrained by the structures of parliamentary democracy, "Hitler was willing, in fact eager...to scrap the constitution."²⁷ Gunther reported Hitler's purge of the civil service as indicative of his desire to consolidate power in the manner of Mussolini in Italy.²⁸

In May and June 1933 Gunther published a series of articles in the *Chicago Daily News* after visiting Hitler's birthplace in Austria. These articles - which appeared in *Vanity Fair* and *Harper's*, and also in newspapers in Germany

²⁶ Gunther, "Hitler Regime Muzzles Foes By Press Gag," *Chicago Daily News* 6 February 1933, 2.

²⁷ Klein, "When the News Doesn't Fit," 136; Herrmann, "American Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany," 163; Gunther, "Hitler Defies Constitution to Obtain Power," *Chicago Daily News* 7 February 1933, 2.

²⁸ Gunther, "Hitler Sweeps Out Police and Prussian Civil Service; All Republicans Are Ousted," *Chicago Daily News* 14 February 1933, 2. While Mussolini came to power in 1922 in Italy, the move to dictatorship did not begin until 1925, following the murder of the prominent socialist politician Giacomo Matteotti. (Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini: A Biography* (New York: Vintage Books, 1982) 76-86). Throughout the life of the fascist regime in Italy Mussolini's dictatorship was never complete and universal, and autonomous centres of power continued to exist such as the monarchy, the army, industry and the church.

and Switzerland – created a sensation.²⁹ Gunther described the boy Adolf Hitler as “moonstruck, dreamy, impractical and not in the least carved of dictator stuff.” He concluded that Hitler’s relationship with his parents – a mother he adored and a father he hated – created an Oedipus complex that transformed him into a “strangely twisted person emotionally.” Gunther also visited the Austrian village that was home to Hitler’s family on his mother’s side. He described the poor peasant folk that were kin to the German dictator, including Hitler’s hunchback cousin. Gunther revealed to American readers that Hitler’s mother had been a servant of his father, and Hitler’s father was rumoured to have been an illegitimate child.³⁰ His depiction of Hitler’s humble background and the somewhat scandalous family tree, contrasted with the Nazi portrait of Hitler as an austere, noble, and upright leader of good German ‘stock.’ Gunther emphasized the many apparent contradictions: a man preaching the purity of German blood and the natural strength of the so-called Aryan race, whose first cousin was a physically deformed Austrian peasant; a man calling for a return to traditional patriarchal family values, whose father was born out of wedlock. This unflattering account of Hitler’s background would later lead to threats from the Nazi regime. While Gunther was one of the few American journalists to perceive Hitler as a threat to peace in Europe, his reports from Austria rarely made the front page of the *Chicago Daily News*, and most often appeared in the foreign

²⁹ Cuthbertson, *Inside: The Biography of John Gunther*, 99.

³⁰ Gunther, “Hitler Recalled in Native Town as Dreamy Boy,” *Chicago Daily News* 2 May 1933, 2; Gunther, “Hitler’s Relatives in Austria Are Just Plain Farmer Folk,” *Chicago Daily News* 15 June 1933, 2; Gunther, “Hitler’s Mother Was Once a Servant of His Father,” *Chicago Daily News* 16 June 1933, 2.

news section on page two. During the early 1930s Chicago was the centre of isolationism in the mid-West, and both of the city's prominent newspapers, the *Chicago Daily News* and the *Chicago Tribune*, appealed to their audiences with their non-interventionist and isolationist editorial positions.³¹ It was not until the murder of Austrian Chancellor Dollfuss that Gunther's warnings about Hitler's expansionist intentions gain considerable attention in the *Daily News*.

American news magazines, on the other hand, did a better job than newspapers in informing readers about the death of the Weimar Republic and the rise of National Socialism.³² In an editorial published on 8 February 1933, the *Nation* echoed reports in the *New York Times* pointing to the constraints on Hitler poised by Hindenburg and von Papen, "the real head of the Cabinet."³³ However, following the Reichstag Fire and the German elections of 5 March, the *Nation* acknowledged the threat posed by Hitler. Editorials in the *Nation* described Hitler's regime as "autocratic one-man rule modeled on that of Mussolini," and assailed the dictator as "ignorant...incompetent," and "unprincipled."³⁴ Following the wave of anti-Semitic terror that spread through Germany in March 1933 the *Nation* joined the majority of the American press in

³¹ The German government banned *Inside Europe* in October 1937 ("Germany Bans Gunther's Book," *New York Times* 27 October 1937, 5). Following the outbreak of war in Europe Gunther's name was placed on the Gestapo's "death list," and Gunther was to be hung if caught. (Cuthbertson, *Inside: The Biography of John Gunther*, 100). Schneider, "The Battle of the Two Colonels," 7.

³² Herrmann, "Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany," 35, 160.

³³ "Hitler in Power," *Nation* 8 February 1933, 138.

³⁴ "Hitler Wins," *Nation* 15 March 1933, 277.

condemning the Nazi persecution of the Jews.³⁵ The *Nation* described Germany under Hitler as an undemocratic country, characterized by a “nation-wide pogrom” against Jews, Communists, and any critic of the National Socialists.³⁶ While the *Nation*’s early reporting placed the Nazi leader within the constraints of parliamentary democracy, the *Nation* quickly recognized the anti-Semitic program of the regime and Hitler’s movement towards a full dictatorship.³⁷ Other prominent liberal American news magazines such as the *New Republic*, followed in train.

Hitler’s Germany and Fascist Italy

Walter Lippmann of the *New York Herald Tribune*, on the other hand, had recognized the dangers to Weimar’s shaky democracy throughout 1932 and reported Hitler’s appointment to chancellor with greater alarm than the majority of the American press. Although historians have criticized Lippmann (who was Jewish) for suggesting that Jews had caused their own suffering, they have also praised him as one of the few American commentators who drew attention to the demise of the Weimar Republic and the dangers of the National Socialists.³⁸

George Herrmann lauds Lippmann for his columns. According to Herrmann,

³⁵ Herrmann, “Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany,” 184; Klein, “When the News Doesn’t Fit,” 132. Klein contends that the mainstream press reported more heavily on the March 1933 wave of anti-Semitic activities in Germany than any single issue in the history of the Weimar Republic.

³⁶ “Terrorism Rules Germany,” *Nation* 29 March 1933, 332-333.

³⁷ Zalampas, *Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich in American Magazines, 1923-1939* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989) 29.

³⁸ Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief*, 45; Herrmann, “American Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany,” iv, 201-202.

Lippmann attempted to educate his readers about the importance of these international events, and the dangers to Weimar.³⁹

Lippmann built his early analysis of Hitler's regime through a comparison with Mussolini's Fascist Italy. Many American journalists frequently utilized this comparison in their explanations of the Nazi state. Mussolini enjoyed great popularity in America throughout the 1920s and into the early 1930s due in part to extensive press coverage. *Time* featured Mussolini on its cover in 1923 and again in 1926.⁴⁰ According to Lippmann, Mussolini had become a "gradualist" in his policies as compared to his former "adventurous" ways. Hitler, in contrast to Mussolini, was "the most extreme and the most impatient." Despite the similarities between the two regimes, Lippmann described Italian fascism using masculine adjectives such as "realistic and conservative," compared to the more feminine, "highly romantic, nervous, and confused" German variety. Lippmann's analysis concluded that Hitler's version of fascism was inferior Mussolini's. Mussolini had successfully consolidated power within Italy, and it was widely believed by both American journalists and officials in the American government that in a relationship with Hitler, Mussolini would have a moderating influence.⁴¹

Like Lippmann, Anne O'Hare McCormick of the *New York Times* contrasted Hitler's young National Socialist dictatorship in Germany with Mussolini's established fascist dictatorship. McCormick's comparison also

³⁹ Herrmann, "American Journalistic Perceptions of the Death of Weimar Germany," 201-202.

⁴⁰ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 23, 24, 26.

⁴¹ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Hitler and Mussolini," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 February 1933, 17.

placed Hitler in a subordinate role to Mussolini, and also presented Mussolini as a moderating influence on Hitler. On the eve of the Four Power Pact in 1933 - signed by Britain, France, Germany and Italy to maintain the League of Nations' Covenant, the Locarno Treaties and the Kellogg-Briand Pact - McCormick praised Mussolini as the "peacemaker of Europe." McCormick described Mussolini as "the sober statesman," and the "apostle of peace." She credited Mussolini for the "unexpectedly moderate line" in Hitler's recent foreign policy, and described Germany as "following the lead of Rome" in recent international initiatives.⁴² Similarly, Lippmann praised Mussolini's "realistic diplomacy." According to Lippmann, Hitler signed the pact "under Mussolini's leadership," and the attitude and actions of Mussolini prevented a serious crisis in European international relations.⁴³

Lippmann and McCormick's assessment of Mussolini was shared by the Roosevelt administration. Roosevelt's predecessors had praised Mussolini's support of the Locarno Treaties, the Dawes and Young Plans, and the Kellogg-Briand Pact. The White House did not view Italian fascism as an immediate threat to U.S. interests; to the contrary, fascism appeared as a stabilizing force in Italy and a bulwark against Communism. Roosevelt administration officials initially maintained this positive assessment of Italian fascism, which also shaped their views of National Socialism in Germany.⁴⁴ As they saw it, the Four Power

⁴² McCormick, "Mussolini Eager to Maintain Peace," *New York Times* 5 June 1933, 3.

⁴³ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Four-Power Pact," *New York Herald Tribune* 18 July 1933, 17.

⁴⁴ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 33-34.

Pact meant that Italy was now a major power in Europe, and Mussolini was acting as a peacemaker in Europe.⁴⁵ The comparisons between Mussolini's Fascist Italy and Hitler's Nazi Germany made by the American government and the press, explained U.S. appeasement towards Nazi Germany. Hitler, like Mussolini, had been "invited" to participate in the government to quell civil and political unrest. Both Hitler and Mussolini's regimes appeared as necessary bulwarks against communism, which was viewed widely in the American government as the number one threat worldwide. The generally positive image of Mussolini served as a model for expectations of Hitler in power, since following a period of consolidating power Mussolini's radicalism appeared to mellow. Furthermore, the view of Hitler's regime as the immature "child" of fascism, deferential to the mature state of Mussolini, lent credence to policies of accommodation and appeasement. It was believed by many in the American government that once Hitler gained revisions of the most disagreeable aspects of the Treaty of Versailles, his regime would become less radical and oppressive.

The administration's expectations for Hitler's regime were bolstered by reports from several American journalists. For example, McCormick's reports from Germany for the *New York Times* in June and July 1933 frequently praised Hitler's state. In the account of her interview with the Nazi leader McCormick called Hitler "the unquestioned master" of Germany. She noted Hitler's frequent smiles and his "sensitive hand of [an] artist," his admiration for Henry Ford,

⁴⁵ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 263,264,267,270,276; Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 7,138,142; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 48.

Franklin Roosevelt, Mussolini and Oliver Cromwell. McCormick ended the account of her interview with Hitler by describing his exit: “[Hitler] rose, smiled cordially, kissed the interviewer’s hand in the best German manner, turned and marched from the room with a light military step.”⁴⁶ While journalism historians have criticized McCormick’s portrait, contemporary readers of the *New York Times* praised her articles from Berlin, including her personal impressionistic description of Hitler. In a letter to the editor of the *Times* a male reader praised McCormick’s “power of penetration” and her “judgment of men and her sense of perspective.”⁴⁷

While McCormick appeared to have been charmed by Hitler, Mussolini was particularly adept at dealing with foreign journalists. Diggins describes Mussolini’s expertise in swaying foreign journalists through private interviews. While many respected male journalists “were taken in by Mussolini’s punctuality and courteous attention.” Diggins also notes how so many women reporters were won over by the “swashbuckling glamour of the Italian dictator.” According to Diggins the female journalists were less capable of remaining objective in interviews with the “masculine temperament” of Mussolini: “Women reporters, of course, generally concentrated on Mussolini’s personality and physical features, and those who met him personally showed a tendency to melt under his charm.” And of these women journalists, Diggins consistently singles out McCormick as a “devotee” of Mussolini, who “fell under the spell” of the fascist dictator. Diggins

⁴⁶ McCormick, “Hitler Seeks Jobs For All Germans,” *New York Times* 10 July 1933, 1, 6.

⁴⁷ Robert Underwood, “Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*,” *New York Times* 2 August 1933, 14.

describes McCormick's reports on Mussolini as "rhapsodic...purple prose and wistful mood," and a "fantasy portrait of a resurrected Italy."⁴⁸ Diggins judges McCormick's journalism from the podium of hindsight. However, while McCormick's praise of Mussolini appeared overstated, she was only one of a chorus of American journalists who sung Mussolini's praises, especially in contrast to the less predictable Nazi dictator.

Yet McCormick differed from many of her colleagues in her willingness to accept the undemocratic aspects of both the Italian and German dictatorships. For McCormick, unstable democracies like the Weimar Republic, or nations that appeared on the verge of communist revolution like Italy before Mussolini's 'March on Rome,' were far more dangerous than Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany. She shared the inaccurate and exaggerated fear of many American officials who believed that in 1921 Italy had nearly succumbed to communist revolution. Writing from Berlin in September 1933, she attempted to explain the mood and manner of the German people. McCormick characterized the German people as "sick for unity, sick for order, sick for power." According to McCormick, the German people believed that Hitler had "saved the country from disorder, from communism, from disintegration, from the loss of the soul." Her account suggests that she believed that Hitler's ascension to power represented a popular response to the excesses of the Weimar Republic, "a kind of overdue catharsis...in the puritanic reaction against the fashion for the decadent and the obscene which has corrupted the popular taste." McCormick praised the overall

⁴⁸ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 25, 38, 46-47, 62.

effects on the “embittered” and “beleaguered” Germany: “The nation summoned into being has more energy, more faith in itself, more harmony with its own genius, than the artificial democracy it displaces.”⁴⁹ McCormick’s description of Hitler’s rule saving Germany from disaster echoed her earlier articles describing Mussolini’s advent to power in Italy. In an article written in 1923 she not only acknowledged Mussolini’s autocratic rule, but actually endorsed his dictatorship:

No citizen of a strictly limited democracy like ours can imagine the relief of being ruled by a good, strong, forthright autocrat after the absolute, unbridled, impossibly logical form of self-government suffered in Italy. The people were already yearning for a dictatorship when Mussolini appointed himself a dictator.

As a devout Catholic, McCormick saw Mussolini as the only man able to save Italy from the atheistic forces of communism. She described Mussolini’s government as “a miracle of conversion,” and his march on Rome as “an answer to a prayer.” McCormick praised the fascist dictatorship for restoring “national pride” in Italy, and creating a state that was “cheerful, industrious, interested and orderly.” Thanks to Mussolini, “all the railroads were running and running on time.”⁵⁰

McCormick was not the only American journalist who presented a positive portrait of Mussolini to the American public. The American press in

⁴⁹ McCormick, “Behind Germany’s Elemental Upheaval,” *New York Times* 24 September 1933, SM3. Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 264.

⁵⁰ McCormick, “The Swashbuckling Mussolini,” *New York Times* 22 July 1923, BR1. McCormick’s interpretation of Mussolini’s rise to power in Italy was widely shared by the American government at the time. See: David Schmitz, “A Fine Young Revolution’: The United States and the Fascist Revolution in Italy, 1919-1925.” *Radical History Review* 33 (1985) 117-38. Historians have analyzed the impact of anti-Communism on American foreign policy in this period and noted that American policy-makers, as well as their British counterparts, frequently viewed international communism as more of a threat than fascism. See: Douglas Little, “Antibolshevism and American Foreign Policy, 1919-1939: The Diplomacy of Self-Delusion,” *American Quarterly* 35 (1983) 376-390.

general greeted Mussolini's assumption of power as "cautiously friendly and hopeful," viewing the Fascist 'March on Rome' as the triumph of order over the postwar chaos that threatened to consume Italy. Throughout the 1920s - despite the controversy over events like the murder of the Socialist deputy Giacomo Matteotti - Mussolini remained popular in the American press. Many Americans looked towards Mussolini's corporate state as a positive example with the onset of the Depression, and the American press hailed "Italian Fascism as a Business Proposition." The American press frequently and favourably compared Roosevelt's New Deal with Mussolini's corporate state.⁵¹

Geneva Disarmament Conference

The American government and press's generally positive assessment of Mussolini as a stabilizing force for Italy and as the dominant fascist dictator, made them hopeful that Hitler's regime could be moderated. However, Hitler's election "win" in March 1933 threatened the progress of the World Disarmament Conference that had been convening in Geneva since February 1932.⁵² Many Americans viewed the arms race between Britain and Germany before 1914 as one of the main causes of the First World War. Furthermore, there was a growing belief that the United States had been gulled into participation in the war by British and American bankers, businessmen and munitions manufacturers. Americans generally viewed the World Disarmament Conference as a step in the right direction - away from the "old world" politics responsible for the First

⁵¹ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 30, 32-33, 38, 48, 49-50.

⁵² Hitler's party only won 43.9% of the vote in an election that was rash with coercion and intimidation.

World War.⁵³ The American government stressed the need for general European disarmament. While American foreign policy was apprehensive concerning German and French conflicts over disarmament, Mussolini emerged as the strongest supporter of American efforts at arms reductions, further enhancing the American view of Mussolini as a force for peace in Europe.⁵⁴ From the American perspective, peace in Europe hinged on maintaining stability and disarmament between the troublesome neighbours, France and Germany.⁵⁵

McCormick contrasted the national character of the Germans or “Nordics,” against their neighbours the French or “Latins,” across the Rhine. She described the “Nordics” as strong, sturdy and steady in contrast to the inflammable and variable “Latins.” McCormick’s contrast between the “Nordic” Germans and the “Latin” French embodied both racial and gender connotations. According to historian Michael Hunt, American elites frequently characterized Europeans according to a hierarchy that influenced their perceptions of world affairs. Germans were only one rung down the ladder following Anglo-Saxons, while the Latin peoples of Europe, including the French and Italians, were further down the hierarchy. Hunt argues that Americans characterized the “Latins” as “sentimental, undisciplined, superstitious,” qualities that related to their lesser

⁵³ Ernest Andrade, “The United States Navy and the Washington Conference,” *Historian* 31:3 (1969) 345-363; Fred Winkler, “Disarmament and Security: The American Policy at Geneva, 1926-1935,” *North Dakota Quarterly* 39:4 (1971) 21-33; Wayne Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932-1945* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983) 65, 69; Richard Fanning, “Peace Groups and The Campaign for Naval Disarmament, 1927-1936,” *Peace & Change* 15:1 (1990) 26-45; Fanning, *Peace and Disarmament: Naval Rivalry & Arms Control, 1922-1933* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

⁵⁴ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 142.

⁵⁵ Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 54-55; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 66-68.

importance in world affairs.⁵⁶ According to McCormick the French were pessimistic and pacific, while the Germans, the “rising phoenix across the Rhine,” were infused with a martial spirit. The French represented the bastion of democracy and civilization, mature with the “wisdom and mellowness of age.” The Germans possessed the “showy talents of the young”: energy, precocity, cleverness and revolutionary adaptability.⁵⁷

McCormick’s portrayal of the national characteristics of France and Germany was a common theme in several American journalists’ explanation of the foreign policies of France and Germany. As many American journalists insisted, France increasingly embodied distinctly feminine qualities as pacifism became equated with appeasement, passivity and dependence on Britain. On the other hand, journalists imbued Germany with masculine qualities of activity, independence, aggression and vigour.

American fears concerning Germany were realized on 14 October 1933 with the German announcement of its withdrawal from both the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations. According to Lippmann the German withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, demonstrated clearly “the war-like spirit of Nazi Germany and the aggressiveness of its attitude toward the countries to the east of it.”⁵⁸ The *Nation* agreed and warned that “there is a profound menace to America in every act of the Hitler

⁵⁶ Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy*, 78-79.

⁵⁷ McCormick, “Again Eyes Turn to the Rhine,” *New York Times* 15 October 1933, SM1.

⁵⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Disarmament Crisis,” *New York Herald Tribune* 17 October 1933, 17.

Government.” The *Nation* characterized Hitler’s followers as “half-crazy,” and accused Hitler’s administration of consolidating power through “deliberate falsification and cheating, by false promises never meant to be kept, by a Machiavellian policy of lying and roguery.”⁵⁹ In sum, the *Nation* characterized Hitler and the early Nazi regime as the very opposite of the qualities of good leaders and good government: forthright, honest, sincere, reasonable, fair and gentlemanly.

Germany and Austria

For this group of American journalists the failure of the Disarmament Conference and Germany’s abrupt withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations were ominous. Interpretations of Hitler as a “little man” or somehow constrained by the machinery of the German government disappeared from newspaper reports. Instead, the American journalists examined in this study quickly turned their attention to Austria as a focal point for evaluating the foreign policy of Hitler’s Germany.

From his post in Vienna Gunther recognized the threat to Austrian independence posed by Hitler’s pan-German rhetoric. Dollfuss became Chancellor of Austria in May 1933, but had suspended Parliament and ruled by decree since March 1933. Dollfuss was vehemently opposed to *Anschluss* with Germany. Gunther reported Dollfuss’ visit to Rome in June 1933 seeking pledges from Mussolini “to safeguard the independence of Austria.” Gunther viewed “Little Dollfuss,” the 4’11” Chancellor of Austria, as a man of “great importance

⁵⁹ “America, the Allies, and Hitler,” *Nation* 1 November 1933, 499.

to the civilized world” in his opposition to Hitler. While he did not necessarily agree with Dollfuss’ increasingly undemocratic policies, for Gunther it was a question of the lesser of two evils. Despite the strength of “Hitlerites” in Austria, Gunther characterized the popular, “agile” and “shrewd” Dollfuss as a competent leader, hopefully capable of “withstanding the Hitler torrent.” Although Gunther described Dollfuss as a small man in stature, he praised him for having the courage to resist the Nazi incursion, much as David had challenged Goliath in the famous biblical tale. Gunther contrasted the national characters of Hitler’s Germany and Dollfuss’ Austria. Hitler’s Germany was pervaded by a “religion of prewar militarism and brutality,” while the Austrians were a “civilized and sophisticated folk proud of their easygoing helplessness.” Gunther appeared to ignore Austria’s history up until 1918, as a part of a great empire in Europe with Vienna as the imperial capital. Although Gunther had been a foreign correspondent in Austria since 1930, he tended to present a romanticized picture of the nation and its capital. Austria was a Catholic and conservative state, with a deep historical strain of anti-Semitism running through its culture. Yet Gunther characterized Vienna as the “friendliest city in Europe,” and praised the *gemutlichkeit* of its inhabitants, defined by Gunther as “jolliness and gaiety...carelessness, and easy-going levity, but it also includes the ominous Viennese trait: laziness.”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Gunther, “Austria Ties Itself Close to Mussolini and Vatican; Gets Protection from Nazis,” *Chicago Daily News* 6 June 1933, 2; Gunther, “Policy by Murder: The Story of the Dollfuss Killing,” *Harper’s* November 1934, 651; Gunther, “Revolt Against Hitler,” *Nation* 7 June 1933, 636-637. Gunther’s remarks on the mentality of Vienna are quoted in Cuthbertson’s biography of

While Gunther emphasized the significance of events transpiring in Austria, he complained to the editors at the *Chicago Daily News* for not printing his entire reports: “The Dollfuss-Nazi scrap was the best story we had here for months and you hardly used any of it?”⁶¹ Yet by January 1934, with evidence of Nazi sympathizers within the ranks of Dollfuss’ government and increasing Nazi agitation in Austria, Gunther’s reports from Austria were published in full. While Gunther had earlier praised the civilized and easygoing characteristics of the Austrians, “a gentle people” who hoped that the “Nazi invasion could be handled in a “knightly” spirit,” he warned that “the only treatment a Nazi understands is a mallet on the head.” Gunther characterized the methods of the Nazis as “hooliganism...devious,” and “unabashed and unabated violence.” For Gunther, only Dollfuss, the “little man” and “miniature Canute,” stood in the way of the “Nazi waves.”⁶²

Gunther described the possibility of the Nazi absorption of Austria as “a major European tragedy,” a view shared by other American journalists reporting on events in Europe. Editorials in the *Nation* called the “menace of Hitlerism...a grave international crisis.” The *Nation* called for collective action through the

Gunther, *Inside*, 88-89. Gunther was socially acquainted with Dollfuss, who attended cocktail parties at Gunther’s apartment in Vienna (Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 95). Thompson also once praised the Austrian Republic, prior to Dollfuss’ autocratic regime, as the most reasonable and least corrupt government in the world. (Ross, *Ladies of the Press*, 366 and Thompson’s introduction to Kurt Schuschnigg’s *My Austria* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1938) xxv). See also: Alfred Low, *The Anschluss Movement, 1931-1938, and the Great Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Laura Gellott, *The Catholic Church and the Authoritarian Regime in Austria, 1933-1938* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987).

⁶¹ Letter from Gunther to Hall at the *Chicago Daily News*, 2 June 1933, ADD 1, Box 10, Folder “Chicago Daily News Correspondence, 1933-1936,” Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago, Chicago. The *Chicago Daily News* reluctance to utilize Gunther’s articles may have been an indication of the large German-American population in the mid-West.

⁶² “Keeping Hitler Out of Austria,” *Nation* 14 February 1934, 180-181.

League of Nations to enforce the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty. To allow Germany to absorb Austria would embolden Hitler, “the madman now in control of the German people,” to continue his aggressive foreign policy.⁶³

Arthur Krock, writing from his vantage point in Washington, agreed that the absorption of Austria by Germany would allow “the stream of Nazi influence [to] flow over the borders into Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Balkan States.” Krock, on the other hand, was uncertain that the leading nations of the League were capable of effective collective action to stop Germany.⁶⁴ Lippmann also perceived the struggle over Austria as key to peace in Europe. Describing Austria as a “feeble buffer state,” and the Austrians as a “pacific population,” he questioned the ability of Austria to withstand German aggression. Like Krock, Lippmann feared that internal weaknesses and rivalries between France, Italy and Britain prevented a unified front to deter Hitler from his Austrian conquest.⁶⁵ Lippmann, echoing McCormick’s earlier contrast of the French and German national qualities, characterized the French as “weaker and more vacillating,” unable to maintain an effective network of alliances to face the revived “military spirit” of Germany. Italy stood alone as the only power willing to back Austrian independence against German aggression.⁶⁶

⁶³ “What to Do with Germany,” *Nation* 23 August 1933, 202.

⁶⁴ Krock, “In Washington: State Department is Alive to Portents in Europe,” *New York Times* 7 February 1934, 18.

⁶⁵ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Struggle over Austria,” *New York Herald Tribune* 9 February 1934, 19.

⁶⁶ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Balance of European Forces,” *New York Herald Tribune* 20 February 1934, 19.

McCormick emphasized the significance of Austria to the rest of Europe. According to McCormick, “only Vienna stands in the way of [Hitler] thundering down to the Adriatic.” She described Dollfuss as “an anxious little man,” but praised his leadership qualities: “He has courage, in political negotiations a skill a little like Roosevelt’s, cloaked in charm.” Like Lippmann and Krock, McCormick questioned the ability of the League powers, especially France, to form a unified front against Germany’s absorption of Austria. She also praised Italy for being the only power to stir in defense of Austria. Lastly, she repeated Gunther’s characterization of Austria as a bastion of civilization in Central Europe: “[Austria’s] history is full of last stands of Europe against Asia, or Christendom against the Turk, of the frontier of one civilization against another.”⁶⁷ McCormick and the others were beginning to see the struggle of Austria as symptomatic of a clash of civilizations. In their interpretation of the Nazi threat to Austrian independence, the journalists cast the Germans in the role of the barbarian, uncivilized hordes, effectively orientalizing the Germans in contrast to the western traditions of civilization, democracy and liberty to which the United States belonged. As further demonstrated in chapter five, these key figures in American journalism relied heavily on this interpretative framework in discussing European events.

Unfortunately, the drama over Austrian independence soon turned to tragedy. On 25 July 1934 a group of Nazi insurgents stormed the Austrian parliament and murdered Dollfuss. In his report on the front page of the *Chicago*

⁶⁷ McCormick, “Focus of the European Tragedy,” *New York Times* 25 March 1934, SM1.

Daily News Gunther described the death of Dollfuss, “the gallant little Austrian chancellor,” by the “brutal gangsterism” of the Nazis. Gunther’s accounts of Dollfuss’ murder emphasized the barbarism of the Nazi assassins, and the heroic qualities of Dollfuss right to the end.⁶⁸ Gunther described the methods of the Nazis as “intolerable beastliness,” and called the Nazis “gangsters,” who were “cold-minded...desperate...irrational...unpredictable.” Dollfuss, on the other hand, was “heroic” for ordering his Cabinet to disperse, in order to meet the assassins alone. According to Gunther, Dollfuss’ actions “saved Austria” from the Nazi putsch.⁶⁹ He compared the “gangsterism” of Hitler’s purge of the SA leadership to Dollfuss’ murder: “The death of Dollfuss marked the entrance of gangsterism into European politics on an international basis. On June 30th, inside Germany, the Nazis went Al Capone, and on July 25th these methods crossed into a neighboring land.”⁷⁰

If Dollfuss was the tragic protagonist of the Austrian drama, then Mussolini emerged as his heroic counterpart. The front page of the *Chicago Daily News* featuring Gunther’s account of the Dollfuss murder was graced by a large and commanding picture of Mussolini. Dressed in a military uniform, gesturing with a clenched fist, Mussolini was depicted with the caption: “The independence of Austria will be defended by Italy strenuously.”⁷¹ The massing of

⁶⁸ Gunther, “Dollfuss, Dead, Seen as Keeping Nazis From Power,” *Chicago Daily News* 26 July 1934, p.1; Gunther, “Eyewitness Story of How Dollfuss Died; Refused Aid, He Lay Bleeding Four Hours,” *Chicago Daily News* 26 July 1934, 2.

⁶⁹ Gunther, “After the Dollfuss Murder,” *Nation* 22 August 1934, 204-205.

⁷⁰ Gunther, “Policy by Murder: The Story of the Dollfuss Killing,” *Harper’s* November 1934, 651, 662.

⁷¹ “Figures in Europe’s Austrian Crisis,” *Chicago Daily News* 26 July 1934, 1.

Italian troops on the Austrian border at the command of an “enraged” Mussolini “meant business,” and forced Hitler – who “crawled like a coward” – to retreat.⁷²

Gunther’s reports on the murder of Dollfuss garnered praise from the editors of the *Chicago Daily News*, who congratulated Gunther for producing “the most intelligent and comprehensive account of the recent tragic events... You have served newspaper readers on this side of the Atlantic in magnificent style.”⁷³

Gunther’s reports created a clear and convincing story of the tragedy for an American audience with a host of unmistakably gendered characters. “Little Dollfuss” was the unlikely male hero, who despite his appearance stood tall against the Nazi incursion, and died heroically. Mussolini was also a hero, bedecked in military attire coming to the aid of the helpless feminized victim Austria. The Nazis were the violent male aggressors, criminal thugs, uncouth gangsters, threatening the “decency, the moderation, the civilized pacifism of Austrians.”⁷⁴

In her account McCormick used many of the same motifs employed by Gunther. For McCormick’s Dollfuss, “this little man, simple and blithe and boyish... gay, loveable and thoroughly unpretentious,” was the unlikely hero in the fight for Austrian independence. She emphasized the rift between Mussolini and Hitler over the Nazi intrusion in Austria, and distinguished between Mussolini’s fascist dictatorship and the upstart “latest child of fascism” in

⁷² Gunther, “After the Dollfuss Murder,” *Nation* 22 August 1934, 204-205.

⁷³ Letter from Hal O’Flaherty at *Chicago Daily News* to Gunther, 11 August 1934, ADD 1, Box 10, Folder “Chicago Daily News Correspondence, 1933-1936,” Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago, Chicago.

⁷⁴ Gunther, “After the Dollfuss Murder,” *Nation* 22 August 1934, 204.

Germany. Consistent in her admiration for Mussolini, McCormick described Mussolini as a “sole dictator” in contrast to Hitler who was “only one of a ruling and divided oligarchy.” She characterized Nazi Germany as belligerent and expansionist, and the Nazi agitators in Austria as hysterical and tactless, poorly organized and desperate assassins. For McCormick, like Gunther, the drama over Nazi influence in Austria clearly demonstrated the methods and the policies of Nazi Germany: devious, underhanded, barbaric, and expansionist.⁷⁵

In the wake of the failed Austrian putsch and the murder of Dollfuss, the international prestige of Mussolini reached new heights. The U.S. State Department viewed Mussolini’s mobilization of troops on the Brenner Pass in response to the Dollfuss assassination as securing his reputation as a peacemaker.⁷⁶ For the American government and the American press Mussolini’s bold actions to preserve Austrian independence clearly demonstrated the differences between Mussolini’s moderate and established regime, and Hitler’s aggressive and barbaric Germany. While Hitler’s appointment as chancellor had elicited little alarm in the American press, the turn of events in Europe - from Germany’s withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference and the League of Nations, to the murder of Dollfuss and the failed Nazi putsch in Austria- drew the attention of the American government, the press, and the public.

German Rearmament

⁷⁵ McCormick, “The Shadow on Middle Europe,” *New York Times* 5 August 1934, SM1.

⁷⁶ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 148-149.

With the immediate threat to Austrian independence suspended and Mussolini's prestige at an all time high, attention turned to diplomatic overtures between Italy and France. The *Nation* reported that a Franco-Italian rapprochement "would give Europe for a time a new system of international relations," since the failed Nazi putsch in Austria had created a rift between the fascist dictators.⁷⁷ Gunther agreed that the German actions in Austria had broken "the brotherhood of the fascist countries."⁷⁸ McCormick also greeted the news of a possible Franco-Italian rapprochement with hope.⁷⁹ The Franco-Italian Accord signed in Rome on 7 January 1935 brought Italy and France together in agreement to guarantee the independence of Austria, and in opposition to German rearmament.⁸⁰ The details of the agreement were not made public, and the *Nation* questioned whether this new move toward European peace was purchased at the expense of Ethiopia. The *Nation* shared the popular American belief that the "old world" politics of secret diplomacy and backroom deals had been a major cause of the First World War. Mussolini had been preparing for a possible war with Ethiopia for some time, and had been shipping war materials to Africa since August 1934. In December of that year minor skirmishes occurred between Italian and Ethiopian forces. The *Nation* quickly concluded that the Franco-

⁷⁷ "If France and Italy Agree," *Nation* 19 September 1934, 312.

⁷⁸ Gunther, "Premiere Laval's Rome Trip Blankets News in Austria," *Chicago Daily News* 4 January 1935, 2; Gunther, "Danube Nations Hail Pact of Italy, France," *Chicago Daily News* 8 January 1935, 2.

⁷⁹ McCormick, "Rome-Paris Plan Will Aid Balkans," *New York Times* 5 January 1935, 6.

⁸⁰ There remains obscurity surrounding the actual conversations and agreements between Mussolini and Laval concerning Ethiopia. Smith contends that Mussolini did not speak directly about a possible war with Ethiopia, but did suggest to Laval that Italian economic penetration of Ethiopia would mean some sort of political control (Smith, *Mussolini*, 191).

Italian agreement effectively promised “Italy a free hand in Africa,” and France had “given both moral and physical support to Italy in its dispute with the African kingdom.” The *Nation* viewed France’s “tacit approval to Italy’s action” as heinous considering France stood as the leading proponent of the League of Nations and was the original sponsor of Ethiopian membership in the League.⁸¹ Throughout February and March 1935 Mussolini continued his war preparations, and all six of the journalists examined here began to question whether the “moderate” fascist dictator was returning to his “adventurous” ways.

While Lippmann, Thompson and the others anxiously watched Mussolini’s “sword rattling” over Ethiopia, Hitler openly denounced the disarmament clauses of the Versailles Treaty in March 1935, revealing the existence of the Luftwaffe, the reintroduction of compulsory military service, and the early stages of German rearmament.⁸² Reporting from France in February 1935, McCormick described the prevalent “fear of war” and mood of “fatalism” in the French living along the German border. Here she reiterated her earlier feminine characterizations of the French as pessimistic and pacific and questioned the impregnability of the French fortifications from aerial attacks. According to McCormick both France and Britain were threatened by aerial bombardment, and this realization had resulted in “the strengthening of the entente between England and France.” She described the British as “shrewd” and “procrastinating,”

⁸¹ “The Rome Agreement,” *Nation* 16 January 1935, 62; “France, Italy and Abyssinia,” *Nation* 23 January 1935, 89-90.

⁸² “Italian Sword-Rattling,” *Nation* 27 February 1935, 237.

motivated solely by “self-interest.” The French, on the other hand, were “fatalistic,” merely waiting for the next invasion by Germany.⁸³

In his report of the reaction in Washington to Germany’s pronouncement, Krock described the “tempered concern” and general lack of “excitement” in Washington.⁸⁴ Krock believed that the “tempered” reaction in Washington was because America was “further removed than any other country from immediate violent consequences” of German rearmament. Lippmann stressed that the United States could not be “detached spectators” in this European drama. His report on this new “European crisis” stressed the dangers to European peace from the “revival of Germany as a great military power.” The anti-German forces in Europe faced “an armed and aggressive Nazi Germany.” According to Lippmann the “political dependence of France upon Britain” and the absorption of Britain and the Soviet Union on European affairs, affected American interests in the Far East, as there would be little hope of collective action in response to possible Japanese threats.⁸⁵

In the *Nation* reaction to German rearmament appeared to justify the magazine’s earlier stance on the Treaty of Versailles as “the peace of vengeance, of arrogance, of hypocrisy, created by a little group of five men behind closed doors.” In his repudiation of Versailles Hitler, “the master showman of Europe,”

⁸³ McCormick, “Border French are Fatalistic,” *New York Times* 24 February 1935, E5; McCormick, “Groping for a Road to European Peace,” *New York Times* 10 March 1935, SM1.

⁸⁴ Krock, “In Washington: Concern in Germany’s Action is ‘Tempered’,” *New York Times* 19 March 1935, 20.

⁸⁵ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The European Crisis,” *New York Herald Tribune* 19 March 1935, 15; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The American Interest in the European Crisis,” *New York Herald Tribune* 23 March 1935, 15.

had humiliated the former victors in a bold and defiant act. The *Nation* questioned the ability of the “little and weak men” leading France and Britain to solve the crisis precipitated by German rearmament.⁸⁶ In their reactions to German rearmament, this group of American journalists used gendered language to contrast the capabilities of the architects of Versailles to counter the growing German menace. They characterized France and Britain as weak, led by “little men,” internally disorganized and incapable of effective collective action. The United States appeared as a detached and disinterested spectator, while Germany was bold, defiant, and aggressive. The Roosevelt administration and the American press looked towards the upcoming meeting at Stresa with hope that the interested European states might formulate an effective collective response to Hitler’s rearmament.

In April 1935 French, British and Italian representatives met at the Italian town of Stresa to reaffirm the Locarno treaties, the independence of Austria, and the need to prevent further German revision of the Versailles Treaty. Gunther, who had recently been assigned as the London correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*, reported on the British reaction to the Stresa conference. The British were following their traditional reluctance to concluding binding continental commitments, he concluded, and they were pleased that the reaffirmation of the

⁸⁶ “Hitler Liquidates Versailles,” *Nation* 27 March 1935, 348.

original Locarno treaty would be “an effective latent threat to Germany to keep “hands off” Rhineland remilitarization.”⁸⁷

Lippmann greeted the results of the Stresa conference pessimistically. The Stresa accord did not commit the participants to any firm action while Germany continued “the development of the greatest army in Europe...subversive propaganda in Austria and elsewhere along the line of her intended conquests, and diplomatic maneuvers designed to prevent the former Allies from reconstructing their alliance.” According to Lippmann, the internal problems and uncertain foreign policies of France and Britain made united and effective collective action unlikely.⁸⁸ Krock’s report from Washington feared that the lack of an official response from the United States’ government would be construed that “Germany need fear nothing from Washington in the pursuit of any European course she may elect.”⁸⁹

While Lippmann and Krock stressed the lack of a strong and committed (but not necessarily military) response from Britain, France or the United States, McCormick’s report from Rome exalted the strength of Mussolini at the Stresa conference. She repeated her characterization of the British as shrinking from commitments and the French as pessimistic. Yet for McCormick the key figure at

⁸⁷ Letter from Colonel Knox to Gunther, 30 March 1935, ADD 1, Box 10, Folder “Chicago Daily News Correspondence, 1933-1936,” Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago, Chicago; Cuthbertson, *Inside: The Biography of John Gunther*, 119; Gunther, “British Regard Stresa Results Favorably; Co-Operation of Powers Believed Closer,” *Chicago Daily News* 15 April 1935, 2.

⁸⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Stresa and Geneva,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 April 1935, 21.

⁸⁹ Krock, “In Washington: Hitler’s Treaty-Scrapping Not Ignored by Administration,” *New York Times* 25 April 1935, 20.

Stresa was its host, Mussolini. Ever the dramatic showman, Mussolini made his dashing entrance to the Stresa conference in a seaplane “with silver wings.”⁹⁰ McCormick described Stresa as “Mussolini’s conference,” and noted that in the end Mussolini’s view prevailed. She stressed Mussolini’s reaction to Dollfuss’ murder, “the little Chancellor, the only political leader in Europe with whom [Mussolini] was on terms resembling intimacy.” According to McCormick, Mussolini remained the knightly protector and staunch defender of Austrian independence.⁹¹

Although the American press response to Stresa was muted it did not mean that the American government or the American people were unconcerned with events in Europe. The January 1935 Senate defeat of Roosevelt’s bill for American admission to the World Court demonstrated clearly the prevalent isolationist stance within the government and the public. Krock blamed the Senate’s rejection of Roosevelt’s World Court bill on the strong opposition mounted by the Hearst press empire and the conservative and isolationist “radio priest” Father Coughlin.⁹² Lippmann argued that the defeat of the World Court bill was directly related to events in Europe and the Far East that “greatly hardened the traditional American objection to formal participation in European affairs.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Frederick Birchall, “Stresa Talk Today Find Powers Split,” *New York Times* 11 April 1935, 3.

⁹¹ McCormick, “Europe Takes Up Germany’s Challenge,” *New York Times* 19 May 1935, SM3.

⁹² Krock, “In Washington: Defeat for World Court Is Taken Calmly,” *New York Times* 31 January 1935, 18. For an account of the defeat of Roosevelt’s World Court resolution see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 119-127.

⁹³ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Defeat of the World Court,” *New York Herald Tribune* 2 February 1935, 13.

The long-standing American fear of European entanglements was also inflamed in late 1934 and early 1935 by the Nye committee's Investigation of the Munitions Industry. Led by Senator Gerald Nye the committee investigated charges made in books like the popular 1934 *Merchants of Death*, which suggested that the United States had been duped into war in 1917 through pressure from bankers and munitions manufacturers. The American revulsion against further European entanglements was demonstrated on 6 April 1935, the eighteenth anniversary of American involvement in the First World War. That day over 50,000 veterans marched through Washington in the name of peace, and the following week 175,000 college students across the United States participated in a one-hour strike in support of peace.⁹⁴

In the spring of 1935 many within Congress believed that legislation to enforce strict neutrality was required.⁹⁵ The traditionally pacifist *Nation* agreed with the principles behind the Nye Committee's suggested neutrality legislation,

⁹⁴Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 101. The Johnson Act, passed in April 1934, prohibited financial transactions with any foreign government in default on obligations to the United States. The Johnson Act represented American disdain for the nations that defaulted on their war debts to the United States, and an attempt to legislate to prevent America from becoming entangled again in European affairs. For works on the Nye Committee and the Johnson Act see: Chal Vinson, "War Debts and Peace Legislation: The Johnson Act of 1935," *Mid-America* 50:3 (1968) 206-222; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 141-162; Matthew Coulter, "The Franklin D. Roosevelt Administration and The Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry," *Mid-America* 67:1 (1985) 23-36; Coulter, *The Senate Munitions Inquiry of the 1930s: Beyond the Merchants of Death* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997).

⁹⁵ Although Roosevelt opposed neutrality legislation, Secretary of State Cordell Hull suggested that Roosevelt approach Congress for a temporary arms embargo. In Congress various influential legislators favoured neutrality legislation. Senator Key Pittman head of the Foreign Relations Committee, and isolationist members of the government including Representatives Frank Kloeb of Ohio and Maury Maverick of Texas, as well as Senators Gerald Nye of North Dakota and Bennett Clark of Missouri pushed for neutrality legislation. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 102-107).

but argued that a collective system was the best guarantor of world peace. The *Nation* also argued for more flexibility for presidential discretion in determining whether the neutrality legislation should be enforced in a particular situation.⁹⁶ By August 1935 the “acute situation” arising from Mussolini’s threats to Ethiopia and the probable response by the League of Nations hastened the actions of neutrality proponents in Washington. Although Krock conceded that it was highly unlikely the United States would be drawn into a conflict arising from Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia, he stressed the possibility that “a general war, involving the whole world, may arise from the territory-hunt of Mussolini in East Africa.” Krock believed that the Neutrality legislation being considered by Congress was “full of holes,” but he also supported the general intentions of such legislation to keep the United States out of another European war.⁹⁷ Lippmann agreed that the crisis arising from Mussolini’s overtures to Ethiopia required a “clarification of American policy.” However, he disagreed with the need to pass Neutrality legislation in response to the Ethiopian crisis. He argued for the clarification and modification of traditional American policy.⁹⁸ Despite his personal opposition to the Neutrality Act, Roosevelt signed the bill into law on 31 August 1935. The Neutrality Act of 1935 was designed to prohibit “the export of arms, ammunition, and implements of war to belligerent countries,” targeting

⁹⁶ “The Problem of Neutrality,” *Nation* 10 April 1935, 404.

⁹⁷ Krock, “In Washington: Neutrality Study Quietly Made, Although Momentous,” *New York Times* 6 August 1935, 16; Krock, “In Washington: Neutrality Proposals Threaten to Upset Congress Plans,” *New York Times* 21 August 1935, 18; Krock, “In Washington: Congress Steers Into Uncharted Seas on Neutrality,” *New York Times* 22 August 1935, 14.

⁹⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Approaching War and American Policy,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 August 1935, 17.

what the Nye Committee concluded was a probable cause of American involvement in the First World War.⁹⁹

Mussolini and Ethiopia

Despite McCormick's insistence that Mussolini was the "apostle of peace" in European affairs, Mussolini continued his "sword rattling" over Ethiopia following the Stresa conference. Reporting from Rome she noted the war-like propaganda pervading the Italian news and the popular enthusiasm generated in Italy for the Ethiopian "adventure." McCormick contrasted the Italian confidence in their leader versus the "reluctant conviction" of the Germans in Hitler: "Germany follows the Fuehrer with more will than faith; Italy follows Mussolini with more faith than will." Mussolini's proposed Ethiopian invasion, described by McCormick as "this mighty manifestation of Italian will," represented the desire "for a Roman Empire." According to McCormick Mussolini was seeking for Italy "a place in the sun that other nations won long ago." Although Mussolini's hunt for an empire in Africa appeared a throwback to pre-First World War European foreign policies, McCormick differed from the majority of her colleagues in her generally sympathetic view of Mussolini's imperialistic pursuits. Following an interview with the fascist leader, she described Mussolini as "jauntier, more self-confident and determined" than ever before. McCormick

⁹⁹ "Neutrality Act" of August 31, 1935. U.S., Department of State, Publication 1983, *Peace and War: United States Foreign Policy, 1931-1941* (Washington, D.C.: U.S., Government Printing Office, 1943) 265-271; Report of the Special Committee on Investigation of the Munitions Industry (the Nye Report), U.S. Congress, Senate, 74th Congress, 2nd Session, February 24, 1936, 3-13. See also Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 163-164, 169-180.

reported Mussolini's desire for "peace and cooperation" in Africa and Europe.¹⁰⁰ The League nations, Britain and France, were weak militarily and politically, according to McCormick, while Italy "has both a firm government and a big army." The desire for a new Roman Empire in Africa, the memory of Italian humiliation at Adowa in 1896, and the need to demonstrate "Italian prowess," made the Ethiopian adventure Mussolini's "personal enterprise." She colourfully described Mussolini's Italy as "the Wolf of Rome, rampant again after centuries of slumber in a cage on the Capitoline Hill," seeking an outlet for its vigorous energy in Ethiopia. With Mussolini's personal prestige at stake in the Ethiopian campaign, she concluded that "nothing long can save the undeveloped remnants of the earth's surface from the pressure of civilization."¹⁰¹ McCormick believed that Italy had been denied opportunities for the imperial pursuits enjoyed by Britain and France, and that Mussolini was attempting to provide the Italian people with the chance for progress and advancement on the world stage. While McCormick attempted to justify Mussolini's plans, editorials in the *New York Times* attacked the fascist dictator for threatening actions against Ethiopia that openly contradicted the League covenant and other treaties that Italy signed. The *Times* also suggested that Mussolini's hold on power was tenuous in Italy, and he was far from the adored and popular leader portrayed in McCormick's articles.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ McCormick, "Italy Expects War in Africa in Fall," *New York Times* 5 May 1935, 37; McCormick, "Italy's Hope Rises For Gain in Africa," *New York Times* 20 May 1935, 7; McCormick, "Africa Plan Final, Mussolini Insists," *New York Times* 24 May 1935, 11.

¹⁰¹ McCormick, "Italy Welcomes a 'Truce'," *New York Times* 2 June 1935, E4; McCormick, "New Dreams of African Empire," *New York Times* 16 June 1935, SM1.

¹⁰² "Mussolini and Baldwin," *New York Times* 10 June 1935, 16. Mussolini was so offended by the *New York Times* editorial that he barred the *New York Times* from Italy following the

Reporting from London, Gunther described the “grave disquiet” of the British government towards Italy’s Ethiopian plans. While the British were concerned about upsetting the British-Italian-French front established at Stresa, Gunther stated that the British strenuously opposed Mussolini’s “insane imperialistic designs.”¹⁰³ Gunther emphasized the British tough talk, but many in the British government and the Royal Navy were concerned that they might be unable to meet a challenge by Italy in the Mediterranean effectively.¹⁰⁴ Gunther was significantly less understanding and sympathetic towards Mussolini’s aims for an Italian empire in Africa. As the summer wore on hopes of joint action between the British and the French to prevent Italy’s military actions against Ethiopia waned following the announcement of the Anglo-German naval agreement in June 1935. Gunther reported that the French were “nettled at Britain because of the provisions of the Anglo-German naval treaty and the manner in which it was negotiated.” The agreement effectively circumvented the Versailles Treaty’s restrictions on the German navy, and renounced British naval influence in the Baltic Sea. It appeared another instance of “old world” politics, with Britain seeking bilateral, conciliatory agreements with Germany at the expense of

publication of the editorial. (“Mussolini Bars New York Times Because of Criticism in Editorial,” *New York Times* 13 June 1935, 1). Works on Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia stress his need for a prestige triumph in Ethiopia to help solidify the domestic base of his regime.

¹⁰³ Gunther, “Turn of Events in Ethiopia and Poland Worries England,” *Chicago Daily News* 13 May 1935, 2.

¹⁰⁴ For a discussion of the British view of Mussolini and the Italians during the Ethiopian crisis see R.A.C. Parker, “Great Britain, France and the Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-1936,” *English Historical Review* 89:351 (1974) 293-332. According to Parker the British were concerned that League sanctions might push the Italians to commit a “mad dog” act in the Mediterranean against the British fleet. The Royal Navy feared it might not be able to respond effectively to such an Italian act, and could not count on French support.

collective action. Britain's international reputation came under increasing fire following the revelation of a plan to "barter" portions of British colonial territory in Africa to Ethiopia to pressure Ethiopia to give concessions to Italy.¹⁰⁵ By August the British were "so worried" about the prospect of an Italian-Ethiopian war, that the cabinet was continuing to meet during the traditional summer break. According to Gunther, the British anxiety stemmed from the fear that a war between the "native and colored races" and a white colonizing power may lead to uprisings throughout the British Empire. Britain was naturally concerned with Italian aggression in the Mediterranean as a threat to the security and stability of the British Empire. The British also had a "genuine high regard and deep respect" for Mussolini, and believed that Mussolini was integral in maintaining Austrian independence.¹⁰⁶

With the Italian rejection of the British offer, what Gunther deemed the plan "to buy off Benito Mussolini's Ethiopian campaign," the British and French contemplated sanctions against Italy. According to Gunther, talk of sanctions only made Mussolini "madder," and in "his present inflamed state [Mussolini] may consider sanctions a *casus belli*." In September the British supported collective League action in the form of sanctions against Italy. Gunther reported

¹⁰⁵ Gunther, "Turn of Events in Ethiopia and Poland Worries England," *Chicago Daily News* 13 May 1935, 2; Gunther, "British, French, Leaders Meet to Ponder Means of Halting Il Duce's Abyssinian Venture," *Chicago Daily News* 5 July 1935, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Gunther, "British Take War Measures in Fear of Ethiopian Crisis," *Chicago Daily News* 2 August 1935, 2; Gunther, "Britain Opposes Italian Policy on Six Grounds," *Chicago Daily News* 13 August 1935, 2; Gunther, "British Cabinet to Meet on Gravest Crisis Since 1914," *Chicago Daily News* 20 August 1935, 2.

that the British “have pledged themselves in no uncertain terms to join collective action to resist any attack or overt aggression anywhere in Europe.”¹⁰⁷

For Lippmann, the crisis over Italian plans for war against Ethiopia was a crisis of the League, and the result of the Paris Peace conference. The victors of the First World War had “tried to impose a settlement which in essence preempted the rich places of the earth for the western victors and denied to Germany, Italy, and Japan the legal and moral right to build for themselves empires resembling those which the victors already possessed.” Furthermore, the western powers that had created this “ruthless” postwar international system “had neither the will to defend it with force nor the wisdom to save it by concessions.” As a result the international system was being challenged by “rebellious” and “dissatisfied” powers in a “brutal and terrifying” revolution against the international system. Lippmann blamed the proponents of the international system for the present state of affairs: “Because they were unwilling to unite and to fight if they were challenged, they taught the dissatisfied powers that it was safe to defy them.” He concluded that the “pacifist democracies” were weak, divided, and lacked the “art of statesmanship” to maintain the postwar international system.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Gunther, “Reveal Terms Believed Offered by Eden to Italy; Large Concessions Made,” *Chicago Daily News* 28 August 1935, 2; Gunther, “Hoare’s Talk Lines Up England Behind League; Sanction Agreement Seen,” *Chicago Daily News* 11 September 1935, 2; Gunther, “British Cabinet Meets Under Shadow of Impending War,” *Chicago Daily News* 2 October 1935, 2.

¹⁰⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Shattered Dream,” *New York Herald Tribune* 11 July 1935, 17.

The *Nation* rejected Italy's claims to Ethiopia by lampooning Mussolini. A cartoon printed in the *Nation* of 24 July 1935 painted an unmistakably gendered interpretation of Mussolini's intentions. "Ethiopia" was depicted as a voluptuous, semi-nude Ethiopian woman struggling against the embrace of Mussolini dressed in full military garb. "Ethiopia" wore a cross around her neck, signifying the predominantly Christian state, and a male Ethiopian warrior lay prone in the foreground. The caption, Mussolini's words to the woman he ravages, "But, dear, I only want to civilize you!" The *Nation* cartoon turned on its head the image of Mussolini described by Diggins as the "great lover."¹⁰⁹ Rather than an amorous lover, Mussolini is depicted as the incarnation of naked masculine aggression, seeking to dominate a helpless Ethiopia.

Editorials in the *Nation* concluded that the concessions offered to Mussolini failed for he "has made it clear that Italy is motivated primarily not by the prospect of great wealth but by considerations of national prestige." The *Nation* suggested that France and Britain - the former responsible for giving Italy a free hand in Ethiopia initially with the Franco-Italian accord and the latter responsible for plans to pressure Ethiopia to concede territory to Italy - "may decide to sacrifice Ethiopian independence in order to prevent a most embarrassing war." While the *Nation* hoped that the system of collective security represented by the League might deter Mussolini, it expressed doubts about the willingness of the leading League nations, Britain and France, to stand by each other and the League. Britain, "the leading offender in the evasion of pledges,"

¹⁰⁹ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 62-63.

had endangered the Stresa front and its relationship with France when the British “made their worst diplomatic blunder of modern times in signing the naval agreement with Hitler.” France was not much better in choosing Italy in preference to Britain with the Franco-Italian accord. Although France chose the League over its “new friendship with the frenzied Mussolini,” and Britain also chose the League over further bilateral actions to protect its empire, the *Nation* doubted that the League could prevent Mussolini’s desire to “create a Caesarian empire in Africa.”¹¹⁰

Despite near universal condemnation of Mussolini’s Ethiopian adventure in the American press, McCormick continued to paint a glowing portrait of Mussolini and his imperial intentions for Ethiopia. She described Mussolini’s charm, frankness, and “his brown, hard, stocky countryman’s figure,” contrasted against British Secretary Anthony Eden’s “slender, elegant and rather fragile” figure.¹¹¹ Her description of Mussolini emphasized his noble and manly qualities: “He is a curious combination of Caesar and peasant.” Mussolini was the “exemplar of the dictatorship principle,” a new Napoleon, the concentration in a single will of the national energy of Italy. McCormick reiterated that the Ethiopian adventure was the justified and legitimate actions of a leader seeking new lands for “the peasant generations who suffer most for lack of spaces and

¹¹⁰ *Nation*, 24 July 1935, 92; “Rome Defies the Powers,” *Nation* 28 August 1935, 228; “Sanctions or War?” *Nation* 4 September 1935, 257; “The League Unites Against Italy,” *Nation* 25 September 1935, 340.

¹¹¹ McCormick, “Europe Gropes for a Course,” *New York Times* 14 July 1935, SM1.

outlets for their poor and overcrowded farms.”¹¹² Continuing her contrast between Britain and Italy, McCormick concluded that the British reaction to Mussolini’s “African adventure” was the reaction of a grand old imperial power to the challenge of a young upstart seeking its own empire.

In McCormick’s analysis there was perhaps a positive outcome for Britain in this development. Mussolini’s challenge had revived the “imperialist spirit” in Britain, which might, she ventured, overcome the “passionate pacifism” that characterized recent British diplomacy. McCormick described the British character as a mix between masculine and feminine attributes. The “strangely impervious” island nation and seat of the world’s greatest empire exhibited the “solid power of the most masculine of nations.” Yet Britain was also “strangely sensitive,” and British diplomacy demonstrated “an instinct strangely feminine” and “expert intuition.”¹¹³ McCormick clearly believed that Mussolini’s Ethiopian adventure was justifiable in the context of colonial ambitions and doubted whether the League Nations, in particular Britain and France, had either the moral authority or the national will to defy Mussolini. In this view McCormick was isolated at her own paper. The editorial opinion of the *New York Times* agreed with the “considered opinion of Europe,” which was outraged and resentful of Mussolini’s planned aggression against Ethiopia.¹¹⁴

By October 1935 Mussolini appeared bent on his Ethiopian war, and the League seemed unable to deter him. In the United States, the Roosevelt

¹¹² McCormick, “The Man the World Watches,” *New York Times* 1 September 1935, SM1.

¹¹³ McCormick, “The Empire Spirit Stirs Britain,” *New York Times* 15 September 1935, SM1.

¹¹⁴ “Affronting Europe,” *New York Times* 20 August 1935, 20.

administration feared that an Italian-Ethiopian war would have far-reaching consequences, possibly leading to a general war in Europe. While Roosevelt attempted to intervene with Mussolini, his concern with domestic issues and growing criticism of his “dictatorial” powers at home resulted in the signing of Neutrality legislation in August 1935.¹¹⁵ For all but McCormick, the impending Italian invasion of Ethiopia was cause for a serious reevaluation of Mussolini and fascist Italy. Mussolini, whose international prestige had reached new heights after his part in preventing the failed Nazi putsch in Austria, appeared now far less the noble statesman, apostle of peace, and moderate senior fascist. Instead, there seemed to be more in common between the two “fascist” dictatorships in Europe, as Mussolini revealed his naked military aggression in his planned conquest of Ethiopia. McCormick remained an exception in the American press as she continued to praise Mussolini and attempted to justify his military endeavours.

All six of these influential journalists interpreted these complex European events through the prism of their own Americanism. Their faith in democracy, at least the temperate, moderate democracy of the United States, coloured their interpretations of Hitler’s rise to power. However, McCormick was more willing than most of her counterparts to overlook the undemocratic dictatorships in Italy and Germany as necessary to counter the unstable democracies and possible communist revolutions in both nations. Gunther also excused Dollfuss’s

¹¹⁵ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 159; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 108-109.

undemocratic policies in relation to the Austrian chancellor's brave stand against Nazi Germany. In their reports of the attempted Nazi coup in Austria Gunther and McCormick described Austria as a "bastion of civilization" threatened by the barbarous Nazis, an early example of the civilization versus barbarism explanation that would become dominant after the Fall of France. These American journalists criticized policies of France and Britain that were indicative of "old world" politics, and questioned the moral leadership of these nations during European crises. Gender became one of several ways the journalists simplified power relations between European states and leaders. In their melodramatic presentation of the fight for Austrian independence, these journalists relied on a cast of highly gendered characters. While all journalists examined in this study utilized gendered frameworks to interpret European affairs, Thompson and McCormick differed from their male colleagues in the degree and extent of their gendered interpretations of European news. Thompson's blatant emasculation of Hitler before he became chancellor of Germany was the primary reason for her expulsion from Germany in 1934. McCormick's "rhapsodic" descriptions of Mussolini led critics to question her objectivity as a journalist. Ethiopia was the high-water mark of gendered language in American press analyses. Thereafter, while it never completely disappeared, it receded in importance as other factors became more prominent. The shift was apparent on the road to Munich.

Chapter 3 – Mussolini's Ethiopian Adventure to the Munich Conference October 1935 to September 1938

On 3 October 1935, despite international condemnation and the threat of sanctions by the League of Nations, Italian forces invaded Ethiopia. The front page of the *New York Times* announced Mussolini's invasion with the reassurance that Roosevelt promised "to keep us 'untangled'." ¹ Roosevelt reacted quickly to the Italian invasion and ordered the enforcement of the Neutrality law through an arms embargo on Italy as soon as he received official confirmation. To his close associates Roosevelt did not hide his sympathy for the Ethiopians. ² McCormick, on the other hand, painted a very different picture of Mussolini and Italy on the eve of the invasion. McCormick reported from Rome how Mussolini assembled "the whole nation" to hear his voice. She described the people chanting "Duce!" like a "litany," and the effect of his voice on the gathered crowds: "The eyes of young men shone as he spoke. Women and girls wept with emotion. All listened." According to McCormick there was no doubt that the entire Italian nation supported Mussolini in his expansionist aims. ³

From Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia to the eve of the Munich conference, American journalists reported European events to an American public increasingly anxious and aware of the crises generated by the European dictators. They painted a darkening picture of Europe as the leading nations of the League,

¹ "Big Italian Force Invades Ethiopia; Mussolini Rallies 20,000,000 Fascisti; Roosevelt to Keep Us 'Unentangled'" *New York Times* 3 October 1935, 1.

² Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 160; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 110-111.

³ McCormick, "Italians Relieved that Die is Cast," *New York Times* 3 October 1935, 6.

Britain and France, appeared hesitant, passive and unable to act in response to the bold and aggressive challenges of Mussolini and Hitler. While they agreed that events in Europe appeared increasingly dire, the journalists were not unified in their interpretation of events. None of them yet called for outright American intervention in the European crises, and several held on to hope that Hitler could be appeased and satiated. They presented multi-faceted interpretations to the American public. McCormick, for example, upheld Mussolini and his Italian dictatorship despite widespread condemnation of his invasion of Ethiopia or Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War. Thompson, on the other hand, loudly condemned Italian and German intervention in the Spanish conflict, and unlike many of her colleagues criticized any appeasement of Nazi Germany. The interpretative frameworks used by these journalists also shifted in this period. Initial interpretations based on gendered and racial imagery subsided as ideological arguments came to the forefront with the outbreak of civil war in Spain. The Spanish Civil War was widely viewed as an ideological war by proxy between two diametrically opposed systems of government. For many journalists in America the Spanish Civil War appeared to pit the forces of civilization, represented by the democratically elected Spanish Republic, against Franco's illegal and barbarous forces. The direct intervention of German and Italian forces on the side of Franco appeared to confirm that the European dictatorships were beginning to work in concert against democracy in Europe.

The series of European events in the three years following Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia – Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, the outbreak of civil war in Spain, the *Anschluss* of Austria, and the crisis over the Sudetenland – seemed to American observers to repeatedly bring Europe to the brink of another general war. Increasingly, especially after the bombing of Guernica and the *Anschluss*, events in Europe were seen through the rhetoric of civilization versus barbarism, as the actions of Mussolini and Hitler, appeared bent on disrupting peace in Europe through their aggressive and expansionist policies. The paradigm of civilization versus barbarism encapsulated the other interpretative lenses of American exceptionalism, Anglo-American solidarity, gender and race. This change in interpretation did not happen overnight, nor did all the journalists in this study reach this conclusion at the same time. Thompson and Gunther, both more sensitive early on to the threat posed by Nazi Germany to Central Europe, came to this conclusion sooner than their colleagues. On the other hand, McCormick and Lippmann remained optimistic that Hitler might be appeased and deterred from his expansionist aims. This was a period of flux for American journalists reporting on European events, as gradually they began to see the European dictatorships as a united threat against democracy and western civilization.

The Invasion of Ethiopia

From London Gunther reported that even the traditionally calm and “staid Britishers” reacted to the news of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia with “nervous excitement.” Gunther, like many of his colleagues, described the British ruling

class as the ultimate example of civility and gentlemanly politics. It played the game of parliamentary politics “in [a] grand manner.” Yet according to Gunther the British were uncharacteristically worried over the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. British officials, who only months before thought Mussolini to be “a great man,” now questioned the sanity of the Italian dictator, who Gunther described as a “running amok like a Malay savage.”⁴ Gunther’s remarks enunciated a crucial narrative discourse that journalists used in their interpretation of European events: civilization versus barbarism. In that interpretation civilization was equated with whiteness, democracy, liberty, and the virtuous qualities of the masculine character: reason, moderation, honour, and justice. Barbarism, on the other hand, stood in stark contrast to civilization: undemocratic, savage, aggressive, irrational, lacking self-restraint, ignoring the rule of law, and acting dishonourably.⁵ But as Gunther’s remark equating Mussolini with a dark-skinned savage implied these categories were elastic and malleable, used and shaped for specific purposes. Many American observers, therefore, reiterated the contrast between civilization and barbarism in their condemnation of Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia.

⁴ Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 232; Gunther, “British Officials Amazed at Bombing of Ethiopian Towns by Italian Planes,” *Chicago Daily News* 3 October 1935, 2. For works on the Italian invasion of Ethiopia see: George W. Baer, *The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967) and *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1976); Thomas M. Verich, *The European Powers and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1936* (Salisbury, N.C.: Documentary Publications, 1980); Alberto Sbacchi, *Legacy of Bitterness: Ethiopia and Fascist Italy, 1935-1941* (Lawrenceville: Red Sea Press, 1997). For the American view of the Italian-Ethiopian war see discussions in Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*.

⁵ The classical concept of *virtus* meant “moral excellence” and was synonymous with manliness. The four classical cardinal virtues were Justice, Courage, Wisdom, and Moderation. Bederman’s *Manliness and Civilization*, analyzes the development of this civilization discourse in the United States. Bederman argues that “civilization” was both a racial and gendered concept.

McCormick was a notable exception, and did not condemn Mussolini's actions outright. While she admitted the censure of foreign news and the tight control of the Italian press by Mussolini's government, McCormick stated that the Italian people were well aware of the international indignation arising from the invasion of Ethiopia. Yet events like the capture of Adowa on 7 October, the site of Italy's disastrous defeat in 1896, aroused the patriotism of the Italian people who were whole-heartedly behind Mussolini in his military endeavour according to McCormick. She argued that the imposition of sanctions would be dangerous, for Italy "like all rebels against the established order, has little to lose and is fatalistically prepared to lose it." It was a stance divorced from that of her paper. An editorial in the *New York Times* on the eve of Italy's invasion openly decried Mussolini's actions as "the reincarnation of the doctrine that force is the only means of settling a dispute between countries." According to the *Times* there was no justification for Mussolini's actions, other than greed and conquest.⁶

The *Nation*, on the other hand, praised both Roosevelt's enactment of the Neutrality law and the League's imposition of sanctions. The *Nation* described the Italian invasion of Ethiopia as "Il Duce's mad adventure." According to the *Nation* the United States needed to align its Neutrality legislation with the sanctions of the League to effectively limit Mussolini's actions.⁷ However, the ability of Britain and France to act in concert was questioned. Gunther's reports

⁶ McCormick, "Italians Defiant of World Censure," *New York Times* 13 October 1935, 34. Britain and France led the League of Nations to declare Italy the aggressor in the conflict, and to impose economic sanctions on Italy. "Opposing Systems," *New York Times* 4 October 1935, 20.

⁷ "Can America Remain 'Unentangled'?" *Nation* 16 October 1935, 425.

exposed cracks between Britain and France. According to Gunther the French believed that the British were ultimately seeking “Mussolini’s downfall,” in a bid to make impotent the Italians, viewed as their imperial rival in Africa. The French, on the other hand, feared the loss of the Italian friendship, and worried about the consequences for Austrian independence.⁸ The *Nation* also questioned British motives. In the *Nation*’s view Britain and France had granted Mussolini a free hand in Ethiopia, as demonstrated by the Laval-Mussolini talks in January 1935, proof that the British and French were continuing the “back room” diplomacy abhorred by Americans. The British shift in policy towards sanctions stemmed not only from the aggressive nature of Mussolini’s conquest, but also fears that it revealed an abrupt change in Mussolini, “after being a veteran of realistic sobriety he changed into a madman.” Naively, the *Nation* portrayed France as an “honest broker” in the Italian-Ethiopian conflict, seeking a peaceful conclusion to the conflict, and thus resisting sanctions. By early November the British government, egged on by vociferous public opinion, had convinced France that sanctions were necessary. The *Nation* warned that unless the League stood united in enforcing effective collective action against Italy, the ability of the League to counter future threats by Hitler would be compromised. It was not just up to the League to take a strong stance against Italy. The *Nation* argued that the

⁸ Gunther, “Britain Wants to Ruin Duce, French Believe,” *Chicago Daily News* 17 October 1935, 2.

cooperation of the United States with the sanctions imposed by the League was required both to stop Italy and to provide a clear warning to Hitler.⁹

In a thinly veiled statement attacking war profiteering, Roosevelt denounced the export of materials to Italy outside the arms embargo for the sake of profits in October 1935. Despite Roosevelt's message and a more explicit statement by Hull on 15 November, Roosevelt was not prepared to go beyond the existing Neutrality legislation and the "moral" embargo against trading war materials.¹⁰ Following the League's announcement that sanctions against Italy included oil, coal, iron, and steel, the *Nation* criticized the American government for failing to include these indispensable war materials in its current embargo against Italy. The *Nation* characterized the American position as "incongruous," and even charged that the United States was actively aiding Italy in its "illegal war."¹¹ By November 1935 Ethiopia's struggle against Italy had generated widespread sympathy in the United States for the Ethiopians. Most American journalists also sympathized with and favoured the Ethiopians in their reports.¹²

McCormick, on the other hand, continued to paint an attractive portrait of Mussolini as a leader with his nation behind him and a destiny to fulfill. She described Mussolini as "worn, grave, older," but still calm, "no less confident," and with "no visible crack in his determination to see things through to the

⁹ "What Does Britain Want?" *Nation* 23 October 1935, 452; "Can Laval Make Peace?" *Nation* 30 October 1935, 496; "Britain Holds Its Ground," *Nation* 6 November 1935, 528; "We Must Enforce the Kellogg Pact," *Nation* 6 November 1935, 524.

¹⁰ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 160; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 114-115.

¹¹ "Helping Mussolini Win His War," *Nation* 20 November 1935, 580.

¹² Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 294.

unknown end.” According to McCormick, Mussolini was seeking not only a settlement of the “Ethiopian dispute,” but a long-term settlement of the “balance of interests in the Mediterranean,” a clear reference to imperial competition between Italy and Britain. Her articles concentrated on the domestic effects of the “economic siege” on the Italian people, a “war on the civil population” that clearly made them victims.¹³ For McCormick Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia was a valid colonial pursuit, and Britain, the greatest imperial power, was not in a moral position to condemn it. While McCormick failed to criticize Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia, the editorial position of the *New York Times* was firmly against Mussolini, and supported strong economic sanctions.¹⁴

Both the British and the French hoped to quickly resolve the crisis precipitated by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in order to rebuild the Stresa Front against Hitler. In early December 1935 British Foreign Secretary Samuel Hoare and French Prime Minister Pierre Laval drafted a plan for concluding “peace” in the Italian-Ethiopian conflict. The Hoare-Laval plan proposed granting Italy direct and indirect control over substantial areas of Ethiopia. Ethiopia and the rest of the League of Nations were not consulted in the drafting of the Hoare-Laval plan. French critics of the plan leaked details to the French press, and both Hoare and Laval faced immediate opposition and criticism.¹⁵

¹³ McCormick, “Mussolini is Aging Under War Strain,” *New York Times* 20 November 1935, 12.

¹⁴ “Opposing Systems,” *New York Times* 4 October 1935, 20; “Encouraging War,” *New York Times* 27 October 1935, E8.

¹⁵ For works on the Hoare-Laval plan see: Michael L. Roi, “‘A completely immoral and cowardly attitude’: the British Foreign Office, American neutrality and the Hoare-Laval Plan,” *Canadian Journal of History* 29 (1994) 333-351; James C. Robertson, “The Hoare-Laval Plan,” *Journal of*

Gunther concluded that the Hoare-Laval plan failed “because of the immense weight of British public opinion against it.” Critics of the plan called it both a “betrayal” of the principles behind the League of Nations, and also of British “prestige.”¹⁶ A *New York Times* article of the same day criticized the Hoare-Laval plan and attacked British prestige. The *Times* described the British as “yielding to Mussolini” out of “war fear.”¹⁷ Lippmann also saw the Hoare-Laval plan as a “sudden and crude repudiation of the letter and the spirit of the [League] Covenant.” Yet he concluded that neither the Hoare-Laval plan nor the “mild sanctions” enacted by the League would deter Mussolini from his all-or-nothing gamble in Ethiopia.¹⁸ According to Krock the Hoare-Laval plan represented the triumph of realism over idealism in European politics, and the end of the spirit of the League.¹⁹ The *Nation* bluntly attacked the Hoare-Laval plan as sabotaging the system of collective security enshrined in the League of Nations.

Contemporary History 10:3 (1975) 433-464; Parker, “Great Britain, France and the Ethiopian Crisis,” 293-332; Ernst L. Presseisen, “Foreign Policy and British Public Opinion: The Hoare-Laval Pact of 1935,” *World Affairs Quarterly* 29:3 (1958) 256-277. Roi argues that considerations of the unreliability of American co-operation with Britain as evident by American neutrality policies led the British to conclude the Hoare-Laval plan in an effort to appease the Italians. Robertson concludes that popular interpretations of the Hoare-Laval plan as a betrayal of League principles were by and large well-founded. Parker argues that the “hastily put together” Hoare-Laval plan was driven by British fears of an Italian “mad dog” act against the British fleet in the Mediterranean.

¹⁶ Gunther, “Deal for Peace by Dividing Ethiopia Believed Dead,” *Chicago Daily News* 13 December 1935, 2.

¹⁷ Charles A. Selden, “Baldwin to Reply to Critics on Italy,” *New York Times* 13 December 1935, 18. Gunther reiterated both the explanation of the Hoare-Laval plan as a result of prevalent war fear in Britain and France, and reaction to the plan as an attack on British prestige in his article of 17 December 1935: “Premier Baldwin Backs Hoare, but May Allow Peace Plan to Fade Out at Geneva,” *Chicago Daily News*, 2.

¹⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Peculiar War,” *New York Herald Tribune* 17 December 1935, 21.

¹⁹ Krock, “In Washington: Collapse of Peace Move Stirs Congress Members,” *New York Times* 20 December 1935, 24.

It accused the Baldwin government of deliberately deceiving “millions of pro-League voters,” and described the Hoare-Laval plan as an “unholy scheme.” Furthermore, the *Nation* concluded that if Mussolini was victorious in his Ethiopian war in direct opposition to the League, “all hope of that agency’s restraining Hitler will have vanished.”²⁰ Haile Selassie, emperor of Ethiopia, publicly denounced the Hoare-Laval plan as a betrayal of the League of Nations, and described any acceptance of such a plan as “cowardice.”²¹ For these journalists the Hoare-Laval plan demonstrated that neither the British nor the French had given up the “old world” diplomacy that had characterized European relations before the First World War.

Faced with overwhelming opposition and backlash to his “peace” plan, Hoare resigned from the Baldwin government on 18 December 1935. By 20 December the British government and the League of Nations had withdrawn their support for the Hoare-Laval plan. The political fall-out from the Hoare-Laval plan also led to the downfall of Laval, who resigned from the French government on 22 January 1936.

After the dismal failure of the proposed Hoare-Laval “peace” plan, American journalists reporting on Mussolini’s African adventure speculated on the power of the League to stop him. Lippmann concluded that the League had failed to impose oil sanctions because the League powers “were not prepared to

²⁰ *Nation* 18 December 1935, 697.

²¹ G.L. Steer, “Emperor Refuses to ‘Betray’ League,” *New York Times* 17 December 1935, 16.

go to war” to enforce it.²² The *Nation* believed that collective action through the League was still the best hope for peace, but admitted that the “shamefulness” of the Hoare-Laval plan stripped the British and French of their “moral leadership” in the League.²³ Writing from Rome, McCormick described the effects of the war and the League sanctions on Mussolini. Without a single criticism or condemnation of Mussolini’s invasion of Ethiopia, McCormick admitted only that the war was taking a toll on the Italian leader. Describing Mussolini as “soberer,” she maintained that the Italian dictator remained “more vigorously alive” than ever, and had the loyalty of the Italian people behind him. According to McCormick Mussolini had become “the Father of his country.” She described the Italian dictator at various points as Moses, Caesar, and a Renaissance man. McCormick continued to paint a romantic and heroic portrait of Mussolini during the Ethiopian war, as “the captain of a beleaguered nation,” bravely fighting against the world. In her articles McCormick demonstrates the elasticity of the civilization versus barbarism world. She consistently equates the Italians with civilization, despite their aggression against Ethiopia. While she describes Mussolini as “a great actor in the Latin manner,” McCormick does not appear to denote the Italians a lower rung on the racial hierarchy, but instead relates Mussolini’s Italy with the civilizations of Rome and the Renaissance.²⁴

²² Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The League’s Coming of Age,” *New York Herald Tribune* 24 December 1935, 15.

²³ “The League’s Hour of Trial,” *Nation* 25 December 1935, p.728; “The League Struggles On,” *Nation* 1 January 1935, 4.

²⁴ McCormick, “A Soberer Mussolini Faces the World,” *New York Times* 12 January 1936, SM3.

By mid-January 1936, with the failure of the League to impose further sanctions the *Nation* now questioned the effectiveness of collective action. The “weakness” of British policy demonstrated by Hoare, Baldwin and Eden, coupled with the “dry rot of compromise and procrastination” of the League, appeared to spell the end of collective security.²⁵ By mid-February Italy had made significant gains on the northern front and McCormick reported that Mussolini was “well and cheerful.” Rather than creating tensions and disturbances at home, she concluded that the Ethiopian war and economic sanctions had strengthened the corporate state and Mussolini’s dictatorship. For McCormick Mussolini’s prediction that the Italian people needed a war to resurrect the warrior characteristics of their Roman forbearers, was borne out by her observations of the Italian people.²⁶

Throughout January and February 1936 American politics erupted in a fresh debate over American Neutrality legislation in the face of the ongoing Ethiopian war. The original Neutrality law was set to expire on 29 February 1936. Roosevelt used this opportunity to press for new legislation with greater presidential discretion. The “moral embargo” was having little effect. American exports to Italy of petroleum, copper, iron and scrap metals had more than doubled since the war began. The Roosevelt administration introduced a new Neutrality bill, but isolationist Senators Nye and Clark introduced a competing Neutrality bill further limiting presidential discretion.²⁷ Krock reiterated his

²⁵ “The League Falter,” *Nation* 29 January 1936, 117.

²⁶ McCormick, “Mussolini Declares Events Favor Italy,” *New York Times* 16 February 1936, E4; Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, p.293.

²⁷ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 114, 117-119.

earlier concerns that any neutrality legislation would ultimately be unable “to lock our door against foreign war.” The Nye-Clark bill, referred by Krock as “peace-at-any-price,” was the more dangerous of the two, for it “will bring about such a reduction of our power and influence as to leave us exposed to the very aggressor nation which our crawl-in policy has permitted to dominate Europe or Asia.”²⁸

The *Nation* also repeated its earlier stance on the Neutrality legislation, insisting that the best prevention of war was not through the “quarantine” of aggressors, but through collective action.²⁹ Lippmann admitted that although the majority of Americans were determined to stay out of another European war, from an economic standpoint further Neutrality legislation not only threatened American trade and prosperity in wartime but also in times of peace. The restrictions imposed by any such law would not discourage war, but merely encourage nations during peace time to stockpile munitions and supplies. For Lippmann barriers to trade and arms stockpiling were two of the cardinal sins of pre-First World War European international relations, outlined in points three and four of Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, which Lippmann had helped the president to draft. Although Lippmann became disillusioned with Wilson following the Paris Peace Conference, he still believed that free trade and disarmament were fundamental international principles from an economic pragmatist’s standpoint.

²⁸ Krock, “In Washington: Neutrality Bill Abandons Long Defended Rights,” *New York Times* 4 January 1936, 14; Krock, “In Washington: Nye Neutrality Bill Seen as A ‘Peace-at-Any-Price’ Move,” *New York Times* 7 January 1936, 20.

²⁹ “Strengthening the Neutrality Act,” *Nation* 8 January 1936, 32.

Lippmann therefore argued for no new Neutrality legislation.³⁰ In the end neither the new administration bill nor the Nye-Clark bill was passed. Roosevelt extended the original Neutrality law to 1 May 1937. The extension also forbade loans to belligerents. Krock described the administration's compromise as a victory only for "convinced pacifists" and "determined isolationists."³¹

The Remilitarization of the Rhineland

On 7 March 1936, with international attention focused on Mussolini's ongoing Ethiopian campaign, Hitler's forces marched into the demilitarized Rhineland. Hitler's brash renunciation of a crucial French strategic plank of the Versailles and Locarno Treaties demonstrated his opportunism, much like his announcement a year earlier of German rearmament while both the British and French were preoccupied with Italian "sword-rattling" over Ethiopia. Hitler's timing also coincided with the recent announcement of the French ratification of a mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union, and the Belgian renunciation of military ties with France. Only days earlier France had sought a reaffirmation of the British commitment to uphold the demilitarized Rhineland to no avail. The recently demonstrated ineffectiveness of the League nations - especially Britain and France - to orchestrate collective action against the Italian aggression, coupled with the extension of American Neutrality legislation, left many

³⁰ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 134, 160; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The New Neutrality Policy," *New York Herald Tribune* 11 January 1936, 15; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Preparation for Neutrality," *New York Herald Tribune*, 11 February 1936, 11.

³¹ Krock, "In Washington: Neutrality Legislation is Victory for Both Sides," *New York Times*, 19 February 1936, 18. For a discussion of the Neutrality debate in 1936 see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 182-186.

American journalists (and Adolf Hitler) doubting action would be taken against German remilitarization of the Rhineland.

Reporting from London Rhineland Gunther concluded that although there will be “formal protests by Great Britain and righteous rancor in France,” no decisive action would be taken “to push the Germans out of what is, after all, their own territory.” According to Gunther, the British position consisted in trying to “restrain the hot-headedness of the French” to avoid war. Gunther shared the widespread and incorrect belief that the French were prepared to go to war over the Rhineland.³² Gunther’s reports on the French and British reactions to the remilitarization of the Rhineland revealed the subtle racial lens of American journalism. The British were characterized by their calm civility, while the French, grouped with the Italians and Spanish as “Latin” peoples, were impetuous and lacked emotional restraint. Lippmann viewed the German remilitarization of the Rhineland and the reactions of the British and French as “likely to mark a turning point in the history of the modern world.” For Lippmann, Hitler was clearly “an even more violent man than Mussolini,” and Hitler’s flagrant disregard for the Versailles and Locarno treaties threatened the peace of Europe. The ultimate decision rested with Britain and France to demonstrate their

³² Gunther, “British See Germany ‘Getting Away With It’,” *Chicago Daily News* 9 March 1936, 1-2; Gunther, “Wait and Watch Britain’s Policy in German Crisis,” *Chicago Daily News* 10 March 1936, 2. While American journalists criticized the French for failing to react or stand up to Hitler’s brazen denunciation of the Versailles Treaty, historian Stephen Schuker argues the French were not concerned by the remilitarization of the Rhineland, but were constrained by a severe lack of military and financial resources at the time, and had no intention of going to war over the Rhineland. (Stephen A. Schuker, “France and the Remilitarization of the Rhineland, 1936,” *French Historical Studies* 14:3 (1986) 299-338).

willingness to use force to uphold these international agreements. Yet he doubted the reliability of the Anglo-French partnership following the French hesitation to impose sanctions on Italy. The British and French attitudes towards Germany's remilitarization of the Rhineland demonstrated their general inconsistency and duplicity. While the French preached the "sanctity of treaties...Laval did not have any great ardor for this doctrine in the Ethiopian affair." Britain, on the other hand, played the heavy hand with Italy over Ethiopia, but in the current debate over the remilitarization of the Rhineland, "the British think the French are unreasonable and impetuous."³³ Gunther too questioned the solidarity of the Anglo-French relationship in the wake of the Hoare-Laval "fiasco," and British views of the "nefarious" French.³⁴

Following a visit to both sides of the Rhine McCormick again contrasted the national characters of the French and the Germans. She characterized the French as pessimists, who "have long expected the worst and are not surprised when the worst happens." The French were internally divided, "bickering in a thousand voices," symptomatic of their excessive and unstable democracy. The Germans, on the other hand, despite being "desperately poor," remained united behind Hitler, convinced that he "has a mission to save Europe and restore peace."³⁵ The *Nation* perceived the German remilitarization of the Rhineland as a

³³ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Fateful Hour," *New York Herald Tribune* 10 March 1936, 21; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: European Crisis: Official Reasons and Real Ones," *New York Herald Tribune* 14 March 1936, 15.

³⁴ Gunther, "Accord is Seen for London and Paris," *Chicago Daily News* 11 March 1936, 2.

³⁵ American journalists were regularly baffled by the instability of the French democracy which experienced 24 changes in government between 1930 and 1940. (Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster*,

far greater threat than the announcement of German rearmament a year earlier, and as “a deliberate attempt to destroy the foundations of international organization.” The combined threats of Mussolini’s Ethiopian adventure and Hitler’s remilitarization of the Rhineland made joint and consistent actions by France and Britain remote.³⁶ Thompson also questioned the ability of Britain and France to form a united front. While she believed that it was a fundamental British interest to maintain the “territorial integrity of France, even by war if necessary,” there were “limits of [the] British enthusiasm for France,” preventing firm British commitments to the defense of France.³⁷

While British and French leaders met in London, and the Locarno powers and the League Council assembled, Kirchwey, Krock and the others speculated whether anyone was willing to call “Hitler’s bluff.” Gunther concluded that only a firm British stand and a united front by the Locarno nations could challenge Germany. Lippmann also believed that unless the British firmly committed themselves to assisting France on the continent, any response to Hitler’s violation of the Versailles and Locarno treaties would lack teeth. For Lippmann the peace of Europe hinged on the inability of Britain and France to firmly coordinate collective action, “because Britain and France have lacked the practical sense to

33); McCormick, “East and West of the Rhine: The Contrast,” *New York Times* 15 March 1936, E3.

³⁶ “A New Watch on the Rhine,” *Nation* 18 March 1936, 335-336.

³⁷ Thompson, “On the Record: Devil’s Choice,” *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 March 1936, 19. Thompson’s interpretations of the Rhineland crisis were found in her newspaper column, “On the Record,” which debuted in the *New York Herald Tribune* on 18 March 1936.

see that if they do not hang together they will assuredly hang separately.”³⁸

According to the *Nation*, Britain’s opposition to sanctions as a penalty to Germany meant the end to collective action and a return to the prewar systems of balance-of-power alliances.³⁹ Both the League Council and the Locarno powers denounced Hitler’s remilitarization of the Rhineland as violations of the Versailles and Locarno treaties. Yet Gunther concluded that the remilitarization of the Rhineland was a “*fait accompli* impossible to resist.” As a result of Hitler’s “wary and ruthless boldness” the Locarno treaties were destroyed and the League was fundamentally weakened. Gunther warned against believing German claims that this violation of international law would be their last. Gunther characterized German tactics as “disingenuous,” and warned that relying on Hitler “as a truth-teller...is a bad risk.”⁴⁰

Ultimately the condemnations by the Locarno nations and the League Council resulted in no concrete action against Germany. Neither Britain nor France was prepared to go to war against Germany. The United States remained aloof. While Roosevelt watched the Rhineland crisis with concern, American sentiment was against any overt involvement. The lack of any concrete action by Britain or France against the German remilitarization of the Rhineland reinforced

³⁸ Edgar Ansel Mowrer and Gunther, “Will Hitler Continue Bluff? Europe Wonders,” *Chicago Daily News* 21 March 1936, 2; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Attempt to Repair the Damage,” *New York Herald Tribune* 24 March 1936, 17; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Pivot of Europe,” *New York Herald Tribune* 2 April 1936, 21.

³⁹ “Will Europe Call Hitler’s Bluff?” *Nation* 25 March 1936, 369.

⁴⁰ Gunther, “The Rhineland Crisis,” *Nation* 1 April 1936, 407-408; Gunther, “Britain Hopes for Peace, but Prepares to Assist France, Belgium, in War,” *Chicago Daily News*, 2.

American opinion that the latest German maneuver was not a direct threat to the peace of Europe or to the security of the United States.⁴¹

By the end of April the German remilitarization of the Rhineland was an accomplished fact. The recent German “elections” held on 29 March returned a vote of 98.9% in support of Hitler. Writing from Berlin in the wake of Hitler’s Rhineland victory, McCormick commented on the adoration of the German people for their leader, who in their eyes “wears a halo” and “walks on clouds of incense.” According to McCormick, Hitler’s latest foreign policy victory greatly enhanced his prestige not only with the German people, but also with foreign observers, such as Thompson, who had once ridiculed Hitler as a “little man.” McCormick agreed that Hitler could no longer be underestimated: “Certainly you can no longer laugh off, or frown down, a man who plays on the weaknesses and divisions in the old Allied front in the effort to make Germany once more the arbiter of Europe.” Although McCormick had never attacked Hitler’s masculinity as openly as Thompson, she generally placed Hitler subordinate to Mussolini. Yet in her appraisal of Hitler’s Rhineland victory McCormick admitted that Hitler’s “political intelligence” may have eclipsed that of Mussolini, who was “trapped into the expensive and unpopular folly of waging physical war to get what he wants.” This was the first time McCormick presented a critical view of

⁴¹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 124-125; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 80-82. Winston Thorson’s study of public opinion as reflected in editorials of leading newspapers and magazines concluded that the public did not view the Rhineland crisis as a threat to the United States. Many people, especially in the isolationist south and Midwest, became more cynical about European diplomacy and pessimistic about the prospects of peace in Europe. Thorsen, “The American Press and the Rhineland Crisis of 1936.” *Research Studies of the State College of Washington* 15 (1947).

Mussolini's foreign policy, and suggested that Hitler's Nazi Germany, the "child of fascism," might surpass its elder.⁴² Historians contend that Hitler's Rhineland victory marked a new stage in his dictatorship as his power within Germany waxed, and German prestige on the world stage was reasserted. According to Ian Kershaw the remilitarization of the Rhineland, "was a major triumph for Hitler, both externally and internally. It was the culmination point of the first phase of his dictatorship."⁴³

With international attention focused on Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, Mussolini's Ethiopian war faded from view. On 2 May 1936 Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie fled into exile and the capital of Addis Ababa fell to Italian forces on 5 May. Italy annexed Ethiopia on 7 May and the Italian King Victor Emmanuel III was proclaimed emperor two days later. According to Lippmann the Italian victory stunned the experts who predicted a long war that would only end when Italy was no longer able to finance the war in the face of League sanctions. The Italian victory was a blow to the League of Nations, the advocates of collective security, and British prestige.⁴⁴ Thompson agreed that as a result of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia there was a "profound decline of confidence in Great Britain on the continent." Furthermore, the Italian victory in

⁴² McCormick, "Exploring the Hitler Legend," *New York Times* 3 May 1936, SM1.

⁴³ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1936-1945: Nemesis* (London: Penguin Books, 2000) xxxvi. Bell also argues that the Rhineland crisis "has been rightly seen as a crucial point in the move towards war." (P.M.H. Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe* (New York: Longman Inc., 1986) 211). For a detailed account of the Rhineland crisis see J.T. Emmerson's *The Rhineland Crisis, 7 March 1936: A Study in Multilateral Diplomacy* (London: M.T. Smith, 1977).

⁴⁴ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Ethiopian Gamble," *New York Herald Tribune* 5 May 1936, 19.

Ethiopia, coupled with the uncontested German remilitarization of the Rhineland, effectively meant the death of the Versailles Treaty.⁴⁵ The *Nation* also placed the lion's share of blame on Britain. Britain's inconsistent policies, from the "passionate denunciation of Italian imperialism and its previous indifference to the Japanese invasion of Manchuria," to the "ill-fated Hoare-Laval proposals and...its refusal to support collective action in the face of Hitler's insolent breach of treaties," gave currency to the old epithet "perfidious Albion."⁴⁶ In her assessment of Italy following its victory over Ethiopia, McCormick stressed how Mussolini's Ethiopian adventure, much like Hitler's victory in the Rhineland, strengthened his support at home and "raised the status of Italy as a military power."⁴⁷ While the League of Nations voted on 10 May to maintain sanctions against Italy, the United States terminated the application of the Neutrality Act to Italy and Ethiopia on 20 June. Haile Selassie made a passionate appeal to the League of Nations to maintain sanctions and pressure on Italy. However, the League, led by Britain, voted to end economic sanctions against Italy and the sanctions were officially lifted on 15 July 1936.

The Spanish Civil War

With the end of the war in Ethiopia and the suspension of sanctions against Italy by the League of Nations, there was a brief period of relative peace in European international relations, interrupted by the outbreak of civil war in

⁴⁵ Thompson, "On the Record: Muddling – But Not Through," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 May 1936, 13.

⁴⁶ "Ethiopia's Collapse and Europe's Peril," *Nation* 13 May 1936, 599-600.

⁴⁷ McCormick, "The New Italy: Fact or Phrase?" *New York Times* 17 May 1936, SM3.

Spain. The war began on 17 July 1936 with an attempted *coup d'état* by the army in Spanish Morocco against Spain's Popular Front government. The civil war appeared to foreign observers as an ideological struggle between Franco's pro-fascist rebels and the leftwing Republican government. American journalists reported extensively on the Spanish Civil War, from both rightwing and leftwing ideological perspectives. Members of the conservative press, especially the Hearst papers, were vocally pro-Franco, viewing the cause of the Spanish "Nationalists" as a fight against the forces of communism. According to Hearst, Franco's forces were fighting against "national disintegration," and Hearst pushed for the extension of Neutrality legislation to include civil wars and an embargo against the Loyalist government of Spain. Colonel McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune* also sided with Franco's forces in his paper's reporting of the Spanish Civil War. Like Hearst, Colonel McCormick's stance was dictated by his anti-communism, and made clear by the firing of the *Tribune's* foreign correspondent Jay Allen for his pro-Loyalist views. The anti-Communist position of the *New York Herald Tribune*, like the Hearst papers and the *Chicago Tribune*, led to the tacit support of Franco as the findings of journalist John T. Whitaker, who had infiltrated Franco's forces and obtained "damning evidence of their murderous mentality," were suppressed in both the New York and Paris editions of the newspaper.⁴⁸ The more liberal American press defended the Spanish Republic,

⁴⁸ Carlisle, "The Foreign Policy Views of an Isolationist Press Lord," 221; Edwards, *The Foreign Policy of Col. McCormick's Tribune*, 128; Kluger, *The Paper*, 294.

the “Loyalists,” as the legal and constitutional government.⁴⁹ With the involvement of Italy and Germany on the side of Franco and the Soviet Union aiding the Spanish Republic, American journalists viewed the Spanish Civil War as a war by proxy between ideological rivals.⁵⁰

Gunther was one of the most vocal American journalists supporting Republican Spain. Gunther had vacationed in Spain less than a month before the outbreak of war and was well aware of the simmering tensions that would shortly tear the country apart. By 31 July with reports of Italian and German aid to the rebel forces in Spain, Gunther’s articles from London stressed the “semiofficial” British attitude of sympathy for the Loyalist government in Spain, the question of whether France’s Popular Front government would remain neutral in the conflict, and the growing fear that the Spanish Civil War was becoming “a war by proxy

⁴⁹ Although the American press was generally split along political and ideological lines in their evaluation of the Spanish Civil War, historian Michael Chapman argues that Franco’s supporters, including Ellery Sedgwick, editor of the liberal progressive magazine the *Atlantic*, “are difficult to pigeonhole, although all shared a loathing of Soviet Communism.” (Michael E. Chapman, “Pro-Franco Anti-Communism: Ellery Sedgwick and the *Atlantic Monthly*,” *Journal of Contemporary History* (2006) 41:4, 241-262) For general works on the Spanish Civil War see: Gabriel Jackson, *A Concise History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1974); Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (London: A. Lane, 1979); Anthony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (London: Orbis, 1982); Michael Alpert, *A New International History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994); George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context, 1931-1939* (London: Longman, 1995). For works on the United States and the Spanish Civil War see: Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart*; David Valaik, J., “Catholics, Neutrality, and the Spanish Embargo, 1937-1939,” *Journal of American History* 54 (June 1967) 73-85; Little, *Malevolent Neutrality*; Dominic Tierney, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (2004) 299-313; Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War*. For an account of the Spanish Civil War as it related to the Second World War see: Willard C. Frank Jr., “The Spanish Civil War and the Coming of the Second World War,” *International History Review* 9:3 (1987) 368-409.

⁵⁰ Many observers in the United States viewed Franco’s forces as a fascists, although Franco had more affinity with the authoritarian Catholic monarchical right than with fascists. See Ishmael Saz Campos, “Fascism, fascistization and developmentalism in Franco’s dictatorship,” *Social History* 29:3 (2004) 342-357.

between the Fascist and non-Fascist states of Europe.”⁵¹ Thompson also used her new column in the *New York Herald Tribune* to rail against the forces of fascism. Although Thompson did not support the “government of racketeers” as she described the Spanish Popular Front and in general did not support any socialist or communist government, she despised the fascist rebels who threatened civil liberties, the rule of law, and the democratic process in Spain.⁵² The liberal *Nation* predictably supported the Spanish Republic and fiercely denounced German and Italian intervention. An editorial in the *Nation* described Mussolini and Hitler as “gangsters” and “irresponsible megalomaniacs,” who “are drunk with the success that the democratic governments have permitted them to seize, with no resistance more effective than half-hearted gestures and empty threats.” The *Nation* assailed Britain and France for appeasing the fascist dictators and failing to support the democratically elected, legitimate Spanish government.⁵³

The American government maintained its policy of non-intervention in European conflicts in response to the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. While the American ambassador to Spain was openly sympathetic to the Loyalists and the Spanish Republic, the Roosevelt administration was skeptical of the left-leaning Popular Front government.⁵⁴ The American government’s policies

⁵¹ Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 137-138; Gunther, “Survival of Europe’s First Real Left-Wing Government at Stake in Spanish Revolt,” *Chicago Daily News* 20 July 1936, 2; Gunther, “London Worries at Reports of Italian and Nazi Aid for Rebel Forces in Spain,” *Chicago Daily News* 31 July 1936, 2.

⁵² Thompson, “On the Record: Pattern of a Revolution,” *New York Herald Tribune* 30 July 1936, 17.

⁵³ “Drunken Dictators,” *Nation* 8 August 1936, 141-142.

⁵⁴ Claude Bowers was a personal friend of Roosevelt and appointed Ambassador to Spain in 1933. Bowers viewed the outcome of the Spanish Civil War as both “a personal and diplomatic

towards the Spanish Republic since its birth in 1931 reflected general American fears of the spread of communism and Bolshevik subversion. The ascension of the Popular Front in the Spanish Republic appeared to confirm fears that Spain was headed into the arms of communism. Since Roosevelt was away from Washington in July 1936, Cordell Hull vocalized the administration's position of non-intervention. On 9 August the British and French agreed to a policy of non-intervention in the Spanish crisis. Two days later Roosevelt announced a "moral embargo" against the selling of war materials to either side in the conflict.⁵⁵

Although the Roosevelt administration had announced a position of non-intervention and neutrality in the Spanish Civil War, Krock published an article on the front page of the *New York Times* on 26 August 1936 announcing that "Roosevelt, if Re-elected, May Call Kings, Dictators and Presidents to Great Power Peace Conference." The article, the result of a private interview granted to Krock by Roosevelt to help gain the editorial support of the *New York Times* for the upcoming election, described Roosevelt's plan to call the leaders of Britain,

tragedy." While Bowers was openly sympathetic to the Republic and pressed for the end of the American embargo against Spain, historian Douglas Little argues that Bowers' influence was constrained by several factors including the fact that he was an appointee and not a career diplomat, he came down on the wrong side of certain political and economic disputes between Spain and the United States, the strong antipathy toward the Spanish Republic in the United States government, and that Bowers was stranded in France following the outbreak of the civil war in Spain. See Douglas Little, "Bowers and his Mission to Spain: The Diplomacy of a Jeffersonian Democrat," in Kenneth Paul Jones (ed) *U.S. Diplomats in Europe, 1919-1941* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 1981) 129-146; Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War*, 32-33; Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 22-25.

⁵⁵ Little, "Antibolshevism and American Foreign Policy,"; Little, *Malevolent Neutrality*, 18, 186, 238; Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War*, 32-33; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 127.

France, Italy, Germany and the Soviet Union together for a peace conference.⁵⁶

Krock described Roosevelt's peace conference plan "as the most important news the world has read since 1919."⁵⁷ The reaction to Krock's story was mixed.

Some readers of the *Times* were thrilled by Krock's story and the president's peace conference plan. Thompson reacted to Roosevelt's plan with "excitement and affirmation." While the *Nation* praised Roosevelt for the idea of a peace conference, ultimately the *Nation* described the plan as "a pipe dream."⁵⁸

Although Krock received assurances from Roosevelt that the White House would not deny the story, the public reaction to the peace conference plan was generally unfavourable. Henry Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture, publicly refuted the story on behalf of Roosevelt.⁵⁹ The administration's denial undermined Krock's credibility as a journalist and further strained the stormy relations between Roosevelt and the *New York Times'* Washington bureau chief. Roosevelt's trial balloon demonstrated that the American public, although generally pacific, were opposed to any intervention in European politics, even in the name of peace.

Several American journalists questioned the British, French and American insistence on non-intervention in the face of obvious Italian and German intervention in Spain. Thompson viewed the conflict in Spain as not merely a

⁵⁶ Saylor, "Window on an Age," 310; Memo Early to McIntyre, 18 August 1936, PPF Folder 675 "New York Times 1936-1937" FDRL, Hyde Park; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 66.

⁵⁷ Krock, "Roosevelt, If Re-elected, May Call Kings, Dictators and Presidents to Great Power Peace Conference," *New York Times* 26 August 1936, 1.

⁵⁸ William M. Paisley, "Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*," *New York Times* 28 August 1936, 16; Thompson, "On the Record: The Peace Conference Idea," *New York Herald Tribune* 29 August 1936, 13; "It's a Pipe Dream, Mr. President," *Nation* 5 September 1936, 260.

⁵⁹ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 66; Saylor, "Window on an Age," 313; "Party to Bird to Krock?" *Time* 7 September 1936.

Spanish domestic crisis, but an ideological crisis that threatened the peace of Europe, and eventually America: “The issue: Communism Socialism versus Fascism is *not* exclusively a Spanish domestic issue, no matter how much neutrality is preached. It is an issue everywhere in Europe today. It may be an issue here tomorrow.” For Thompson, the intervention of Germany in the Spanish Civil War confirmed the expansionist aims of Hitler’s Germany.⁶⁰ McCormick also viewed the Spanish Civil War as a struggle between opposing ideologies for “the mastery of Europe.”⁶¹ While the *Nation* greeted non-intervention agreements with optimism that a general European war could be avoided, it warned that the “excessive caution – or cowardice – of the French and British governments is an open invitation to the fascist powers to attack when they think the time opportune.” Furthermore, the *Nation* argued, the American position of non-intervention left the door open to the triumph of fascism in Europe, which would eventually threaten American national interests.⁶²

Lippmann, on the other hand, disagreed with many of his colleagues who believed the Spanish Civil War would ultimately lead to another world war. He argued that the “massacre, terrorism, pillage and vandalism” of the Spanish Civil War provided important demonstrations of the “true nature of another European war.” Lippmann believed that the next war would not be fought or won quickly

⁶⁰ Thompson, “On the Record: Spain and Neutrality,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 August 1936, 11; Thompson, “On the Record: Looking Backward,” *New York Herald Tribune* 15 August 1936, 13; Thompson, “On the Record: Legal vs. Moral Rights,” *New York Herald Tribune* 20 August 1936, 13.

⁶¹ McCormick, “Right vs. Left: A Great Struggle,” *New York Times* 30 August 1936.

⁶² “Civil War and Intervention,” *Nation* 29 August 1936, 228-229; “Anti-British Hysteria,” *Nation* 11 September 1937, 253-254.

by aerial bombardment or advanced military technology and strategy. The Spanish Civil War demonstrated the brutality of modern warfare and served as a warning against another general European war. According to Lippmann peace in Europe could still be maintained since the British and French were essentially pacific powers, Mussolini was “a realist and no fool,” and Hitler’s government still contained moderate figures like Hjalmar Schacht.⁶³

Some of Lippmann’s optimism was a result of the Non-Intervention Committee that met in London on 9 September 1936. Twenty-seven nations, including Britain, France, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union, signed the agreement pledging not to intervene in the Spanish Civil War. In spite of the Non-Intervention Agreement Thompson commented “that the Italians and the Germans have been furnishing aid to the rebels.”⁶⁴ The *Nation* agreed with Thompson that there was little doubt concerning continued German, Italian and Portuguese intervention in the Spanish Civil War on behalf of Franco. In response, the Soviet Union threatened to withdraw from the Non-Intervention Agreement. By late October the Soviet Union began actively assisting the Spanish Republic through shipments of tanks, armaments and other supplies. The *Nation* praised the Soviet Union for coming to the assistance of the Spanish Republic when none of Spain’s “sister democracies” had intervened to help. The *Nation* criticized the cowardice of Britain and France who in the face of

⁶³ Lippmann, “The Lesson From Spain,” *New York Herald Tribune* 19 September 1936, 17.

⁶⁴ Thompson, “On the Record: Paging Armageddon,” *New York Herald Tribune* 12 October 1936, 21.

“Mussolini’s and Hitler’s growing boldness...have crawled farther and farther into their shells,” and was particularly critical of the French for failing to come to the assistance of the Spanish Popular Front government.⁶⁵ Lippmann argued that the French had followed the British lead in remaining passive and not intervening in the Spanish conflict. Both the British and the French, he suggested, required more time to build up their military power before confronting the fascist dictators.⁶⁶ While Lippmann painted the British and French hesitation as a pragmatic response to rearmament deficiencies, many American journalists interpreted the inaction of Britain and France in harsher terms, namely the cowardly abandonment of the legitimate and democratic government of Spain.

In the midst of Franco’s pitched battle to capture Madrid, Germany and Italy officially recognized his government on 18 November 1936. The *Nation* suggested that the agreement had been reached between Germany and Italy following Ciano’s visit to Hitler. Indeed, Ciano’s visit to Berlin in October, described by the *New York Times* as “a reception as resplendent as any given visiting royalty in pre-war days,” resulted in an agreement for a common front between the two fascist dictatorships against Bolshevism in Europe. As part of the pact Germany formally recognized Italy’s conquest of Ethiopia, and the two dictatorships agreed to recognize Franco’s rebels. In his speech of 1 November Mussolini described Italy’s new relationship and “understanding” with Germany

⁶⁵ “The Soviets Force a Showdown,” *Nation* 17 October 1936, 435; “The Soviets Accept a Challenge,” *Nation* 31 October 1936, 508-509.

⁶⁶ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Critical Interval,” *New York Herald Tribune* 21 November 1936, 17.

as “an axis around which all European States animated by a desire for peace may collaborate on troubles.” In his speech Mussolini addressed the British directly, outlining the need for bilateral “recognition of reciprocal interests” between Britain and Italy with respect to interests in the Mediterranean.⁶⁷

On 2 January 1937 Britain and Italy concluded a “gentlemen’s agreement” to respect and maintain the status quo in the Mediterranean.⁶⁸ The Mediterranean agreement also reiterated the premise of the Non-Intervention Agreement, whereby both Britain and Italy renewed their pledges to stay out of the Spanish Civil War. Considering Britain was the chief instigator in bringing sanctions against Italy over the Ethiopian war, the Mediterranean agreement was hailed by many as a sign of progress towards peace in Europe. For others it was further evidence of the duplicity of British policies. Lippmann viewed the Anglo-Italian agreement with optimism. According to Lippmann the agreement over the Mediterranean would lessen the probability of the Spanish Civil War becoming an international conflict. He viewed the Anglo-Italian agreement as further evidence that Mussolini was a “well-educated man” and a “realist” who was not willing to risk another expensive war.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ “The Little World War Begins to Grow,” *Nation* 28 November 1936, 621; “Ciano Welcomed With Great Pomp,” *New York Times* 21 October 1936, 6; Guido Enderis, “Germany and Italy in Full Agreement,” *New York Times* 24 October 1936, 1; Edwin L. James, “Hitler and Mussolini Find Common Ground,” *New York Times* 25 October 1936, E3; “Text of Mussolini’s Milan Speech,” *New York Times* 2 November 1936, 12.

⁶⁸ “Britain and Italy Sign Accord For Mediterranean Harmony,” *New York Times* 3 January 1937, 1.

⁶⁹ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Spain, A Better Prospect for Europe,” *New York Herald Tribune* 5 January 1937, 19.

According to McCormick the Anglo-Italian agreement enhanced the position and importance of Italy in Europe. The change was evident in Mussolini whom she described as “in the pink of physical condition and still at the peak of his domestic popularity.” Mussolini’s impressive physique was illustrated in the photograph accompanying McCormick’s 2 February article in the *New York Times*, which depicted a shirtless Mussolini skiing with the caption “Il Duce Defies Weather on Skiing Trip.” McCormick described Mussolini’s appearance as “bronzed and hard.” She argued that within the new relationship between Mussolini and Hitler - the “Rome-Berlin axis” – Mussolini still maintained the senior position as the “only ruler who may be presumed to know and influence Chancellor Adolf Hitler’s intentions.” Although she conceded that Mussolini was “anxious” over the Spanish Civil War, recent international developments including the Italian victory over Ethiopia, the Rome-Berlin Axis, and the gentlemen’s agreement between Italy and Britain, marked a “year of triumphal progress” for Mussolini and Italy.⁷⁰

Diggins argues that after the Ethiopian War American journalistic opinion became increasingly critical of Mussolini and Fascist Italy. Yet McCormick, for one, continued what Diggins calls “her infatuation with Mussolini.”⁷¹ Her “infatuation” did not go unnoticed by readers of the *New York Times*. An unpublished letter to the editor of the paper criticized McCormick’s writing as

⁷⁰ McCormick, “Rome Swings its ‘Axis’ from Berlin to London,” *New York Times* 31 January 1937, 62; McCormick, “Mussolini Anxious Over Spanish War,” *New York Times* 2 February 1936, 11.

⁷¹ Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 317.

“Fascist propaganda” and cast doubts on McCormick’s objectivity and even her loyalty to the United States. The letter called Mussolini McCormick’s “hero, big-joweled and caesarian,” and implied that McCormick was enamoured with the Italian dictator.⁷² *Time* also questioned McCormick’s close relationship with Mussolini, once describing McCormick as Mussolini’s “favorite U.S. Newshen.”⁷³ Although McCormick’s articles about Mussolini garnered occasional criticism, her career with the *New York Times* rapidly advanced in 1936 and 1937. In May 1937 McCormick became the first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for her foreign correspondence.⁷⁴

While civil war raged in Spain in late 1936 the Roosevelt administration celebrated one of the greatest election landslides in American history. On 5 February Roosevelt announced his intention to enlarge the Supreme Court, in an effort to confront the Court’s blocking of his New Deal legislation.⁷⁵ American journalistic reaction to Roosevelt’s reform of the Supreme Court was bitterly divided, as the proposed enlargement of presidential powers brought comparisons with the fascist dictatorships in Europe. For many American journalists Roosevelt’s Supreme Court reform threatened a fundamental principle of American democracy - the systems of checks and balances that demarcated the

⁷² Malcolm Decker, “Letter to the editors of the *New York Times*,” 17 January 1937, Box I, Folder “General Correspondence Jan-May 1937,” Papers of Anne O’Hare McCormick, New York Public Library, New York.

⁷³ “Query and Right,” *Time* 20 January 1936.

⁷⁴ Memo from AHS, 27 November 1936, Box AHS BIO-44 “McAnery-McDonald, James,” Folder “McCormick, Anne O’Hare,” *New York Times* Archive, New York; “What’s Behind the News From Europe?” *New York Times* 21 February 1937, 13.

⁷⁵ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 137.

American political system from both the European dictatorships and the unstable democracies like France.⁷⁶

Lippmann described the president's plan as "a bloodless coup d'etat which strikes a deadly blow at the vital center of constitutional democracy." While he did not go as far as other Roosevelt critics who labeled the president a dictator, Lippmann argued that Roosevelt was "proposing to create the necessary precedent, and to establish the political framework for, and to destroy the safeguards against, a dictator."⁷⁷ For Thompson, Roosevelt's proposed reform of the Supreme Court was a move to subject the Court "to the personal will and leadership of the executive." Such a move represented "pure personal government," a direction that would eventually lead to a dictatorship.⁷⁸ McCormick, on the other hand, denounced the accusations of "dictator," stating that "Mr. Roosevelt has not in any case the temperament of a dictator," and suggested that the spectacle of the European dictatorships had made Americans

⁷⁶ For the isolationist opposition to Roosevelt's Supreme Court reform see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 211-222.

⁷⁷ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow" *New York Herald Tribune* 14 February 1933; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Seizure of the Court" *New York Herald Tribune* 9 February 1937, 21; Walter Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: That Better 'Ole" *New York Herald Tribune* 25 February 1937, 21.

⁷⁸ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 228; Thompson, "On the Record: The President's Message" *New York Herald Tribune* 8 February 1937, 15; Thompson, "On the Record: On Further Thought" *New York Herald Tribune* 10 February 1937, 21; Thompson, "On the Record: Ruffled Grouse" *New York Herald Tribune* 17 February 1937, 23. In April 1937 Thompson appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing to comment on the Supreme Court reorganization plan based on her experiences "as an observer of the collapse of European democracies." Thompson's testimony before the hearing, described by *Time* magazine as "most strikingly expressed by a woman," attracted "more Senators and more spectators than had attended the hearing since its early sessions." She suggested that such reform of the Court would invariably place far too much power in the hands of a would-be dictator. ("Court Plan Holds Peril of Dictators, Senate Told By Dorothy Thompson" *New York Herald Tribune* 1 April 1937, 1, 8; "The Big Debate," *Time* 1 March 1937.).

“uncommonly wary of changing the status quo by any increase of executive power.”⁷⁹ Unlike several of her colleagues, McCormick was more willing to accept the undemocratic leanings of the Roosevelt administration, as she had done in her reports on Mussolini’s dictatorship. In the pages of the *Nation* the Supreme Court reform debate revealed the simmering tensions between the journal’s editor, Kirchwey, and former owner, editor and ongoing contributor Villard. Readers compared Villard’s attacks on Roosevelt’s reform plan to those in the Hearst papers. The editorial position of the *Nation*, in contrast to Villard and the multitude of press opinions, supported the administration’s attempts to curb the power of the Supreme Court as necessary to prevent the blocking of essential New Deal legislation.⁸⁰

A fresh debate over American neutrality legislation in the early months of 1937 further demonstrated the divisions between Kirchwey and Villard. *Nation* editorials argued that the Spanish Civil War illustrated the dangers of strict and inflexible neutrality legislation. Villard, on the other hand, argued that the Neutrality Acts were necessary to ensure that the United States was not drawn into another European war, as was the case from 1914-1917, through “the tying

⁷⁹ McCormick, “As Mr. Roosevelt Sees His Role” *New York Times* 17 January 1937, 117; McCormick, “Examples Abroad: Influence of Dictatorships on the Court Issue Here” *New York Times* 26 July 1937, 18; McCormick, “An Unchanging Roosevelt Drives On” *New York Times* 15 August 1937, 107.

⁸⁰ Letters to the editor from John Poniard and John Ochou, July 1937, Box 12 Folder 207 “Anti-Villard, 1937-1938,” Papers of Freda Kirchwey, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge; Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 108-109; “Roosevelt Is No Dictator” *Nation*, 14 November 1936, 565. In July Roosevelt withdrew his bill to reform the Supreme Court and in August it was revealed that Roosevelt’s nominee for the Supreme Court, Alabama Senator Hugo Black, had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

up of our great industrial plants and munitions factories to the Allied military machine.” Villard’s pacifism, his insistence that “I’ll never countenance any war, or our selling supplies to one side or the other,” placed his column in conflict with the general editorial policy of the *Nation* during the late 1930’s.⁸¹ The conflict between Kirchwey and Villard became more pronounced when the *Nation* was sold again in 1937 to Kirchwey herself, who acted as both editor and publisher of the magazine.⁸² Kirchwey maintained Villard’s weekly column, but as Kirchwey’s editorials responded to the European crises of the late 1930s with calls for “collective action,” Villard’s opinions appeared more at odds with the magazine’s editorial stance. Although Villard insisted that his contributions would “have complete freedom of utterance without regard to editorial policy,” frequent criticisms appeared both from Kirchwey herself and readers of the *Nation*, regarding the noticeable divergence between the magazine’s editorials and Villard’s column.⁸³

The issue of American Neutrality legislation and the Spanish Civil War evoked strong responses from American writers and journalists. On 1 March 1937 a group of ninety-eight American writers, including Gunther, signed a joint letter supporting the “democratically elected republican government of Spain”

⁸¹ Villard, “Another Word on Neutrality” *Nation* 1 May 1937, 508; “Are We Safe from War?” *Nation* 8 May 1937, 524-525.

⁸² “‘The Nation’ Is Sold,” *Nation*, 12 June 1937, 666; “‘The Nation’s’ Future,” *Nation*, 19 June 1937, 695.

⁸³ Letter Villard to Kirchwey, 28 August 1937, Box 8 Folder 136, Papers of Freda Kirchwey, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge; Letter Villard to Kirchwey, 5 July 1938, Box 8 Folder 136, Papers of Freda Kirchwey, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge.

and condemning the “cowardly and cruel” attacks on civilians.⁸⁴ The American Newspaper Guild also issued a statement supporting the Republican forces in Spain against the “lawless” forces of fascism. Lippmann protested against the political position of the American Newspaper Guild and publicly offered his resignation from the organization.⁸⁵

While American journalists were deeply divided over the Spanish Civil War, one event evoked nearly universal outrage and condemnation. On 26 April 1937 the Republican held Basque town of Guernica was savagely bombed by enemy aircraft. It was market day and the air attack resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties. The American reaction to the bombing of Guernica was swift and denunciatory. Even conservative newspapers and news magazines that supported Franco’s forces condemned the bombing of the town.⁸⁶ The front page report in the *New York Times* by George Steer, the British war correspondent in Spain, set the tone. Steer called the bombing of Guernica “unparalleled in military history.” He concluded that the objective of the bombing of Guernica was “the demoralization of the civil population and the destruction of the cradle of the Basque race.” Steer also clearly implicated Germany in the bombing,

⁸⁴ “98 Writers Score Spanish Rebels,” *New York Times* 1 March 1937, 7.

⁸⁵ “News Guild Backs Enlarging Court,” *New York Times* 11 June 1937, 8; “Assails Guild Policies,” *New York Times* 22 June 1937, 6; Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 337-338. Steel argues that Lippmann did not take “a passionate, partisan interest in the Spanish Civil war,” fearing that the crisis might start a general European war, and instead supported the neutral position of the United States in the conflict.

⁸⁶ Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart*, 56, 106.

describing “German-type planes” as responsible for the attack.⁸⁷ Although both Germany and Italy had signed the Non-Intervention Agreement, in November 1936 Germany, Italy and Portugal blocked a British plan to post observers around Spain’s borders to report on breaches of the agreement. Steer’s words were echoed in other accounts of the Guernica bombing in American newspapers. A *New York Times* editorial of 29 April 1937 denounced the bombing as “wholesale arson and mass murder.”⁸⁸ Even some conservative news magazines including *Time* and *Newsweek*, which had been pro-Nationalist in their reporting of the Spanish Civil War, changed their posture following the bombing of Guernica.⁸⁹

In his bestselling book *Inside Europe*, Gunther called the bombing of Guernica, “the first instance in history of the complete and willful obliteration of a whole city, non-combatants as well as fighters.”⁹⁰ In her column Thompson described the bombing of Guernica as “the ruthless, cold-blooded, vicious extermination of one of the rare peoples of the earth – the Basques.” Thompson contrasted the characteristics of the Basques, proud, noble, independent, pious and free, against the cowardly, inhuman and cold attackers. She decried the attack on helpless women and children, the tactics of “Fascist warfare” and terror.

Convinced that the bombing of Guernica was evidence of German intervention in

⁸⁷ George Steer, “Historic Basque Town Wiped Out; Rebel Fliers Machine-Gun Civilians,” *New York Times* 28 April 1937, 1.

⁸⁸ “Mass Murder in Guernica,” *New York Times* 29 April 1937, 20.

⁸⁹ Guttman, *The Wound in the Heart*, 56.

⁹⁰ Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 176. *Inside Europe* quickly rose on the bestselling book lists for 1936, reaching number six. It was described as “absorbing,” and backed by considerable information. (“The Best-Selling Books of 1936,” *New York Times* 10 January 1937, 102; John Chamberlain, “Books of the Times,” *New York Times* 8 February 1936, 13; Eugene J. Young, “Views Behind the Scenes in Europe’s Chancelleries,” *New York Times* 16 February 1936, BR19).

the war Thompson lambasted the non-intervention position of Britain, France and the United States: “The democratic nations do not believe in “intervention.” Instead, we sell copper to Germany and oil to Italy!”⁹¹ Since January Thompson had been attacking the Neutrality legislation set for renewal on 1 May 1937. In this case she came up against the editorial position of the *Herald Tribune*, which ran an editorial arguing: “Miss Thompson wholly neglects the very important thesis that the most positive and practical of all contributions which this country can make to peace is a genuine attitude of neutrality toward the European quarrel.”⁹² For Thompson this would not be the last time that her views would contradict the politics of the *Herald Tribune*, nor would it be the last time that she would face a public rebuke. Lippmann agreed with Thompson that a mandatory embargo “would mean an economic crisis in America,” but argued that the Neutrality legislation was a necessary evil to keep the United States out of the next European war.⁹³ While these journalists disagreed over American neutrality policy in relation to the Spanish Civil War, their interpretative articles stressed the barbaric nature of the attack against the civilized Basques.

For others the bombing of Guernica and German intervention in the Spanish Civil War were justification for expanding American neutrality legislation to include Germany and Italy. Senator Nye called for an embargo

⁹¹ Thompson, “On the Record: Women and Children First,” *New York Herald Tribune* 30 April 1937, 21.

⁹² Thompson, “On the Record: Inaugurating What Policy?” *New York Herald Tribune* 22 January 1937, 21; “Staying Out Vs. Going In” *New York Herald Tribune* 23 January 1937, 12.

⁹³ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Neutrality Bill: A Choice of Evils,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 February 1937, 13.

against both Germany and Italy. The State Department did not endorse an embargo against Germany and Italy, and the permanent Neutrality Act passed on 1 May 1937 restricted Americans from traveling on vessels of belligerents, but allowed for sales to belligerents on a cash and carry basis. Yet throughout the spring and summer of 1937 the Roosevelt administration faced increasing pressure from organizations in the United States to extend embargos to Germany and Italy. In June Roosevelt met with Norman Thomas, the head of the American Socialist Party, to discuss evidence of Italo-German intervention in the Spanish conflict. But fear of a backlash from Catholic opinion in the United States and pressure from Britain to maintain the present American policy, convinced Roosevelt to leave American policy unchanged.⁹⁴ With evidence of increased foreign intervention in the war in Spain, many Americans feared that it was only a matter of time before the United States would be drawn into another international crisis.

In an effort to counter isolationism and to educate the public concerning American foreign policy, Roosevelt delivered his “Quarantine speech” on 5 October 1937 in Chicago. Roosevelt condemned the “present reign of terror and international lawlessness,” evident through invasions of “alien territory” (the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the Japanese invasion of China), the targeting of civilians through aerial bombardment (the bombing of Guernica), and foreign intervention in civil war (German and Italian involvement in the Spanish civil

⁹⁴ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 140-143; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 223-238; Valaik, “Catholics, Neutrality, and the Spanish Embargo, 1937-1939.”

war). Roosevelt stressed his commitment to maintaining peace, but warned that the “epidemic of world lawlessness is spreading,” and proposed that the “peace-loving nations” join together to “quarantine” the aggressors. Roosevelt’s speech contrasted the “peace-loving” and civilized nations of the world against the unjust, inhumane, immoral outlaw states who preyed on the weak and innocent. Roosevelt’s Quarantine speech clearly placed the United States alongside the “civilized” nations of the world. Roosevelt’s speech invoked the civilization versus barbarism paradigm, and foreshadowed the language of Cold War containment. The American press reacted favourably to Roosevelt’s Quarantine speech.

For Roosevelt, the positive reception in the press to his Quarantine speech was a great relief. Even the *Chicago Tribune*, one of the staunchest opponents of Roosevelt and a stridently isolationist paper, praised Roosevelt’s stance.⁹⁵ Knox, publisher of the *Chicago Daily News* and the Republican vice-presidential candidate in 1936, increasingly supported Roosevelt’s foreign policy following the Quarantine speech.⁹⁶ In a letter penned after the speech to George Messersmith, Assistant Secretary of State, Knox explained his new opinion of the Roosevelt administration: “As you know, I have differed widely with the President on many of his domestic economic policies although sharing completely a belief in his ultimate objectives, but in this manner I find myself in

⁹⁵ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 147-148.

⁹⁶ Colonel Knox’s anti-Roosevelt politics was one of the main reasons John Gunther quit his post with the *Chicago Daily News*.

thoroughgoing accord with him.” Knox also echoed these sentiments in a letter to Secretary Hull.⁹⁷ The *Times* also applauded Roosevelt’s Quarantine speech. Although Krock questioned whether the State Department had any concrete policy to back up the president’s “quarantine” suggestion, he described Roosevelt as an “outstanding national leader,” whose speech was both “an expression of public opinion” and a warning to the dictators. Krock wrote an unsigned editorial entitled “America’s Aloofness” at the private request of Hull in November 1937, to endorse the administration’s recent public pronouncements concerning the “quarantine” of aggressors and to champion a more active role for America on the international stage.⁹⁸ In response to Roosevelt’s speech Thompson praised the president’s move to align American foreign policy with the League of Nations and “the end of isolationism, in favor of collaboration in mutual responsibility, with the “ninety per cent” of the peoples of the world who want peace.”⁹⁹ The *Nation* also hailed the Quarantine speech as indicative of administration support for collective security and alignment with the League of Nations, calling the

⁹⁷Letter Knox to George Messersmith, 6 October 1937, Box 4 Folder “General Correspondence 1935-1939”, Papers of Frank Knox, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Letter Knox to Cordell Hull, 12 October 1937, Box 4 Folder “General Correspondence 1935-1939,” Papers of Frank Knox, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also letter Knox to Roosevelt, 15 December 1937, Box 4 Folder “General Correspondence 1935-1939,” Papers of Frank Knox, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁸Krock, “In Washington: The ‘Quarantine’ Policy Must Await Definition,” *New York Times* 6 October 1937, 24; “America’s Aloofness,” *New York Times* 30 November 1937, 22; Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 480, 482. Krock and Hull were old acquaintances who had known each other since the administration of President William Howard Taft. Throughout Roosevelt’s administration Krock and Hull met on several occasions, garnering Krock important inside information that appeared in his newspaper column. (Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 254, 459).

⁹⁹Thompson, “On the Record: America Must Choose,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 October 1937, 23.

speech “a shot in the arm to the discouraged forces of democratic world opinion.”¹⁰⁰

Although the public and the press reacted favourably to Roosevelt’s Quarantine speech, the administration was hesitant to endorse strong action against Japan at the Nine Power conference on China being held in Brussels in November. Roosevelt did not want it to appear as though the United States was being led by Britain at Brussels – “a tail to the British kite” – as suggested by the Hearst papers. Anti-British opinion was on the rise in the United States, fed by the First World War, disdain for the British system of imperial preference, the failure of Britain to pay its war debt owed to the United States, and American interpretations of the abdication of King Edward VII as a result of his relationship with an American woman.¹⁰¹ Roosevelt was keenly aware of these Anglophobic sentiments. The President’s relationship with Neville Chamberlain, who became Prime Minister in May 1937, revealed many of same these tensions. Chamberlain rejected Roosevelt’s invitation to Washington in June, and criticized the hesitancy of American policy towards the Japanese incursions in China. Chamberlain had grave doubts concerning American policy and the president, and was also irritated

¹⁰⁰ “Quarantine: Gesture or Policy?,” *Nation*, 16 October 1937, 391; Villard, “Issues and Men,” *Nation*, 16 October 1937, 405; Letter Villard to FDR, 31 August 1937, PPF Folder #2178 “Villard, Oswald Garrison,” FDRL, Hyde Park.

¹⁰¹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 151-152; Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 86, 93, 100.

by Roosevelt's Quarantine speech, which appeared to threaten Chamberlain's own policies of appeasement.¹⁰²

Anschluss

While Roosevelt's Quarantine speech did not translate into any new concrete foreign policy initiatives or firm commitments by the United States to collective action and security, the "three bandit nations" of Germany, Italy and Japan, seemed to be forming a closer relationship. McCormick reported on Mussolini's visit to Germany in September, contrasting the national characters of the Germans and the Italians, and the personalities of the two dictators. While McCormick praised Mussolini as a "man of destiny," she contrasted the pragmatic Italian dictator against the "messiah" and "mystic" Hitler. According to McCormick the "studiously overdone" reception for Mussolini in Berlin "implies easing the tension" between the fascist dictators over the fate of Austria.¹⁰³ Both Thompson and Kirchwey warily watched the meeting between the fascist dictators "upon whose word the next war hangs."¹⁰⁴ On 6 November 1937 Italy joined the anti-Comintern Pact with Germany and Japan. This announcement appeared to confirm that Italy had renounced the Stresa Front in favour of a relationship with Germany and Japan. Thompson viewed the German-Japanese-Italian anti-Communist pact as an indication that all three powers were striving

¹⁰² MacDonald, *The United States, Britain and Appeasement*, 28, 42, 48; Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt*, 28-29, 35-39.

¹⁰³ McCormick, "Mystic and Realist – a Fateful Meeting," *New York Times* 26 September 1937, 135; McCormick, "Europe: Berlin's Welcome to Mussolini Held Studiously Overdone," *New York Times* 27 September 1937, 20.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, "On the Record: A New Definition of Democracy," *New York Herald Tribune* 1 October 1937, 21; "The Dictators Meet," *Nation* 2 October 1937, 336-337.

“to create three world empires on the ruins of existing empires.” For Thompson, as for others, the three powers appeared to be united in their aggressive and expansionist aims. According to McCormick, the Rome-Berlin axis was tightening and strengthening, and the relationship between the two dictators was changing as “Germany is gaining the upper hand.” For McCormick, this new relationship spelt doom for Austria.¹⁰⁵ Gunther agreed that Hitler was the dominant partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis, and with this position established Hitler would be able to move on Austria without opposition from Mussolini.¹⁰⁶ On 12 December Mussolini announced that Italy was leaving the League of Nations. According to the *Nation* Italy’s departure indicated “the ever-widening breach between the fascist powers and the rest of the world.”¹⁰⁷ The *Nation* agreed with Thompson that the world seem to be dividing between the fascist/dictatorships and the democracies. The closer relationship between Germany and Italy, and Italy’s withdrawal from the League of Nations appeared as dangerous portents.

On 7 February 1938 McCormick reported from Vienna the process of “Nazification” occurring within the Austrian government.¹⁰⁸ The Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg met Hitler in Germany five days later. At the meeting Hitler presented Schuschnigg with a list of demands intended to turn Austria into

¹⁰⁵ McCormick, “Rome and Berlin: ‘Partners for Profit’,” *New York Times* 12 December 1937, 145.

¹⁰⁶ Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 103c.

¹⁰⁷ “The Shape of Things,” *Nation* 18 December 1937, 673-674.

¹⁰⁸ McCormick, “Europe: Austrians See Compromise in Hitler’s Changes,” *New York Times* 7 February 1938, 14.

a Nazified satellite state. With no apparent support forthcoming from the Stresa powers, Schuschnigg had few choices. On hearing of Hitler's ultimatum to Schuschnigg Thompson concluded, "Germany won the world war." According to Thompson Austria was the strategic "key to the whole of Central Europe." Lippmann argued that the weakness and hesitancy of French and British policy over the past five years indicated that neither France nor Britain would stand against Hitler for the independence of Austria. The *Nation* doubted whether Britain or France would call the "fascist bluff" over Austria, and even suggested that there were pro-German contingents in the Chamberlain government that encouraged *Anschluss*. According to the *Nation*, Chamberlain's policies were a clear repudiation of the League. France, on the other hand, had virtually abandoned its independent policy in Europe, merely following the British lead in hopes of retaining a close relationship with Britain. Thompson also questioned the ethics of the Chamberlain government, noting that the resignation of Foreign Secretary Eden left Chamberlain open to continue negotiations with Italy, despite the "rape" of Austria by Germany. Gunther agreed that the resignation of Eden signified that Chamberlain "wanted an agreement with the dictators at any price," and would not let moral quandaries over the fate of Austria get in the way.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹Thompson, "On The Record: Write it Down!" *New York Herald Tribune* 18 February 1938, 21; McCormick, "Europe: Rome and Berlin Still Doubt Durability of Their Axis," *New York Times* 21 February 1938, 18; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Wait and See," *New York Herald Tribune* 22 February 1938, 17; "Surrender in Vienna," *Nation* 26 February 1938, 232-233; "Europe and America," *Nation* 5 March 1938, 259-262; Thompson, "On the Record: Flash From Darkness," *New York Herald Tribune* 28 February 1938, 19; Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 103e. Historian William Rock argues that Eden resigned both because he opposed British conversations with Italy and disagreed with Chamberlain's dismissive attitude towards the United States. Halifax, Eden's

Schuschnigg did not immediately acquiesce to Hitler's demands and on 9 March called a plebiscite over *Anschluss* scheduled for 13 March. Hitler did not wait for the referendum to be held, and on 11 March dispatched an ultimatum to Schuschnigg. Realizing that Austria was isolated, and to prevent bloodshed, Schuschnigg cancelled the referendum and resigned. On 12 March the German army marched unopposed into Austria. Hitler crossed the Austrian border that afternoon at his birthplace of Braunau to crowds of cheering people and the ringing of church bells.¹¹⁰ An editorial in the *New York Times* clearly recognized the opportunism of Hitler's latest foreign policy move made, which was made while France was in the midst of another internal political and economic crisis, and Britain and Italy were pursuing rapprochement. Hull quickly responded on behalf of the administration stating that "there was nothing the United States intended to do about it."¹¹¹ Although Roosevelt initially suggested a strong response to Hitler's annexation of Austria, Roosevelt followed Britain's lead, providing tacit approval for Chamberlain's appeasement.¹¹² On 15 March a triumphant Hitler addressed the cheering throngs in Vienna. Kershaw describes

replacement, was loyal and strongly in line with Chamberlain's appeasement policies toward the dictators. (Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt*, 81, 86-87). Parker argues that Chamberlain "exaggerated his differences with Eden," but in the end Chamberlain wanted no more compromise, forced Eden from the government, and "successfully asserted his dominance both of the Cabinet and of the House of Commons." According to Parker Chamberlain's choice of Halifax to replace Eden indicated Chamberlain's "control over British foreign policy." (R.A.C. Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 121-123).

¹¹⁰ Kershaw, *Hitler*, 79.

¹¹¹ "Hitler Strikes Again," *New York Times* 12 March 1938, 16; "U.S. Will Not Act In Austria Crisis," *New York Times* 12 March 1938, 2.

¹¹² Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 157-158.

the *Anschluss* as a “watershed” for Hitler, marking his greatest political triumph to date.¹¹³

American journalists reacted to the *Anschluss* with a mixture of outrage against the complacency of Britain and France, and despair about Hitler’s presumed next target, Czechoslovakia. Lippmann warned Czechoslovakia to fight for its independence, only then perhaps would Britain and France be roused from their collective inaction.¹¹⁴ Gunther bemoaned the death of Austria, “the country which had more quality of grace, of cultivation, and sophisticated charm, than any other in the world.” For Gunther, Austria epitomized enlightened culture and civilization, a nation of art, literature, and music, which was crushed under “Nazi bootheels.”¹¹⁵ Gunther did not report the warm welcome given to the Nazis by many in Austria.

Thompson’s article, “Wake Up to Live!” described the *Anschluss* as “a world event of the first order,” which set in motion forces that could only be stopped either by war or the complete capitulation of the democratic nations. She unleashed a barrage of criticism against the Chamberlain government suggesting that its policies were unrealistic and bankrupt, and even remarking that the leadership of Britain had sympathies with Nazism and Fascism. She blamed the

¹¹³ Kershaw, *Hitler*, 83. Bell argues that Hitler did not plan the events of 11 March 1938, but the *Anschluss* was a “long step” towards war in Europe. (*The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 229). For specific works on the *Anschluss* see: Alexander Lassner, “The Foreign Policy of the Schuschnigg Government 1934-1938: The Quest for Security,” *Contemporary Austrian Studies* 11 (2003) 163-186; Low, *The Anschluss Movement*; Alfred Low, “The Anschluss Movement, 1933-1938, and the Policy of France,” *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 11 (1982) 295-323.

¹¹⁴ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Fall of Austria,” *New York Herald Tribune* 15 March 1938, 19.

¹¹⁵ Gunther, *Inside Europe*, 103k.

French also, who were “paralyzed” by yet more internal crises and unable to act on the international stage. Lastly, Thompson called the isolationists in America “blind” to the impact events in Austria would have for the United States. She also believed that Czechoslovakia would be the next target of Nazi Germany. Unless the three great democracies united in collective action against the “madmen” threatening world peace, she believed another war would soon follow.¹¹⁶

Thompson, like Gunther, described Austria as a centre of western civilization: “The Austrian idea is the western idea – from Rome, through the Middle Ages universalized by the Christian Church, through the Renaissance universalized by a common sources of art and inspiration, to the very dream of the United States of America: the idea of mankind of many origins finding a common language and a common home: a Realm of the Spirit.” For Thompson, as well as many of her colleagues, the disappearance of Austria represented a threat to civilization.¹¹⁷

The *Nation* argued that the *Anschluss* was part of Hitler’s conquest of Eastern Europe, as outlined in *Mein Kampf*. The *Nation* also believed that Czechoslovakia would be the next step in Hitler’s plan. While the *Nation* accused the Chamberlain government of pro-Nazi leanings, it held out hope that Britain, France, and perhaps even the Soviet Union, would come to the defense of Czechoslovakia.¹¹⁸ McCormick too feared that Czechoslovakia was next in line, and blamed the hesitant policies of Britain and France for the failure of collective

¹¹⁶ Thompson, “On the Record: Wake Up to Live!” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 March 1938, 21; Thompson, “On the Record: Now or Never!” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 March 1938, 21.

¹¹⁷ Dorothy Thompson, “Introduction” in Kurt Schuschnigg, *My Austria*, xxiii-xxv.

¹¹⁸ “‘Mein Kampf’ Unfolds,” *Nation* 19 March 1938, 316-317.

security.¹¹⁹ For these journalists Hitler's bloodless conquest of Austria demonstrated the combined weakness of Britain and France. Hitler's policies were becoming more bold and aggressive, while Mussolini, the former knightly protector of Austria, was clearly the subordinate "partner" in the Axis.

While journalists bemoaned the conquest of Austria and waited for Hitler's next move against Czechoslovakia, Britain and Italy concluded their anticipated agreement on 16 April 1938. The Anglo-Italian Pact officially recognized Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia, provided an Italian promise to withdraw Italian troops from Spain at the conclusion of the civil war, and voiced assurances from both sides that they would seek to preserve the status quo in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea region.

Some viewed the Anglo-Italian Pact as an important step towards easing tensions and preserving peace. Joseph Kennedy, who had taken up the post as American Ambassador to Britain in March 1938, spoke favourably about the Anglo-Italian Pact in a letter to Krock: "There is general feeling here that Mussolini realizes now that he will be more comfortable with Great Britain as a friend than he would be in relying exclusively on Hitler...The idea of weaning Mussolini away from Hitler has been materially aided...by the Anschluss."¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ McCormick, "Europe: Savage 'Conquest' of Vienna Casts Shadow on Prague," *New York Times* 4 April 1938, 16; McCormick, "Europe: Bloodless Austrian Conquest Backs Hitler's Boast," *New York Times* 11 April 1938, 14.

¹²⁰ Letter from Kennedy to Krock 14 April 1938, Series II, Selected Correspondence, Box 31, Folder "Kennedy, Joseph P," Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University. Krock has been described as a "loyal friend" and a "mouthpiece" for Joseph P. Kennedy. Krock frequently applauded Kennedy's accomplishments in the Roosevelt administration in his column, describing Kennedy as "very able...very practical...very daring...very attractive personally." While serving

Kennedy spoke highly of Chamberlain, describing Chamberlain's policy of "waiting to see what happens" as both popular and the best policy to prevent the outbreak of war. In his several "Personal and Confidential" letters to Krock, Kennedy praised Chamberlain's policies of appeasement in Europe and his "high morals."¹²¹ Lippmann, who also received nearly identical "Personal and Confidential" letters from Ambassador Kennedy, warned Kennedy about his excessive praise of Chamberlain. He suggested that Kennedy was being "seduced" by British politicians and their "excellent manners and the impressive literary style of the House of Commons." Lippmann dismissed Chamberlain's policies, like the Anglo-Italian pact, as "buying off potential enemies," to avoid confrontation. Lippmann criticized the British recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia as "immoral," and viewed the agreement as important for Mussolini to

as the American Ambassador to London, Kennedy sent Krock several lengthy letters marked "Private and Confidential," detailing extensive political and diplomatic information from the British capital. Krock frequently used Kennedy's insights into European international relations in his column. Kennedy's close relationship with Krock did not go unnoticed by the administration, and Roosevelt warned Kennedy of the political dangers of public support from Krock and the passing of sensitive diplomatic information from the American embassy directly to a journalist. (Ralph de Bedts, *Ambassador Joseph Kennedy, 1938-1940: An Anatomy of Appeasement*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1985) 184-185; Krock, "Recovery Mission Set For Kennedy in London," *New York Times*, 12 December 1937, 79. See also Krock columns in the *New York Times*: "In Washington: J.P. Kennedy Has Excelled In Various Endeavors," 4 July 1934, 14 ; "In Washington: Kennedy Fulfills Promises to Simplify Business Financing," 8 March 1935, 20; "In Washington: Mr. Kennedy Returns For Another Hard Job," 10 March 1937, 22; de Bedts, *Ambassador Joseph Kennedy*, 64, 185; Letters Kennedy to Krock, 21 March 1938, 28 March 1938, 14 April 1938, 2 May 1938, 31 May 1938, 15 September 1939, Series II Box 31 Folder "Kennedy, Joseph P," Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University, Princeton).

¹²¹ Letter from Kennedy to Krock 21 March 1938; Letter Kennedy to Krock 28 March 1938; Letter Kennedy to Krock 2 May 1938, Series II, Selected Correspondence, Box 31, Folder "Kennedy, Joseph P," Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University.

prevent Italy from becoming the “vassal of Germany, and the catspaw of Germany and Japan.”¹²²

McCormick praised the Anglo-Italian pact as indicative of the power and prestige that Mussolini possessed on the international stage. With the agreement Britain was treating Italy an “as equal instead of inferior partner.”¹²³ The Roosevelt administration, on the other hand, viewed the British recognition of the Italian conquest as distasteful, and indicated this to the British government. Hull made it plain that the United States would continue its policy of non-recognition.¹²⁴ Thompson remained skeptical concerning the results of the Anglo-Italian Pact and the prospects for peace in Europe. She agreed that Mussolini had forged the pact in part to bolster Italy’s independence in foreign policy and to prevent Italy from becoming a “satellite of Germany rather than a partner.” Yet she doubted Mussolini’s ultimate intentions, whether this agreement marked a weakening of the Rome-Berlin axis, or if Italy was the same “dubious ally” from the First World War.¹²⁵ Thompson’s estimation of Mussolini was shared by *Chicago Daily News* publisher Frank Knox who questioned the expediency of Chamberlain’s policy towards Mussolini: “I can think of no greater

¹²² Letter from Lippmann to Kennedy 7 April 1938, Box 81, Folder 1208 “Kennedy, Joseph P,” Papers of Walter Lippmann, Yale University. Kennedy wrote several letters to Lippmann marked “Personal and Confidential” in March, April, and May 1938, many of which were nearly identical to letters written to Krock during the same period; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Anglo-Italian Agreement,” *New York Herald Tribune* 19 April 1938, 17.

¹²³ McCormick, “Europe: Anglo-Italian Pact May Be Decisive Factor in Trends,” *New York Times* 18 April 1938, 14.

¹²⁴ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 156-158; “Hull Says Policy on Ethiopia Stands,” *New York Times* 13 May 1938, 14.

¹²⁵ Thompson, “On The Record: The British-Italian Agreement,” *New York Herald Tribune* 20 April 1938, 21.

folly than for a public man to stake his political future on Mussolini's promises."¹²⁶ For these American journalists the Anglo-Italian agreement, especially the British recognition of the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, indicated the continued appeasement of the Chamberlain government and the duplicity of British foreign policy. Britain had been the prime force for the implementation of sanctions against Italy during the Ethiopian war, and now was the leading nation in calling for recognition of the Italian conquest. Many wondered how far Chamberlain was willing to go in pursuing appeasement in the name of peace.

The Czechoslovakian Crisis

For American journalists watching the unfolding of events in Europe since the *Anschluss*, growing agitation over the German-speaking minority in Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1938 came as no surprise. Many had already concluded that Czechoslovakia would be Hitler's next target. Yet the position of Czechoslovakia, which enjoyed military alliances with both France and the Soviet Union, and a large, well-armed military, led reporters to speculate that Czechoslovakia would not disappear as quietly as Austria. McCormick reported that following the *Anschluss* the government of Czechoslovakia began making concessions to the German minority in the Sudetenland to quell unrest. Yet the Czechs were also convinced "that in a showdown the British will support the French," if the French fulfilled their military obligation to come to the aid of

¹²⁶Letter from Knox to Edgar Mowrer 24 February 1938, Box 4, Folder "General Correspondence 1935-1939," Papers of Frank Knox, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Czechoslovakia.¹²⁷ The *Nation* was less sanguine about the possibility of French and British support to Czechoslovakia. According to the *Nation*, the government of Edouard Daladier, which had been formed on 10 April 1938 after the fall of the Popular Front in France, was even more determined to follow the British lead in foreign policy. Daladier seemed less likely to follow traditional French policy, “reliance on the League, the Franco-Soviet pact, and the Little Entente,” in favour of the policy of Chamberlain, defined by the *Nation* as “deals with dictators.” The *Nation* believed the French were more concerned about concluding an agreement with Italy, similar to the Anglo-Italian pact, than maintaining their alliances with the Soviet Union or Czechoslovakia.¹²⁸ To these journalists the French seemed to be rapidly abandoning their own foreign policy in favour of dependence on Britain.

The speculation over Hitler’s next step ended on 24 April 1938 with the Sudetenland German Party’s announcement of the Karlsbad Decrees demanding autonomy for the German minority. Thompson quickly recognized that the Decrees issued by the party’s leader Konrad Henlein, were “absolutely incompatible with the sovereignty” of Czechoslovakia. She decried the “blindness” of the British government for not seeing these demands for what they were, “a cynical and sinister attempt to destroy the Czechoslovak Republic.”

¹²⁷ McCormick, “Europe: American Mind Less Isolated Than the European,” *New York Times* 28 March 1938, 14.

¹²⁸ “Paris Bows to London,” *Nation* 23 April 1938, 457-458.

Thompson believed that the demands of the Sudetenland Germans were part and parcel of Germany's imperialistic ambitions.¹²⁹

In May Britain and France began pressuring the Czech government to make concessions to the German minority in the Sudetenland. The possibility of France coming to the aid of Czechoslovakia, and Britain backing France, was growing remote. Thompson described Britain as paralyzed by the fear of war, and France as equally weak and dependent on Britain. With the visit of Konrad Henlein to London, she warned: "if Mr. Chamberlain's government actually collaborates to sell out this state, the repercussions all over the world... will be tremendous."¹³⁰ Edvard Benes, President of Czechoslovakia, initially resisted Henlein's demands, and on 20 May ordered a partial military mobilization in response to rumours of a German invasion. For McCormick, the Czech mobilization confirmed her belief that "the Czechs have never wavered in their resolve to fight."¹³¹ According to the *Nation*, the British push for Czech concessions to Henlein confirmed their fears concerning Chamberlain and his appeasement policies.¹³² During the war scare in late May, the Roosevelt administration refused to support either the British-French policy of appeasement or to encourage Czechoslovakia to fight. Instead, Secretary Hull appealed to

¹²⁹ Thompson, "On the Record: The Czechoslovak Crisis," *New York Herald Tribune* 27 April 1938, 17.

¹³⁰ Thompson, "On The Record: Foreign Policy and Domestic Peace," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 May 1938, 13; Thompson, "On The Record: Henlein in London I," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 May 1938, 13; Thompson, "On The Record: Henlein in London II," *New York Herald Tribune* 18 May 1938, 21; Thompson, "On The Record: Henlein in London III," *New York Herald Tribune* 20 May 1938, 19.

¹³¹ McCormick, "Europe: Are the Czechs Forcing a Showdown?" *New York Times* 23 May 1938, 16.

¹³² "Take Chamberlain: He's Yours," *Nation* 28 May 1938, 606.

Germany and Czechoslovakia to observe the Kellogg-Briand pact and resolve their conflict through peaceful means.¹³³

The war scare passed, yet the crisis over the Sudetenland continued throughout the summer of 1938. How would the crisis be resolved? Would Benes, under pressure from Britain and France, give in to Henlein's demands? If war erupted, would France and the Soviet Union fulfill their military alliance with Czechoslovakia? Would Britain provide military support to France? Lippmann, who spent July in London and Paris, doubted that Hitler intended war over the Sudetenland, but believed that Czech resources were necessary for Hitler to prepare for a future war. He argued that if the small nation were to fight, then the French as well as the Soviets, would come to its assistance. The visit of the British monarchs to Paris that July appeared to strengthen the Franco-British alliance. According to Lippmann the Franco-British alliance was "the most imposing thing in Europe," and a clear deterrent to German and Italian ambitions.¹³⁴

Shortly thereafter the British convinced Benes to accept Lord Runciman as a mediator in the dispute over the Sudetenland. Both Lippmann and McCormick viewed Lord Runciman's mission with optimism. Both were hopeful that a

¹³³ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 162; "Hull Urges Peace in Central Europe," *New York Times* 29 May 1938, 1; McCormick, "Europe: The United States Second the Motion for Peace," *New York Times* 30 May 1938, 10.

¹³⁴ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Chances of War," *New York Herald Tribune* 5 July 1938, 13; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Czechs and the Germans," *New York Herald Tribune* 19 July 1938, 17; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Franco-British Alliance and the German Revolution," *New York Herald Tribune*, 21 July 1938, 17; Lippmann, "The Franco-British Combination," *New York Herald Tribune* 23 July 1938, 11.

peaceful solution was possible. McCormick argued that the British and French were pursuing a defensive policy of delaying action, until they had gathered their collective strength for resistance.¹³⁵ Krock, who had just returned from visiting London and his friend Ambassador Kennedy, also viewed Runciman's mission with optimism. According to Krock, Runciman would successfully barter a truce over Czechoslovakia, at least until the British and French were strong enough to confront Hitler. He forecast that the British would appease Hitler and force concessions from the Czechs.¹³⁶ By late August many Americans anxiously watched the European waiting game, wondering which side would be first to break the stalemate, and what action, if any, would be taken by the Roosevelt administration.

From May to August Roosevelt remained a mute and detached observer of the Czechoslovakian crisis. Only in late August, with news of extensive German military preparations, did Roosevelt break his public silence.¹³⁷ In a speech delivered in Canada on 18 August, Roosevelt proclaimed "that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other empire." Roosevelt's speech appeared to confirm solidarity between the United States and the British Empire, and journalists viewed it as a "thinly

¹³⁵ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Lord Runciman's Mission," *New York Herald Tribune* 28 July 1938, 17; McCormick, "Europe: Britain's Frontier Is Now at the Danube," *New York Times* 30 July 1938, 12; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The British Attitude," *New York Herald Tribune* 4 August 1938, 17; McCormick, "Europe: Germany Shows Her Teeth to Avoid Going to War," *New York Times* 27 August 1938, 12.

¹³⁶ Krock, "In the Nation: Impressions of Men and Matters Abroad," *New York Times* 10 August 1938, 18; Krock, "In the Nation: Being No.2 From Notebook of a Traveler," *New York Times* 11 August 1938, 16.

¹³⁷ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 162-163.

veiled attack on dictators and dictatorships.”¹³⁸ While Roosevelt agreed that a peaceful solution to the Sudetenland question was the most desirable outcome, he did not trust Chamberlain.¹³⁹ Roosevelt’s speech appeared as an early articulation of common values and cause between the United States and Britain.

The *Nation* also questioned Chamberlain’s policy of pressuring Czechoslovakia to appease Germany. The *Nation* described Chamberlain’s policies as “uncertain” and “passive,” perhaps even sympathetic towards Germany. Thompson, on the other hand, believed that the democracies would not appease Hitler this time. According to Thompson, France, Britain, and the United States would ultimately fight against Hitler.¹⁴⁰ However, bowing to pressure from the British, Benes announced concessions to Henlein on 5 September. Benes conceded to all but one of Henlein’s demands. As Lippmann stated, the British had now “won half the battle for peace” in convincing the Czechs to grant great concessions, but the question was now whether Hitler would accept them.¹⁴¹

Hitler delivered his much anticipated speech at Nuremberg on 12 September, but fell short of issuing a final ultimatum to Czechoslovakia. Yet with disturbances continuing in the Sudetenland, Chamberlain requested a personal meeting with the Fuehrer and promptly flew to Germany.¹⁴² Many

¹³⁸ Felix Belair, “Aims at Dictators,” *New York Times* 19 August 1938, 1.

¹³⁹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 163-164.

¹⁴⁰ “Europe Mobilizes,” *Nation* 3 September 1938, 215-216; Thompson, “On the Record: Peace or War?” *New York Herald Tribune* 5 September 1938, 13.

¹⁴¹ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Estimate of the European Situation,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 September 1938, 21.

¹⁴² “Hitler’s Speech to Nazi Party Troops,” *New York Times* 12 September 1938, 2; “Outbreaks Mark Sudeten Vote Cry,” *New York Times* 12 September 1938, 1; Kershaw, *Hitler*, 109-110;

Americans greeted Chamberlain's personal intervention with optimism. The *New York Times* reported that "the efforts for the Prime Minister for peace have the strongest good wishes here." Lippmann concluded that despite the tensions and anxieties of the past few weeks, "the cause of peace with honor is by no means lost." McCormick agreed with Lippmann, and did not believe that Chamberlain would beg or merely capitulate to Hitler's demands, but thought that a real diplomatic solution was possible. She also commented on the "drama" of Chamberlain's flight to Germany, so uncharacteristic of the Britain that Chamberlain personifies, "slow, shrewd, quiet-spoken."¹⁴³ Thompson, on the other hand, strongly disagreed. Her appraisal of Chamberlain's mission was highly critical, questioning whether Chamberlain was intent on concluding "one of the dirtiest deals in history" with the Nazi dictator. According to Thompson, if the British allowed Hitler to take Czechoslovakia, they would betray not only Czechoslovakia, "the last democracy in central Europe," but also the French. Ultimately, such a course would ruin the moral standing of the British Empire.¹⁴⁴ On his return Chamberlain continued to pressure Benes, issuing a joint ultimatum with the French demanding further Czechoslovakian concessions. Thompson greeted the British-French ultimatum with outrage: "Not only did France and Britain desert Czechoslovakia, but they weakened her for defense in

¹⁴³ "Chamberlain Lifts Washington Hopes," *New York Times* 15 September 1938, 2; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The European Situation Now," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 September 1938, 21; McCormick, "Europe: Mixture of Motives the Key to Chamberlain Flight," *New York Times* 17 September 1938, 16.

¹⁴⁴ Thompson, "On the Record: Interview with Henlein," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 September 1938, 21; Thompson, "On the Record: Elementary Realities," *New York Herald Tribune* 19 September 1938, 15.

advance...Not only have they assassinated her but they have besmirched her character!" In her column entitled "Obituary for Europe," Thompson railed against Britain and France for their cowardice, treachery, perfidy, and dishonour.¹⁴⁵

With little choice, the Czechs accepted the Anglo-French ultimatum. Thompson decried the destruction of Czechoslovakian democracy. The *Nation* described the Anglo-French ultimatum as "the brutal and irresponsible betrayal of the Czechoslovak republic by the British and French." According to the *Nation* the lion's share of this "coldblooded" and callous betrayal belonged to Britain, and Britain would reap the rewards:

when Chamberlain went to Hitler to offer up Czechoslovakia on the altar of fascist violence and lawless contempt for decent international behavior he subjected his country to the deepest humiliation and shame that it has suffered in our time. Britain and the world will pay for his act in the years to come.¹⁴⁶

McCormick interpreted the crisis as a conflict between Germany's "cave-man ideology," primitive and militaristic, and the civilized reluctance of Britain and France to go to war borne from their desire to maintain the social unity of their nations. In France, "where social instability is greater," their desire to maintain peace was also greater.¹⁴⁷ Chamberlain returned to Germany to present Hitler with the Czechoslovakian acceptance. To Chamberlain's shock and dismay, Hitler rejected the plan, and demanded the immediate German occupation of the

¹⁴⁵ Thompson, "Obituary for Europe," *New York Herald Tribune* 21 September 1938, 23.

¹⁴⁶ Thompson, "On the Record: The Czech Acceptance," *New York Herald Tribune* 23 September 1938, 19; "The Great Betrayal," *Nation* 24 September 1938, 284-285.

¹⁴⁷ McCormick, "Europe: If War Comes Chamberlain Has Made a Clear Issue," *New York Times* 24 September 1938, 16.

Sudetenland. Without the support of his cabinet, Chamberlain was unable to accept Hitler's demands. On 23 September the Czechoslovakian forces mobilized, followed by France on 27 September, and the Royal Navy the next day. Roosevelt reacted to the events with pleas to the governments of Czechoslovakia, Britain, France, and Germany to continue negotiations. On 27 September Roosevelt also appealed to Mussolini to intercede in the name of peace.¹⁴⁸

With Europe on the brink of a general war, Hitler called a conference at Munich for 29 September, to be attended by Chamberlain and Daladier, and mediated by Mussolini. Representatives from Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union were conspicuously absent. For a moment it appeared that war was forestalled, and Thompson, Gunther and the others anxiously awaited news. McCormick viewed this "week of grace" as an opportunity for the allies of Czechoslovakia, especially the French, to prepare, arm and gather their courage to say "no" to Hitler.¹⁴⁹ Thompson and Gunther joined 20,000 people at Madison Square Gardens cheering for Czechoslovakian resistance and booing Chamberlain's appeasement proposals.¹⁵⁰ In London the British public prepared with air raid drills, gas masks and bomb shelters. The Czechs likewise prepared,

¹⁴⁸ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 165-166; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 108; "3 Nations in Reply Praise Roosevelt," *New York Times* 27 September 1938, 1.

¹⁴⁹ McCormick, "Europe: The 'Week of Grace' Provides a Time for Second Thoughts," *New York Times* 26 September 1938, 16.

¹⁵⁰ "20,000 in Garden Cheer for Czechs," *New York Times* 26 September 1938, 4.

fortified and mobilized on the German border.¹⁵¹ All eyes looked to the four power conference convening in Munich to see if this latest crisis in European relations would be solved peacefully or through war. While they were not in agreement in their assessments of the Czechoslovakian crisis, some like Lippmann hoped for a peaceful solution through compromise and appeasement while others like Thompson decried any appeasement of Hitler, these journalists viewed the crisis as another battle in the emerging war between the civilized and democratic countries in Europe and the aggressive and barbaric dictatorships.

The period from Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia to the eve of the Munich conference was a period of flux in these journalists' interpretations of European events. While their earlier interpretations of Mussolini and Hitler often took the form of personal portraits painted in gendered terms, journalists re-evaluated the European dictators based on their aggressive and expansionist foreign policies. Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia, the Axis pact of October 1936, German remilitarization of the Rhineland, German and Italian intervention in the Spanish Civil War, and the *Anschluss* with Austria, indicated that there was much in common between the methods and aims of the European dictatorships. While the individual interpretative lenses of gender, race, and American exceptionalism did not disappear, increasingly the six viewed the crises in Europe as indicative of a clash between western civilization and the forces of barbarism.

¹⁵¹ Sir Arthur Willert, "Britain is Gloomy but Ready to Act," *New York Times* 28 September 1938, 14; G.E.R. Gedye, "Czechs Rest Hope on Nazi Showdown," *New York Times* 28 September 1938, 1.

Chapter 4 – The Munich Agreement to the Fall of France September 1938 to June 1940

On the eve of the Munich conference most American journalists believed Europe was on the brink of war. While some argued for an end to the British and French appeasement of Germany, calling for a stand against Hitler over the Sudetenland, others hoped for a peaceful resolution to the crisis, which would give Britain and France, as well as the United States, time to prepare for a war that seemed imminent. McCormick and Lippmann, for example, had been optimistic that a peaceful solution to the Sudetenland crisis could be found, while Thompson and Kirchwey, on the other hand, opposed any appeasement of Hitler over Czechoslovakia. The men and women at the centre of this study thus had mixed reactions to the conclusion of the Munich agreement. But the series of events that quickly followed, including *Kristallnacht*, Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War, Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia and seizure of Memel, and Italy's invasion of Albania, destroyed their belief in appeasement. American observers were therefore optimistic when Britain and France drew the line in the sand with the Polish guarantee in March 1939, but the shocking Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression pact shattered their hopes for an effective anti-Nazi collective security alliance.

American journalists increasingly painted the crisis in Europe as a conflict between civilized and democratic nations versus the barbarism and savagery of dictatorships. They still used racial and gendered interpretations of European

events, evident in assessments of the Soviet character during the failed attempt at a collective security agreement with Britain and France, and Thompson's emasculation of Chamberlain following Hitler's absorption of Czechoslovakia. The interpretative frameworks of gender and race did not disappear, but frequently played into and supported the growing consensus that the crises in Europe were part of a larger battle between civilization and barbarism. As for American exceptionalism, it was present in journalists' critiques of the Munich Agreement. Yet while Anglo-American relations reached a low point with the failure of the Munich agreement, American journalists reporting on the Anglo-French guarantees to Poland, and the Royal visit stressed the common bonds between the United States and Britain as the world's leading democratic states. Openly sympathetic to the British and the French, American press accounts of the invasion of Poland, the Winter War in Finland, Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway, and the *blitzkrieg* campaign through the Low Countries and France, read as contests between the heroic defenders of civilization and barbaric foes. By painting the European war as a conflict over the survival of civilization identified with American history, institutions and beliefs, these American journalists called on the United States to assist materially the European citadels of democracy and civilization.

The Munich Agreement

As the four-power conference convened at Munich on 29 September 1938, American journalists anxiously waited for the word: war or peace. Although the

Roosevelt administration maintained “that the United States has no involvements in Europe,” Roosevelt sent final pleas for peace to Hitler and Mussolini on 27 September. Roosevelt and the State Department greeted the Munich conference with “great hope and encouragement” that the “grave danger of war could be averted.” Chamberlain arrived in Munich to a hero’s welcome, greeted by cheering German throngs on his way to the four power conference. The Munich crowds also received Daladier and Mussolini with exuberant ovations. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia watched the Munich conference with suspicion, fearing the conference, from which they were excluded, would secure “peace” at their expense. The Soviets viewed the Munich meeting with “complete disapproval.” Also excluded, the Soviet Union predicted the results would be “the sacrifice of Czechoslovakia and the serious impairment of France’s strength.” The Soviet Union viewed these possible consequences as detrimental to its military alliances with Czechoslovakia and France.¹

¹ “Washington hopes for peace mounts,” *New York Times* 29 September 1938, 1; “Chamberlain hero of Munich crowds,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 1; “Czechs suspicious of Munich parley,” *New York Times* 29 September 1938, 1; “Soviet disapproves four-power meeting,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 10. For works on the Czechoslovakian crisis and the Munich agreement see: Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 229-243; Geoffrey Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War: Russo-German Relations and the Road to War, 1933-1941* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995) 49-61; Kershaw, *Hitler*, 98-124; Igor Lukes, “Czechoslovakia” in Robert Boyce and Joseph A. Maiolo (eds.) *The Origins of World War Two: The Debate Continues* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003) 165-175. According to Kershaw Hitler’s “own popularity and prestige reached new heights after Munich.” For the Munich crisis and American foreign policy see: John McVikar Haight, “France, the United States, and the Munich Crisis,” *Journal of Modern History* 32:4 (1960) 340-358; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 162-166; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 106-109; Norman Graebner, “The American Road to Munich.” in F. Kevin Simon (ed) *The David A. Sayre History Symposium: Collected Lectures, 1985-1989* (Lexington, KY: Sayre School, 1991) 169-194; Farnham, *Roosevelt and the Munich Crisis*; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 41-46; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 26-27; Divine, *The Reluctant Belligerent*, 51-56.

American newspapers quickly reported news from Munich. On 30 September the *New York Times* proclaimed “Nazi Demands Met.” The *Times* report stressed how smoothly and quickly the conference had proceeded to its conclusion. While Hitler was appeased, Britain and France guaranteed the territorial integrity of the rest of Czechoslovakia. The international reaction to the Munich agreement, according to the *Times*, was mixed. Cheering throngs in the streets of Rome greeted the news as a victory for the dictatorships over the democracies. The Munich agreement marked Mussolini’s greatest personal diplomatic triumph, making the fascist dictator again “the man who gave to the world the gift of peace.” In Germany the “popular triumph” that greeted the returning Fuehrer was even greater than following the *Anschluss*. While in Paris people celebrated the news and breathed a collective sigh of relief, the government continued war precautions. Privately, Daladier resented his part in the Munich agreement, viewing the agreement as only a respite, and was astonished at his welcome. The French cheered Daladier, believing the Munich agreement, which ceded the Sudetenland to Germany, and essentially made the rest of Czechoslovakia a German satellite, meant peace, hope, and the strengthening of the relationship with Britain. In London there were also signs of relief, yet citizens were advised to maintain preparations like trenches dug in parks, gas masks, and the conservation of gasoline. Chamberlain’s triumphant

Divine calls the Munich Conference “the high tide of American isolationism in the 1930s.” For a general work on the Czechoslovakian crisis see: J.W. Breughel, *Czechoslovakia before Munich: The German Minority Problem and British Appeasement Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

return was marked by jubilant crowds, “hysterical” women, and Chamberlain’s premature words, “I believe it is peace for our time.” Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, greeted the “dictated” Munich agreement “under protest to the world,” calling the agreement a great betrayal to Czechoslovakia by the western democracies: “Our people, good-hearted, trustful and peace-loving, have again been led up to Golgotha to buy European peace with its sacrifices.” From Moscow the Munich agreement was viewed as a diplomatic disaster, which ultimately set the course for future German territorial expansion into the rest of Czechoslovakia and beyond. The Soviet Union emerged from the Czechoslovakian crisis bitter at the British and French betrayal and increasingly isolated in European affairs.²

In the press the Roosevelt administration praised the Munich agreement for avoiding a war over the Sudetenland, but refrained from passing judgment on the agreement itself.³ Previously Roosevelt had criticized Chamberlain’s appeasement policies, but during the Czechoslovakian crisis the president intervened on several occasions to push for a negotiated settlement that would

² “Nazi Demands Met: Powers Make Accord,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 1; “Italians Shout Joy at News of Accord,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 1; “Mussolini Hailed as Hero of Peace,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 2; “Grateful Berlin Acclaims Hitler,” *New York Times* 2 October 1938, 34; “France is Calmer; Precautions go on,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 4; Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster*, 81; “Paris Newspapers Hail Peace Accord,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 5; “Daladier Cheered by Joyful France,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 1; “British Relieved; But Restrain Hope,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 5; “Peace with Honor’ Says Chamberlain,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 1; “Czech Rulers Bow, But Under Protest,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 1; “French Loss Great in Moscow’s View,” *New York Times* 2 October 1938, 79. According to Roberts the Soviet Union viewed the Czechoslovakian crisis as the last opportunity for the European powers to halt Hitler’s advance short of actual war. (Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War*, 60).

³ “Roosevelt Asks People to Pray on Sunday for Continued Peace,” *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 6; “Hull Voices Relief Over Peace Accord,” *New York Times* 1 October 1938, 3.

avoid war. On hearing of Chamberlain's acceptance of Hitler's invitation to Munich, Roosevelt sent the British Prime Minister a telegram simply stating "Good man." Roosevelt also told the American ambassador to Rome that he was completely satisfied with the results of the Munich conference.⁴ Roosevelt's reaction to the Munich agreement was shared by the majority of Americans, as demonstrated in a poll that reported sixty percent were in favour. The Roosevelt administration and the American public believed the Munich agreement not only prevented the immediate outbreak of war, but also increased the hope Hitler could be contained and satiated.⁵

American journalists, however, were not united in their evaluation of the Munich agreement. Knox, publisher of the *Chicago Daily News*, expressed alarm and dismay at the at the Munich bargain. In his editorial titled "The Tragedy of Munich," he bluntly warned, "FASCISM IS ON THE MARCH."⁶ Krock quickly questioned the belief that the Munich agreement was "peace for our time." He warned it was far too early to pass judgment on its effectiveness. Krock argued that Mussolini's intervention, at the urging of Britain, was crucial.⁷ McCormick concluded the British and French had sacrificed Czechoslovakia in the name of peace. The Munich agreement, she argued, was made under duress, and it would

⁴ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 166; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 108-109; Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt*, 124-131.

⁵ Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 27.

⁶ Knox, "The Tragedy of Munich," *Chicago Daily News* 1 October 1938.

⁷ Krock, "In the Nation: A Little Early for the Laurel Wreaths," *New York Times* 30 September 1938, 20; Krock, "In the Nation: The Foreign Policies of Roosevelt and Hoover," *New York Times* 28 October 1938, 22.

take time for Britain and France to “count the cost” of this hurried peace. She praised Mussolini for resurrecting his role as the mediator and peacemaker.

Like McCormick, Lippmann described the atmosphere of the Munich conference as “hysterical terror” and “panic.” Yet Lippmann went further in his disapproval, implicating the British mediator of the crisis, Runciman, in a British conspiracy to dismember Czechoslovakia. While earlier Lippmann had been optimistic that Runciman could arbitrate a just agreement, he now argued that Runciman had been “won over” by the Sudeten Germans and Hitler, and accepted the annexation of the Sudetenland before Hitler had even demanded it. Chamberlain thus had no choice but to accept Hitler’s demands, since Runciman had already acquiesced. This was another example of the European “old world” back-room diplomacy frequently criticized by American journalists.⁸

Thompson had opposed any attempts to appease Hitler, and she blasted the “peace” of Munich as “an international Fascist coup d’etat.” Chamberlain bore the brunt of Thompson’s attack. She compared the British Prime Minister to former German chancellor Franz von Papen, a man widely deemed responsible for Hitler’s appointment as chancellor in 1933. Thompson derided Chamberlain as either “another von Papen, the unwitting dupe and tool of a powerful

⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Now It Has Been Told,” *New York Herald Tribune* 1 October 1935, 13; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: After the Panic,” *New York Herald Tribune* 4 October 1938, 15; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The American Part in the European Crisis,” *New York Herald Tribune* 6 October 1938, 23; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Toward an Estimate of the Consequences to America of the Munich Peace,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 October 1938, 7.

conspiracy,” or “a fellow-conspirator.” Thompson, like Lippmann, believed the Munich agreement was the result of “secret diplomacy.”⁹

The *Nation* viewed the Munich agreement as the abandonment of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France, and the “end of French security,” as France alienated its “Little Entente” allies. The Munich conference also repudiated the “open” negotiations represented by the League of Nations. According to the *Nation* the Munich agreement was a horrible betrayal of Czechoslovakia, a nation that “represented everything decent in European democracy,” by its supposed “protectors,” Britain and France.¹⁰ The *Nation*, like Thompson, upheld Czechoslovakia as a shining example of a democratic and civilized state in Central Europe, and believed that its demise at the hands of Nazi Germany represented a victory for the forces of barbarism in Europe. Privately Kirchwey agonized over the recriminations of the Munich agreement, the “great betrayal” of Czechoslovakia, which meant the end of France as a great power and its complete dependence on Britain.¹¹ While Kirchwey firmly believed the Munich agreement was a mistake, Villard praised it for securing peace. In a letter to Roosevelt Villard acclaimed the president’s intervention in the crisis as a “brilliant chapter in our diplomatic history.”¹² The Munich agreement

⁹ Thompson, “On the Record: ‘Peace’ – And the Crisis Begins!” *New York Herald Tribune* 1 October 1938, 13; Thompson, “On the Record: The President’s Intervention,” *New York Herald Tribune* 7 October 1938, 21.

¹⁰ “The Treaty of Munich,” *Nation* 8 October 1938, 340-341.

¹¹ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 24.

¹² Letter from Villard to FDR 5 October 1938, PPF Folder #2178 “Villard, Oswald Garrison,” FDRL, Hyde Park.

emphasized the growing divergence in opinion between the *Nation's* editor, Kirchwey, and its ongoing contributor and former owner Villard.

Gunther's evaluation of the Munich agreement was swift and denunciatory. He agreed with McCormick and Lippmann's conclusion that the agreement was formulated out of fear: "Fear, funk, fear, accounted for the gross and sickening betrayal of the Czechoslovak nation, its assassination by its 'friends'." He also believed the consequences of Munich were disastrous for Czechoslovakia's 'friends': namely, the grave "humiliation" of Britain, and the reduction of France to a "second-class power." According to Gunther 1938 was "the year of the Fascist offensive," marked by the "rape" of Austria and the "assault" on Czechoslovakia. It was the year in which fascism "conquered the will of the democracies to resist." Gunther pessimistically concluded that "but for the narrowest of margins," the year 1938 may mark the "obituary of Europe."¹³

Kristallnacht

The "peace" of Munich was shattered on the nights of 9 and 10 November, as the SA and SS ransacked Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues in parts of Germany and Austria. The assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a German Embassy officer in Paris, by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-Polish Jewish refugee, provided the excuse for *Kristallnacht*. American newspapers quickly reacted to the Nazi pogrom. Reports from London expressed disgust at the "excesses" of the Nazis, described in terms of barbarism and savagery: "By arson, hooliganism, and

¹³ Gunther, *Inside Europe*, xii, xxii, xxiii, xxviii.

mass hysteria the Nazis have sought to demonstrate their boasted virility and culture.” The reaction in London to the “orgy of destruction” of *Kristallnacht* helped to turn the British public against Chamberlain’s policy of appeasement to Germany.¹⁴ In the United States the press voiced near universal disgust and outrage. According to an editorial in the *New York Times* the violence of *Kristallnacht* destroyed “whatever shadow of good-will may have been established by the handshaking at Munich.” *Time* described the public outrage of several American officials including former president Herbert Hoover and prominent Republican Thomas Dewey, but questioned the lack of response from the president himself.¹⁵ Roosevelt finally responded: first by recalling Ambassador Hugh Wilson from Berlin on 14 November, and then in a statement to the press described as the “most vigorous” issued by a president to a “friendly” nation. The president also authorized 15,000 German and Austrian refugees who were in the United States on visitors permits to remain in the country.¹⁶ Many questioned whether the administration’s response was enough.

¹⁴ According to Kershaw *Kristallnacht* was the culmination of the third wave of anti-Semitic violence in Hitler’s Germany, and represented the escalation of the connection between Hitler’s coming war of expansion, and Hitler’s war against the Jews. *Kristallnacht* also represented the “final fling” in Germany of the “pogrom anti-Semitism,” before further radicalization that led to the “Final Solution.” (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 129-150) For the American reaction to *Kristallnacht* see: Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 167-168; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 50-51; Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 155; Doenecke and Wilz, *From Isolation to War*, 79-80; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 27. “Nazis Complicate Chamberlain Task,” *New York Times* 11 November 1938, 2.

¹⁵ “American Press Comments on Nazi Riots,” *New York Times* 12 November 1938, 4; “Germany Forgets History,” *New York Times* 12 November 1938, 14; “These Individuals!” *Time* 21 November 1938.

¹⁶ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 168-169; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 27; “U.S. is Displeased,” *New York Times* 15 November 1938, 1; “Statement Sharp,” *New York Times* 16 November 1938, 1.

McCormick and Thompson interpreted *Kristallnacht* in terms of barbarism and savagery against civilization. McCormick bemoaned the “orgy of sadism” that swept Germany. The terror unleashed on *Kristallnacht*, she argued, was a threat “to the civilization of the world.”¹⁷ Thompson called for Americans to act in defense of the “principles of civilization” threatened by the “mob madness” and “mob spirit” of the pogrom. For these journalists the savagery of *Kristallnacht* hardened their perceptions of the Nazis barbarians bent on destroying civilization in Europe. Thompson also quickly rose to the defense of the assassin Grynszpan, establishing a fund for his trial in Paris. Through radio broadcasts and her newspaper column Thompson rallied the public and her fellow journalists to assist. Sensitive to anti-Semitism she appealed specifically to non-Jews, “because contributions from Jews may be interpreted in Germany as an excuse for further outrages,” and to journalists, who she argued as a profession are dedicated to free speech and truth. Thompson was soon supported by several influential journalists, including Gunther.¹⁸ Her outspoken sympathy and support for the plight of European Jews led to an onslaught of hate-mail, and she was frequently

¹⁷ McCormick, “Europe: Nazi Day of Terror a Threat to All Civilization,” *New York Times* 12 November 1938, 14.

¹⁸ Thompson, “On the Record: To a Jewish Friend,” *New York Herald Tribune* 14 November 1938, 15; Thompson, “On the Record: Give a Man a Chance,” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 November 1938, 23; “Thousands in U.S. Offer to Help Assassin; Dorothy Thompson Forms Defense Fund,” *New York Times* 16 November 1938, 9. Other journalists who pledged their support to Thompson’s defense fund included Leland Stowe, Raymond Gram Swing, Hamilton Fish Armstrong, Heywood Broun, Edgar Mowrer, Westbrook Pegler, Oswald Garrison Villard, and William Allen White. (Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 284).

accused of being “Jewry’s protégée.”¹⁹ By 19 November the defense fund had raised \$10,000 and hired a noted Parisian lawyer to defend Grynszpan.

Thompson spoke to a crowd of 20,000 at Madison Square Gardens, rallying support for Grynszpan. At the meeting Roosevelt was hailed as a “Galahad,” the leader of democracy and humanity, while Chamberlain was booed by the audience.²⁰

The outrage of many Americans was directed at Britain and Chamberlain, the arch-appeaser and architect of the Munich agreement. Public opinion in America concerning Britain was at its nadir following *Kristallnacht*, and the Roosevelt administration sought closer Anglo-American relations through the Anglo-American Reciprocal Trade Agreement concluded on 17 November, and the announcement of the upcoming royal visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.²¹ According to historian John Moser, Roosevelt used the Anglophobia of the American public in late 1938 “as a club with which to bludgeon London into doing what he wanted,” including the conclusion of the trade agreement.²²

¹⁹ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 284-285. Thompson continued to receive hate-mail concerning her support of Jews, and also accusations that she was Jewish herself. Letter from Helen Reid to reader, Miss La Barbe, 7 May 1939 and Letter from Thompson to Miss La Barbe, 7 May 1939. Box I: D254, Folder “Thompson, Dorothy,” Papers of Helen Rogers Reid, Library of Congress.

²⁰ “Noted Paris Lawyer to Defend 17-Year-Old Killer of vom Rath,” *New York Times* 19 November 1938, 3. By early December 1938, more than \$32,000 had been raised. (Letter from Dorothy Thompson as Chairman of the Journalists’ Defense Fund to Oswald Garrison Villard, 5 December 1938, Papers of Dorothy Thompson, Series II, Box 1, Folder #2 “1938,” Syracuse University; “20,000 Jam Garden in Reich Protest,” *New York Times* 22 November 1938, 6.

²¹ Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt*, 136; Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 114; Charlie Whitham, “Seeing the Wood for the Trees: The British Foreign Office and the Anglo-American Trade Agreement of 1938,” *Twentieth Century British History* 16:1 (2005) 45; Peter Bell, “The Foreign Office and the 1939 Royal Visit to America: Courting the USA in an Era of Isolationism,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37:4 (2002) 601-602;

²² Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 115-116.

Although the Roosevelt administration was initially buoyed at the prospects for peace following Munich, Hitler's announcement of increased western fortifications on 9 October, coupled with the savagery of *Kristallnacht*, effectively destroyed the belief that Hitler could be appeased and peacefully contained.²³ In late 1938 the Roosevelt administration cultivated a closer relationship with Britain both to deter further British appeasement, and as a combined "show of force" to discourage further German aggression.²⁴ By this time many American journalists believed appeasement had been proven hollow.

Lippmann commented on the general failure of appeasement since Munich, and how Hitler continued to provoke Britain and the western powers. He argued that appeasement of Hitler must end, since Hitler would not be satisfied with "mere material things," for he was not "a business man interested in accumulating real estate," but "a revolutionary empire builder."²⁵ Thompson predicted that by spring 1939 "we shall...see the world in even worse turmoil than it is at present." She did not believe that Munich would create a lasting peace, or that Hitler could be appeased, but prophesied that Munich "was the beginning of a crisis and not the end of one."²⁶ *Time* agreed that Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, "peace with honor," achieved neither. In the article

²³ Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 27; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 171; MacDonald, *The United States, Britain and Appeasement*, 113.

²⁴ Whitham, "Seeing the Wood for the Trees," 50.

²⁵ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Appeasement Since Munich," *New York Herald Tribune* 15 December 1938, 23; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Prospect of Appeasement in Europe," *New York Herald Tribune* 3 January 1939, 11.

²⁶ Thompson, "On the Record: Harbingers of Spring," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 December 1938, 23.

accompanying Hitler's cover for "Man of the Year 1938," *Time* described the German leader's policy victories of 1938 in the face of an "apparently impotent world." Hitler was definitely the greatest threat to "the democratic, freedom-loving world." Rather than believing that Hitler was satisfied and appeased following Munich, *Time* ended its article with the prophecy "that the Man of 1938 may make 1939 a year to be remembered."²⁷

The End of the Spanish Civil War

Time noted that if Franco had been victorious in the Spanish Civil War in 1938, he may well have been "Man of the Year," but by early 1939 "war weariness and disaffection on the Rightist side made his future precarious."²⁸ British and French leaders suggested a mediated settlement between the two sides. The *Nation* assailed talk of a settlement, accusing the British of wanting to settle the Spanish question so they could continue with the provisions of the Anglo-Italian agreement concluded in April 1938.²⁹ Roosevelt was increasingly concerned about the possibility of a Franco victory in Spain, and spent late 1938 and early 1939 investigating possibilities for repealing the arms embargo against Loyalist Spain. But pressure from Catholics, and the legislative binding of the Neutrality Acts complicated the president's ability to assist the Loyalists.³⁰

²⁷ "Man of the Year," *Time* 2 January 1939.

²⁸ "Man of the Year," *Time* 2 January 1939.

²⁹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 177; "Spanish 'Settlement'," *Nation* 19 November 1938, 526.

³⁰ Krock, "In the Nation: Law and Policy Disputes Dealing With Spain," *New York Times* 25 January 1939, 16; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 178-180; Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War*, 75; Valaik, "Catholics, Neutrality, and the Spanish Embargo,

According to Thompson, Franco would join the Rome-Berlin Axis if victorious in Spain. She pointed to the recent “cultural treaty” between Franco and Hitler as evidence of this strengthening relationship. This would effectively surround France and threaten key British strategic points, most prominently Gibraltar. She called for the repeal of the arms embargo, arguing that the United States was “yielding to blackmail, and, like France, following the lead of a British government which has proved an appalling incapacity of courage, leadership, or even simple morality.”³¹

Franco launched an offensive in December and successfully captured the Loyalist capital of Barcelona on 26 January. By late February Franco’s forces controlled over three quarters of Spain, and within a month of the fall of Barcelona thirty states recognized the Franco regime. Britain and France recognized Franco’s Nationalist government on 27 February.³² McCormick commented on the haste of British and French recognition, which revealed their concerns with securing their own “vital imperial interests,” a sentiment shared by many Americans who disparaged British and French imperialism.³³ The civil war ended with the capture of Madrid on 28 March 1939. On April 1 the United States recognized Franco’s government. In a rare signed article in the *Nation*,

1937-1939”; Tierney, “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Covert Aid to the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39.”

³¹ Thompson, “On the Record: The Spanish Embargo,” *New York Herald Tribune* 23 January 1939, 13; Thompson, “On the Record: Spain and the Catholics,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 January 1939, 17.

³² Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War*, 197, 199.

³³ McCormick, “End of War in Spain Opens a New Struggle,” *New York Times* 5 March 1939, E6.

Kirchwey commented on the Franco victory, which was “partly a victory for Hitler and Mussolini.” Kirchwey argued that American recognition of Franco’s government was a continuation “to the bitter end the policy of paralleling British and French action.”³⁴ According to historian F. Jay Taylor the Roosevelt administration’s handling of the Spanish Civil War was “the cardinal blunder of American foreign policy” in the period. Historian Dominic Tierney argues that by 1939 Roosevelt viewed American policy towards the Spanish Civil War as a “mistake.” Although Roosevelt was openly sympathetic to Loyalist Spain, the restrictive Neutrality legislation and the inaction of Britain and France resulted in a largely ineffective American policy.³⁵ While many liberals and those further to the left in America mourned the end of the Spanish Republic, events elsewhere in Europe consumed the attention of the American public and press in March 1939.

Annexation of Czechoslovakia

On 15 March 1939 Hitler’s army marched into Bohemia and Moravia, occupying the remainder of Czechoslovakia. Hitler arrived in Prague on 16 March and announced the end of Czechoslovakian independence. An editorial in the *New York Times* lamented “the twilight of liberty in Central Europe.” In the United States the death of independent Czechoslovakia was devastating to many since the state was essentially formed on American soil in 1918 with the support

³⁴ Kirchwey, “‘Peace’ in Spain,” *Nation* 8 April 1939, 394.

³⁵ Taylor, *The United States and the Spanish Civil War*, 208; Tierney, *FDR and the Spanish Civil War*, 1.

of President Wilson.³⁶ For those skeptics of appeasement and the Munich agreement, the absorption of Czechoslovakia came as no surprise. *Time* questioned why anyone was surprised at Hitler's annexation of the recently "emasculated" Czechoslovakia.³⁷ For Thompson Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia was yet another step on the road to the racial war outlined in *Mein Kampf* to establish the "supremacy of the Teutonic and allied races over the earth, reducing the rest to vassalage."³⁸ The *Nation* viewed Hitler's annexation of Czechoslovakia as the second act of Munich, merely the conclusion of what was started in September 1938 when the "faithless friends," Britain and France, gave Hitler the Sudetenland.³⁹

From Washington, Krock noted the abrupt changes in the administration's views of the Munich agreement and the surge in support for Roosevelt's "Fourth New Deal," which he defined as "increased national defense facilities, public censure of outlaw governments and a policy of exclusive American aid to the democracies abroad." According to Krock the majority of Congress, as well as the majority of Americans, distrusted the Anglo-French appeasement policies, and increasingly viewed both the statesmanship and the structure of the British and

³⁶ "A Nation Disappears," *New York Times* 15 March 1939, 18; "Czech State's End Stirs Washington," *New York Times* 15 March 1939, 15.

³⁷ "Surprise? Surprise?" *Time* 27 March 1939. According to Kershaw "none but the most hopelessly naïve, incurably optimistic, or irredeemably stupid could have imagined that the Sudetenland marked the limits of German ambitions to expand." Kershaw argues that Hitler regretted the Munich agreement, and the lost chance to occupy all of Czechoslovakia at once. (*Hitler*, 157,163). See also Bell, *The Origins of the Second World War in Europe*, 248-250.

³⁸ Thompson, "On the Record: Nihilism East of the Rhine," *New York Herald Tribune* 15 March 1939, 21.

³⁹ "Munich: Act II," *Nation* 25 March 1939, 335-337.

French democracies as weak.⁴⁰ Thompson and Lippmann also blamed the “weakness, irresolution, division” in the western democracies for their failure to resist Hitler’s expansionist policies. For the journalists examined here the inability of the democracies to act swiftly and decisively to meet the sudden and audacious German foreign policy moves, laid bare the fundamental differences between the democracies and dictatorships.⁴¹

Roosevelt reacted quickly to Hitler’s annexation of Czechoslovakia. Heartened by public revulsion at the occupation and Chamberlain’s announcement that Britain would no longer appease the Nazi dictator, Roosevelt condemned “the temporary extinguishment of the liberties of a free and independent people.” Roosevelt sought revision of the Neutrality Act, and on 20 March Senator Key Pittman introduced the Peace Act of 1939, which would eliminate the mandatory arms embargo and allow trade on a cash-and-carry basis.⁴² In a signed editorial Kirchwey applauded the administration’s move to “stop Hitler.” While critical of Roosevelt’s past support for appeasement, she recognized the push for Neutrality revision as a step in the right direction.⁴³

Under Kirchwey the *Nation* was increasingly lauding public figures for their anti-

⁴⁰ Krock, “In The Nation: Two Views of the Next Move in Europe,” *New York Times* 16 March 1939, 21; Krock, “In The Nation: Effects of Hitler’s New Coup on Our Policy,” *New York Times* 17 March 1939, 18.

⁴¹ Thompson, “On the Record: The World and Adolf Hitler,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 March 1939, 13; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Eastern Push,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 March 1939, 15.

⁴² Krock, “In The Nation: Washington Hardens in Facing Dictators,” *New York Times* 19 March 1939, 65; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 183; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 312.

⁴³ Kirchwey, “Loving Hitler Less,” *Nation* 25 March 1939, 337-338.

fascism, including Ickes, Roosevelt, and Thompson. Kirchwey's interventionist views conflicted with Villard, who was the honorary chairman of the Keep America Out of War Congress, founded in March 1938. The Keep America Out of War Congress was a pacifist-socialist group, which opposed American involvement in European conflicts through a left-liberal critique of Roosevelt's policies. The Keep America Out of War Congress was just one of many different isolationist or anti-interventionist voices, whose protests against American involvement in Europe's problems were becoming louder as Roosevelt was "eroding" the Neutrality laws.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ "The Nation's Honor Roll for 1938," *Nation* 7 January 1939, 27; Doenecke, "Non-interventionism of the Left: The Keep America Out of the War Congress, 1938-1941," *Journal of Contemporary History* 12 (1977), 221-236; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 310-330. There are several works detailing the rise of isolationist or non-interventionist pressure groups from 1939 to Pearl Harbor. See: Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940-1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953); Manfred Jones, *Isolationism in America, 1935-1941* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*; Doenecke, "American Isolationism, 1939-1941." *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 6:3-4 (1982) 201-216; Thomas N. Guinsburg, *The Pursuit of Isolationism in the United States Senate from Versailles to Pearl Harbor* (New York: Garland Press, 1982); Doenecke, "Explaining the Anti-War Movement, 1939-1941: The Next Assignment," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 8:1 (1986) 139-142; Doenecke, *Anti-Intervention: A Bibliographical Introduction to Isolationism and Pacifism from World War I to the Early Cold War* (New York: Garland, 1987); Doenecke, *In Danger Undaunted: The Anti-Interventionist Movement of 1940-1941 as Revealed in the Papers of the America First Committee* (Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1990); Doenecke, *The Battle Against Intervention, 1939-1941* (Malabar, FL: Kreiger Publishing Company, 1997); Doenecke, *Storm on the Horizon: the Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941* (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000). According to Doenecke isolationists or anti-interventionists came from both the left and right wings of the political spectrum. Some were pacifists, like Villard, others criticized American intervention from a progressive or liberal-socialist standpoint. Others belonged to a more right-wing, Republican, and "nationalist" strain of anti-interventionism. Some of these, like Hearst, Colonel McCormick, Father Coughlin and Lindbergh, were virulently anti-communist and at times appeared pro-Nazi. There was also an ethnic component to anti-interventionists, with Italian-Americans and German-Americans opposing American intervention on the side of Britain. See: Ronald Johnson, "The German-American Bund and Nazi Germany, 1936-1941," *Studies in History and Society* 6 (1975) 31-45. Women also played important roles in the anti-interventionist movement. See: Glen Jeansonne, "Furies: Women Isolationists in the Era of FDR," *Journal of History and Politics* 8 (1990) 67-96; Jeansonne, *The Women of the Far Right: The Mother's Movement and World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996);

On 23 March 1939 German forces had seized Memel, the predominantly ethnically German port city of Lithuania. Kirchwey described Hitler's occupation of Memel as an indication he was carving in Europe a new empire "worthy" of the German people, and warned that the Polish city of Danzig would be next. While Kirchwey cynically wrote "Poland remembers Munich and expects nothing from the great powers of the West," Chamberlain surprised many with his announcement of a guarantee of Polish independence on 31 March.⁴⁵ France followed suit. The *Times* greeted the guarantee as "a turning point in the swiftly moving history of Europe."⁴⁶

Thompson described Chamberlain's speech guaranteeing the independence of Poland as "the most definitive commitment that Britain has made ever east of the Rhine since the World war." The British reversal, she argued, stemmed from Chamberlain's and Halifax's "personal indignation" over Hitler's breaking of the Munich agreement. Hitler "made a fool of Chamberlain" in front of the world. In one of her most memorable columns titled "Chamberlain and Alice," Thompson derided the British Prime Minister as "the masculine twin of Alice" in Wonderland. Chamberlain's naïve policies encapsulated the qualities of Alice: niceness, reasonability, incredible foolishness, simplicity and innocence. According to Thompson Chamberlain possessed none of the masculine

Laura McEnaney, "He-Men and Christian Mothers: The America First Movement and the Gendered Meanings of Patriotism and Isolationism," *Diplomatic History* 18:1 (1994) 47-57.

⁴⁵ Kirchwey, "Blood and Geography," *Nation* 1 April 1939, 365-366.

⁴⁶ "Warning to Germany," *New York Times* 31 March 1939, 20.

characteristics of a national leader. Her emasculation of Chamberlain echoed Thompson's earlier attack on Hitler.⁴⁷

The Invasion of Albania

On 7 April Britain extended a guarantee to protect the independence of Hungary, but on the same day Mussolini sent Italian military forces into neighbouring Albania. Historians argue that Mussolini's actions stemmed from feeling snubbed by Hitler's failure to warn Italy in advance of the seizure of Czechoslovakia and Mussolini's fear that Italy appeared a second-rate partner in the Rome-Berlin Axis. The invasion was also a clear repudiation of the Anglo-Italian Gentlemen's Agreement preserving the status quo in the Mediterranean, and a warning to Britain.⁴⁸ The invasion of Albania, which was already under nominal Italian control, was in many ways a repeat of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. An Italian diplomat derided the empty gesture as an act "like raping your own wife," an act of barbaric and aggressive masculinity.⁴⁹ Britain reacted with a stern warning to Italy and the extension of defensive guarantees to Greece and Romania.

⁴⁷ Thompson, "On The Record: The Meaning of Meaning," *New York Herald Tribune* 3 April 1939, 17; Thompson, "On The Record: Chamberlain and Alice," *New York Herald Tribune* 5 April 1939, 23.

⁴⁸ "Rome Moves Held as Retort to Britain," *New York Times* 7 April 1939, 8.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Sally Marks, *The Ebbing of European Ascendancy: An International History of the World, 1914-1945* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2002), 356. Diggins describes Italy's invasion of Albania as "shameless" and evidence of Mussolini's fear of playing "second fiddle" in the Axis and his attempts to "Prussianize" Italy, also demonstrated by the introduction of racial laws into Italy starting in July 1938 (Diggins, *Mussolini and Fascism*, 318-320, 323). Dennis Mack Smith comments that Mussolini's invasion of Albania sprung from Mussolini's need "to copy Hitler in effective military action." (Smith, *Mussolini: A Biography*, 230-231). For the Mussolini's "prussianization" of Italy and the introduction of racial laws see Smith, *Mussolini*, 217-223. Schmitz argues that Mussolini's invasion of Albania should have ended any further consideration of the fascist dictator as a "moderate." (Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 200-201).

From Paris McCormick observed the strengthening relationship between Britain and France since the announcements of the defensive guarantees. The French were “naturally more pessimistic” than the British, argued McCormick, and accepted their “minor role” in the Anglo-French strategic relationship “willingly, even with relief.”⁵⁰ McCormick warned that Mussolini, once the peacemaker in Europe and the “cornerstone” of Chamberlain’s appeasement policies, was “now in a fighting mood.” In her earlier interpretations of Mussolini’s Ethiopian invasion McCormick had justified Mussolini’s actions as legitimate imperial ambitions. But in her comments on the Italian invasion of Albania, McCormick provided no such justification. She even suggested that Mussolini had little to gain by his move against Albania. She viewed the Italian invasion of Albania not as a sign of problems within the Rome-Berlin Axis, but that the Axis partners were operating in tandem, a vast “Juggernaut” plowing across Europe. Many American journalists used this term “Juggernaut,” defined as an overwhelmingly destructive and unstoppable destructive force, to describe the aggressive advancing forces of the fascist dictatorships.⁵¹ The *Nation* agreed with McCormick that “the gears of the axis are still meshing neatly,” and questioned the effectiveness of the Anglo-French policy of using Mussolini as a

⁵⁰ McCormick, “Europe: France Content to Let Britain Lead in War Moves,” *New York Times* 10 April 1939, 13. In her analysis McCormick assumed that the French were continuing to follow the British lead in foreign policy, yet several historians agree that by the spring of 1939 the French were pressuring the British to act. For French policy in this period see Jackson, *The Fall of France* and Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War*.

⁵¹ McCormick, “Europe: Britain, in Deadly Earnest, Meets Hitler’s Challenge,” *New York Times* 8 April 1939, 14; McCormick, “Europe: France Content to Let Britain Lead in War Moves,” *New York Times* 10 April 1939, 13.

moderating influence on Hitler, or trying to break up the Rome-Berlin Axis altogether. Although the *Nation* praised British attempts to create a coalition of anti-Fascist states, it warned that the Soviet Union was essential to this scheme. As a long-standing ideological supporter of the Soviet Union, the *Nation* had criticized the absence of the Soviets at Munich, and looked optimistically to the formation of an anti-fascist front among Britain, France and the Soviet Union.⁵² By mid-April Britain, France and the Soviet Union began pursuing a possible defensive alliance.

In a press conference on April 8 the Roosevelt administration responded to the Italian invasion of Albania. Secretary Hull decried the “forcible and violent” invasion as a clear violation of the Kellogg-Briand Pact.⁵³ Following his return to Washington from his Warm Springs retreat, Roosevelt chose the Pan American Day address on 14 April to express America’s heightened interest in European affairs. The president insisted that the civilizations of America could never be truly isolated from the “Old World,” and reiterated the previous year’s pledge to defend Canada. The following day in a radio address, Roosevelt sent a public message to Hitler and Mussolini, asking them to guarantee the independence of thirty-one specific nations for a period of ten years. The president offered to host

⁵² “Europe in Turmoil,” *Nation* 15 April 1939, 419-420; “Rediscovery of Russia,” *Nation* 1 April 1939, 364-365.

⁵³ “Attack on Albania Assailed by Hull,” *New York Times* 9 April 1939, 34. The Kellogg-Briand Pact, named for American Secretary of State Frank Kellogg and French Foreign Minister Aristide Briand, was a treaty concluded in 1928 “providing for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy.” Although Briand envisioned the pact as a way to involve the United States in European international relations and the precursor to a formal alliance, the pact was largely symbolic and did not oblige the signatories to any actual action. The Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed by numerous nations including Germany, Italy, and Japan.

a peace conference with the fascist dictators. Roosevelt also sent personal telegrams to Hitler and Mussolini outlining his proposals for peace.⁵⁴

Many journalists interpreted Roosevelt's actions as an indication the United States would no longer remain isolated from European affairs. Krock viewed Roosevelt's actions as decisive deviations from the traditional American policy of neutrality. Although the president had suggested this position previously in his 1937 Quarantine speech, the recent proclamations from the administration were "clear and honest" announcements that the president was moving the frontiers of American foreign policy "far eastwards." Most surprising for Krock, as well as for many members of the Roosevelt administration, was the "hearty reception" and public enthusiasm in America to Roosevelt's appeals.⁵⁵ While Kirchwey was not optimistic that Roosevelt's appeals would have any direct impact on Hitler or Mussolini, she applauded the president's intervention. In an intentionally deceptive article titled "Let's Mind Our Own Business," Kirchwey lamented the demise of democracy in Spain and Czechoslovakia and called on the United States to boycott the Axis powers to send a strong message that the United States could not ignore European affairs. She correctly concluded the American people generally supported their president in his peace efforts: a

⁵⁴ "Addresses of President and Hull Before Pan American Union," *New York Times* 15 April 1939, 2; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 185-186. The thirty-one nations included in Roosevelt's message were: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, Belgium, Great Britain and Ireland, France, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey, Iraq, the Arabias, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Iran.

⁵⁵ Krock, "Roosevelt Moves Far Into European Field," *New York Times* 16 April 1939, E3; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 186.

survey conducted by the American Institute of Public Opinion revealed that 60% polled favoured Roosevelt's peace conference suggestion to Hitler and Mussolini. That same month, while on tour of the isolationist mid-West, Villard wrote an article for the *Nation* titled "We Can Keep Out of the War." He supported the arch-isolationist stance of the *Chicago Tribune* and insisted that although "there will be tremendous appeal to our sympathies if London is bombed and thousands of its inhabitants killed. Still, we can stay out of it."⁵⁶

On 28 April Krock broke a sensational story about Roosevelt's peace efforts. In it Krock recalled the president's earlier idea for a peace conference proposed in August 1936. Although Krock had received this information from a personal interview with the president, the Roosevelt administration had vehemently denied Roosevelt's peace conference plan in 1936 after the American public reacted negatively. In April 1939 Krock reported on a new peace plan proposed by Roosevelt. According to Krock, a few months previously the president had contacted Mussolini, and through Mussolini Hitler, and proposed an "unprecedented conference" with the fascist dictators "at sea, or near some neutral island such as one of the Azores." Krock stated that the dictators rejected the idea. He argued that this conference proposal refuted critics' charges that Roosevelt was exaggerating the dire condition of Europe "for selfish purposes."⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Kirchwey, "Roosevelt, Peace-Monger," *Nation* 22 April 1939, 456-457; Kirchwey, "Let's Mind Our Own Business," *Nation* 15 April 1939, 421-422; "Roosevelt's Note to Hitler Backed," *New York Times* 28 April 1939, 3; Villard, "We Can Keep Out of War," *Nation* 29 April 1939, 501.

⁵⁷ Krock, "In the Nation: President and Duce Agree on Conference Size," *New York Times* 26 April 1939, 22; Krock, "Roosevelt Plan Disclosed," *New York Times* 28 April 1939, 1.

The president soon denied Krock's latest peace conference story in an official statement: "I have read the Krock story in THE NEW YORK TIMES. It is not true, but otherwise it is interesting and well written." Ickes also denied Krock's story in his book *America's House of Lords*, calling it a "luridly sensational tale" and a "will-o-the-wisp story." In a memo to Press Secretary Early Krock insisted that the source of the story was "a member of the President's official family," and in a personal letter to Roosevelt Krock defended his story's publication: "I felt the chance should be taken in the interest of illumination your peace record and repelling frequent charges in the Nazi-Fascist controlled press. I believed the value of the publication outweighed the professional and personal risk."⁵⁸ While Krock claimed that his article was meant to boost support for Roosevelt's peace proposals, he believed the administration was hesitant to reveal previous failed attempts while they waited for Hitler's response in his next Reichstag speech. Krock's story does not appear in most historians' accounts of Roosevelt's diplomacy in this period, yet the frequent personal messages and interventions by the president do not rule out that Roosevelt had attempted to again intervene personally at this time.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ "Sea Parley Denied by Roosevelt," *New York Times* 29 April 1939, 3; Ickes, *America's House of Lords*, 117; Memo from Krock to Stephen Early, "Background of story published in the New York Times on Friday, April 28, 1939," Series II Box 25 Folder "Early, Stephen," Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University; Letter from Krock to Roosevelt, 1 May 1939, Series II Box 52 Folder "Roosevelt, Franklin," Papers of Arthur Krock, Princeton University.

⁵⁹ White maintains that Krock's sources for this story were individuals within the Roosevelt administration. (White, *FDR and the Press*, 34).

On 28 April Hitler delivered a rousing speech to the Reichstag and directly answered President Roosevelt's telegram. He denounced the president's proposals for a peace conference, refused to provide firm guarantees for the independence of the thirty-one nations listed by Roosevelt, but assured he was committed to "the justice, well-being, progress and peace of the whole human community."⁶⁰ Mussolini also spurned Roosevelt's proposals. Krock again praised Roosevelt's "unselfish effort for peace," and argued that since the president's 1937 Quarantine speech, Roosevelt had put the fascist dictators on the defensive. Krock believed that Hitler's direct public response indicated that the dictator took seriously Roosevelt's intention to somehow be involved in the brewing European conflict. Thompson believed Hitler's response to Roosevelt was masterfully written by the German embassy in Washington, "carefully aimed at the anti-Roosevelt forces in this country and designed to play upon the isolationist sentiment." Unfortunately, Hitler's speech did indeed appeal to isolationists in the United States, as evidenced by Senator Hiram Johnson who stated that Roosevelt "wants...to knock down two dictators in Europe, so that one may be firmly implanted in America." Many isolationists and Roosevelt critics viewed the president's peace proposals as a way to distract the American public from problems with the New Deal at home.⁶¹ The American public was better

⁶⁰ "Text of Chancellor Hitler's Address Before the Reichstag on Germany's Foreign Relations," *New York Times* 29 April 1939, 9;

⁶¹ Krock, "Roosevelt's Turn Next in Duel with Dictators," *New York Times* 30 April 1939, 75; Thompson, "On The Record: Hitler's Speech," *New York Herald Tribune* 1 May 1939, 21; Quoted in Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 187.

informed and more attentive to events in Europe, but remained hesitant about direct American involvement in European affairs. Gallup Polls indicated that more than half of Americans polled believed war would break out in Europe by the end of 1939. While the majority of Americans polled supported aiding Britain and France in the case of war by selling them war materials, Americans were still opposed by a ratio of six to one against sending U.S. troops to Europe.⁶² In the spring of 1939 the American public was increasingly concerned and pessimistic about the possibility of war in Europe, but an important event provided a distraction. The King and Queen of England paid their first state visit to the United States in June. The event was widely reported in the American press, and shaped the way Americans viewed their relationship with Europe.

The 1939 Royal Visit

The Royal visit was meant to clearly symbolize abroad the common bonds, if not solidarity, of the English-speaking people at this time of escalating danger and some feared, impending war. Preparations abounded for the Royal visit, from flying the Union Jack throughout Washington, to printing a special edition of the London *Times* in the United States.⁶³ The public and press received the Royal visitors with hearty enthusiasm and near universal praise. The *New York Herald Tribune* praised the Royal visit as indicative of the “very human bonds between English and Americans,” bonds shaped by “countless sharings”

⁶² George Gallup, “What We, the People, Think About Europe,” *New York Times* 30 April 1939, 15.

⁶³ “Officials Depart to Welcome King,” *New York Times* 7 June 1939, 14; “U.S. London Times on Sale Here Today,” *New York Times* 8 June 1939, 19.

including a common language, democracy, common law, and the “enduring friendship” of Canada, an important part of the British Commonwealth. The *Herald Tribune* recognized that Anglo-American relations needed improvement for there were still “back-currents of ill-feeling in the wake of the World War.” But the “manly and courteous Englishman” and his “winning Scottish wife,” immensely improved the American public’s view of the British, and created a platform for “English-speaking accord” and “common aims.”⁶⁴ The *New York Times* stressed the appeal of the Royal couple who “captured the hearts of the people.” The *Times* described the King as “a very human person, with a friendly, democratic manner – the kind who could be expected to be a true friend of democratic government.” The Queen appeared sincere, friendly, and charming. The *Times* stressed the approachability, the human and ordinary qualities of the Royal couple, as they took in the sights around New York City and the World’s Fair, acting like tourists and craning their necks to take it all in.⁶⁵ *Time*’s account

⁶⁴ “History in the Making,” *New York Herald Tribune* 10 June 1939, 14; “The Meaning of It,” *New York Herald Tribune* 12 June 1939, 18.

⁶⁵ Russell B. Porter, “Reign at Fair,” *New York Times* 11 June 1939, 1; Kathleen McLaughlin, “City is Enchanted by Queen’s Charm,” *New York Times* 11 June 1939, 1. The British pavilion at the 1939 World’s Fair in New York City was one of the most popular exhibits. The Hall of Democracy featured one of the original copies of the Magna Carta, and a seedling Royal Oak was planted on the site to symbolize “the understanding between the English-speaking peoples.” (Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 119; “Pavilion Presents Glories of Britain,” *New York Times* 13 May 1939, 9; “Oak From Britain is Planted at Fair,” *New York Times* 19 May 1939, 18). According to historian Nicholas Cull, the British Pavilion was a purposively planned British overseas publicity and diplomatic move to remind Americans of their “inherent” bonds to Britain, and to build the foundations for a war-time Anglo-American relationship. (Nicholas Cull, “Overturn to an Alliance: British Propaganda at the New York World’s Fair, 1939-1940,” *Journal of British Studies* 36:3 (1997) 326-327). David Reynolds also agrees that the British pavilion at the World’s Fair, especially the display of the Magna Carta, shrewdly played up the “strong sense that the two countries shared a common liberal political tradition.” (Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 23). For other studies of the 1939 World’s Fair see: David E. Nye,

of the Royal visit also emphasized the very friendly and charming qualities of the Royal couple, describing the King as “young, fit and earnest,” and the Queen, the “heroine of the occasion,” as “crisp and bonny.”⁶⁶

The Roosevelt administration and the British government carefully orchestrated the Royal visit. David Reynolds argues Roosevelt quite intentionally avoided the trappings of a traditional state visit, since the British monarchy was “the symbol of all that *divided* the two countries – a reminder of the colonial past and the stratified Old World society that Americans were proud to have repudiated.” Instead, the president opted for a relaxed picnic on his Hyde Park estate where the Royal visitors enjoyed hot dogs, beer, and swimming.⁶⁷ The Royal couple appealed to the American public with their friendliness, keen interest in America, and their deference to the American president.⁶⁸

Even the curmudgeonly Krock evaluated the Royal visit as a success. While Krock admitted that many Americans remained “suspicious” of British motives and intentions, he accepted that the Royal visitors “intended to increase friendliness for their country, to show how democratic and wholesome are the symbols of the constitutional monarchy that is Britain’s.” Many Americans

“European Self-Representations at the New York World’s Fair of 1939,” in R. Kroes, R.W. Rydell and D.F.J. Bosscher (eds.) *Cultural Transmissions and Receptions: American Mass Culture in Europe* (Amsterdam, 1993); Marco Duranti, “Utopia, Nostalgia, and World War at the 1939-40 New York World’s Fair.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 41:4 (2006) 663-683.

⁶⁶ “Here Come the British,” *Time* 19 June 1939.

⁶⁷ Reynolds, “FDR’s Foreign Policy and the British Royal Visit to the U.S.A., 1939,” *Historian* 45 (1983) 467. See also Benjamin Rhodes, “The British Royal Visit of 1939 and the ‘Psychological Approach’ to the United States,” *Diplomatic History* 2:2 (1978) 197-211.

⁶⁸ Bell, “The Foreign Office and the 1939 Royal Visit to America,” 604.

viewed Britain as not quite a true democracy, still ruled by the monarchy and a class of landed elites.⁶⁹

Yet despite the public enthusiasm for the Royal couple, some wondered if “Great Britain’s external policy is to find a way to induce the United States to serve as catspaw.”⁷⁰ The Hearst press and the *Chicago Tribune* voiced these suspicions, warning that the Royal visit was Chamberlain’s thinly veiled propaganda mission, the purpose to “inveigle” the United States from its isolationism.⁷¹ These reactions were predictable, but not representative of the majority of the American press, which generally praised the Royal couple, recognized the symbolic common bonds between the United States and Britain, and concluded that the Royal visit was a great success. McCormick reported that the Royal visit “served to focus the attention of Europe on the United States,” while briefly distracting Americans from the problems and events of the old world. The “old world,” she argued, could not miss the “warmth and enthusiasm with which a former colony hailed the descendant of its former oppressor.”⁷²

Although the Royal visit provided a welcome distraction from the fear of impending war in Europe, Roosevelt renewed his efforts for revisions to the Neutrality laws in late spring 1939. On May 31 the president asked congressional

⁶⁹ Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 192-193.

⁷⁰ Krock, “Royal Visitors Avoid All Political Pitfalls,” *New York Times* 11 June 1939, E3.

⁷¹ Bell, “The Foreign Office and the 1939 Royal Visit to America,” 612.

⁷² McCormick, “Europe: Royal Visit Draws Europe’s Eyes to Us for a Change,” *New York Times* 12 June 1939, 14.

leaders to consider Neutrality revision.⁷³ With renewed debate in the Capitol, the press began a fresh discussion on Neutrality revision. The *New York Herald Tribune* applauded revisions to the Neutrality legislation, and even encouraged further revisions commenting, “we should like to see the new legislation made even more flexible, giving to the President even greater latitude.” The *Herald Tribune* went even further in July 1939, making a plea to put aside partisan politics: “As a Republican newspaper we regret that in the House so many Republicans seemed to vote on the neutrality problem primarily with a view to embarrassing the President. The crisis is far too serious for such petty spitefulness.”⁷⁴ Lippmann also supported revisions to the Neutrality legislation as outlined by Secretary Hull, which would give discretion to the president to “decide what parts of the world are too dangerous for American travelers, American ships, American exporters.”⁷⁵ Thompson agreed with her colleague at the *Herald Tribune*, and congratulated Hull for “having cut the Gordian knot into which our foreign policy was tied by the present neutrality act.”⁷⁶ At the *Nation* the renewed debate over Neutrality legislation widened the chasm of opinion between Kirchwey and Villard. By the summer of 1939, with Kirchwey’s editorials supporting Roosevelt’s attempts to revise the Neutrality legislation and

⁷³ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 189.

⁷⁴ “The Neutrality Bill,” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 June 1939, 22; “Reconsidering the Neutrality Bill,” *New York Herald Tribune* 4 July 1939, 14.

⁷⁵ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Secretary Hull’s Neutrality Program,” *New York Herald Tribune* 30 May 1939, 13.

⁷⁶ Thompson, “On the Record: Secretary Hull Cuts the Gordian Knot,” *New York Herald Tribune* 2 June 1939, 23.

Villard's column attacking the administration's efforts, Kirchwey attempted to divorce Villard's views from the general tone of the *Nation* through her insistence on a by-line attached to Villard's column stating that his views did not represent those of the *Nation*. In a letter to her former boss Kirchwey also personally rebuked Villard for his virulent anti-Roosevelt articles: "To attack Roosevelt even by means of a series of questions, at a time when he is fighting tooth and nail against a reactionary coalition in Congress seems to me a serious error in judgment."⁷⁷

Krock warned that the failure to revise the Neutrality Law could appear to the dictators as a clear signal that the United States would not be involved in any future war in Europe. On the other hand, the president hoped that the revision of the Neutrality law would serve as "material notice to the dictators in advance that we will arm the French and the British [and] will serve as a preventive of war."⁷⁸ According to Robert Dallek, Krock interpreted correctly Roosevelt's intention in attempting to revise the Neutrality law in the summer of 1939. Roosevelt announced that the "failure of the Senate to take action now would weaken the leadership of the United States in exercising its potent influence in the cause of preserving peace," and admitted in a press conference, "I have practically no power to make an American effort to prevent such a war from breaking out." However, Dallek argues Roosevelt overestimated the possible influence of the

⁷⁷ Letter Kirchwey to Villard, 31 July 1939, Box 8 Folder 136 "Villard, Oswald Garrison", Papers of Freda Kirchwey, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge.

⁷⁸ Krock, "In the Nation: Mixed, Some Temporary, Reasons Shelved Neutrality," *New York Times* 12 July 1939, 16.

United States in preventing Hitler's next aggressive foreign policy move in Europe. While the debate over Neutrality legislation was vigorously carried out in American corridors of power and in the American press, European events continued with little consideration of American domestic political wrangling.⁷⁹

The Nazi-Soviet Pact

While many American journalists argued that revisions to the American Neutrality legislation were required to help prevent war in Europe, they also looked to other possible means to prevent war, especially the discussions between Britain, France and the Soviet Union for a collective security agreement. Talks began in April 1939, but with the replacement in early May of Soviet foreign minister Maxim Litvinov, who was Jewish, with Vyacheslav Molotov, journalists began to question if the discussions were in jeopardy.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Quoted in Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 192.

⁸⁰ Roberts argues that Litvinov was dismissed in May 1939 for reasons of internal politics as well as questions of foreign policies. According to Roberts the change from Litvinov to Molotov represented the assertion of Stalin of direct control over foreign policy at the eve of the Second World War (Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War*, 72). Edward Bennett argues that observers in the Roosevelt administration believed that Litvinov's "resignation" indicated a radical shift in Soviet policy that would not bode well for the democracies (Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, xxiii). Although the Soviet Union has only been on the periphery of this study, American journalists frequently reported and commented on the Soviet Union and its position in European affairs. Historians have criticized American journalists' portrayal of the Soviet Union to the American public, especially correspondents Walter Duranty and Louis Fischer. Historians have accused Duranty, and the *New York Times* which published his articles, of the deliberate misrepresentation and under-reporting of the 1932-1933 Ukrainian famine. Duranty was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for his Russian reporting, and has been accused of taking bribes from the Soviet government to cover up the famine. Duranty was considered the "dean of Moscow correspondents," whose reports from Russia carried enormous influence with Roosevelt. During the 1932 presidential campaign Roosevelt consulted with Duranty regarding the Soviet Union and information provided by Duranty played into Roosevelt's considerations for recognition of the Soviet Union. For works on Soviet-American relations and American perceptions of the Soviet Union, especially American journalists and the Ukrainian famine see: Thomas R. Maddux, "Watching Stalin Maneuver Between Hitler and the West: American Diplomats and Soviet Diplomacy, 1934-1939,"

Thompson argued the “resignation” of Litvinov, who “represented the Russian policy of rapprochement with the western democracies,” indicated an end to that policy. For Thompson there were few differences between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, as both were dictatorships and undemocratic. For these reasons she doubted the possibility of an alliance between the Soviet Union and the western democracies, Britain and France.⁸¹ Lippmann, too, believed Litvinov’s departure represented the end of the Soviet policy of “looking for allies in Western Europe,” and did not rule out the possibility that the Soviet Union may be considering “an understanding with Germany.” The most important message from Litvinov’s replacement, according to Lippmann, was the Soviet Union was clearly negotiating from a position of power in any discussions.⁸²

The *Nation* agreed that the pledges made to Poland and Rumania by Britain and France would be “not only futile but highly dangerous” without the assistance of the Soviet Union. In June the *Nation* was still optimistic that Hitler

Diplomatic History 1:2 (1977) 140-154; James William Crowl, “They wrote as they pleased: A study of the Journalistic Careers of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty, 1922-1940” (PhD Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1978); Crowl, *Angels in Stalin’s Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, A case study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty* (Washington, D.C.: The University of America Press, 1981); Marco Carynnyk, “The Famine the “Times” couldn’t find,” *Commentary* 76:5 (1983) 32-40; Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Security*; Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*; Sally Taylor, *Stalin’s Apologist: Walter Duranty: The New York Times Man In Moscow* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Wayne Morris, “Stalin’s famine and the American journalists,” *Continuity* 18 (1994) 69-78; Allen McTavish Johnson, “Moscow Dispatches, 1921-1934: The Writings of Walter Duranty, William Henry Chamberlain and Louis Fischer in Soviet Russia” (PhD. Dissertation, Tulane University, 2000); David C. Engerman, “Modernization from the other shore: American Observers and the Costs of Soviet Economic Development,” *American Historical Review* 105:2 (2000) 383-416; Lubomyr Luciuk, (ed.) *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty’s Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2004); Glantz, *FDR and the Soviet Union*.

⁸¹ Thompson, “On The Record: As Litvinov Goes,” *New York Herald Tribune* 5 May 1939, 21.

⁸² Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Russian Puzzle,” *New York Herald Tribune* 9 May 1939, 21.

could be dissuaded from war by a “convincing demonstration of the power of collective security,” through an agreement between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. Yet Kirchwey questioned the delay in concluding such an agreement, blaming “British wavering and indecision.”⁸³ McCormick, on the other hand, argued the delay was a result of mistrust on the part of both the British and the Soviets. McCormick also provided a racial interpretation for the Soviet tactics in the discussions. She described the Soviets as “oriental traders” who were shrewd, suspicious, secretive and mysterious, clearly not to be trusted.⁸⁴

The discussions continued into August, when the British and French finally agreed to send representatives to the Soviet Union. Roosevelt attempted to encourage an agreement between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, sending a message to Soviet leaders on 4 August.⁸⁵ The Anglo-French mission, composed of officials with no authority to actually sign any agreement and traveling aboard a slow merchant steamer, did not arrive in the Soviet Union until 11 August. The talks quickly broke down over the issue of Soviet passage into Poland, and on 23 August German foreign minister Ribbentrop arrived in Moscow and signed a ten-year non-aggression pact with Molotov the very same day.

The announcement of the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact shocked contemporaries. Many American journalists viewed the agreement as a

⁸³ “Molotov’s Terms,” *Nation* 10 June 1939, 659-660; Kirchwey, “Lull Before Appeasement,” *Nation* 24 June 1939, 717-718.

⁸⁴ McCormick, “Europe: Delay in British-Russian Pact Born of Mutual Distrust,” *New York Times* 24 June 1939, 10.

⁸⁵ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 196.

frightening indication that war in Europe was imminent. Kirchwey and the writers at the *Nation* were also stunned. The journal was a long-time ideological ally of the Soviet Union. According to the *Nation* the abrupt reversal in Soviet policy gave “Hitler a colossal diplomatic victory and laid foundations for another Munich.”⁸⁶ McCormick viewed the Nazi-Soviet pact as indicative of their common aims: “to destroy the standards, values, traditions, and freedoms defended by the democracies.” For McCormick and her colleagues the Nazi-Soviet Pact was yet another sign that Europe was divided between the civilized and democratic nations, and those aimed at destroying them with their aggressive and expansionist policies. While she still asserted “no man in Europe is working so hard to prevent war” as Mussolini, according to McCormick the question of war or peace in Europe rested with Hitler.⁸⁷ Thompson also agreed war or peace in Europe hinged on Hitler, who she disparaged as “an arsonist, a liar, a murderer, a blackmailer and a thief.”⁸⁸ Krock viewed the Nazi-Soviet pact as ammunition for isolationists, who would contend that such a diplomatic “double-cross” demonstrated that no nation in Europe could be trusted. Yet Krock believed the

⁸⁶ “Red Star and Swastika,” *Nation* 26 August 1939, 211-212.

⁸⁷ McCormick, “Europe: Nazi-Soviet Pact Means That Like is Seeking Like,” *New York Times* 26 August 1939, 10; McCormick, “In Europe: In the Final Test One Man Stands Against the World,” *New York Times* 28 August 1939, 11. McCormick’s interpretation of the Nazi-Soviet pact as indicative of the common structures and aims of the dictatorships or “totalitarian” regimes was a widely held belief following the announcement of the pact. Several historians have studied the evolution of the idea of “totalitarianism” in this period. See: Les Adler and Thomas G. Paterson, “Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930s-1950s,” *American Historical Review* 75 (1970) 1046-64; Thomas Maddux, “Red Fascism, Brown Bolshevism: The American Image of Totalitarianism in the 1930s,” *The Historian* 40 (1977) 85-103; Thomas Lifka, *The Concept of “Totalitarianism” and American Foreign Policy, 1933-1949* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

⁸⁸ Thompson, “On The Record: Ecrasez l’Infame!” *New York Herald Tribune* 30 August 1939, 17.

president would not idly sit back and do nothing “when the cloud of war hangs lower and darker,” but Roosevelt “will surely try to make his great influence, position and prestige serve the cause of world peace.”⁸⁹

Roosevelt did attempt to intervene in the late days of August 1939 by sending messages to Italy’s King Victor Emmanuel, to Hitler, and to the president of Poland.⁹⁰ But in the waning days of the summer, most simply waited, in Kirchwey’s words listening “like drug addicts to the endless nerve-deadening iteration of proposals, real and rumored...for some way out of war.” Kirchwey, in a clear demonstration of her movement away from pacifism, declared “war would be preferable to another deal with Hitler, and war would be preferable to the continued struggle of nerves and diplomacy that has exhausted the peoples for the past months.” She warned Chamberlain, the British people “will not tolerate another sell-out followed by another period of tension ended by another climax and threatened war.” The *Nation* supported Roosevelt’s recent peace attempts, but recognized once war broke out in Europe, the United States could not idly stand by to see the “British Empire – with all its sins – replaced by a Nazi empire.” Villard, on the other hand, agreed with the isolationist argument that the Nazi-Soviet pact meant more than ever “we must keep out of the whole revolting

⁸⁹ Krock, “In the Nation: Effects of “New Europe” on our Foreign Policy,” *New York Times* 23 August 1939, 18; Krock, “In the Nation: The Relations of the President to World Peace,” *New York Times* 24 August 1939, 15.

⁹⁰ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 196.

European mess.”⁹¹ On 1 September 1939 the “death watch” ended as Hitler’s forces invaded Poland. Two days later Britain and France declared war on Germany.

The Invasion of Poland and War in Europe

As a group the journalists discussed here viewed the outbreak of war in Europe as a shock, but not necessarily a surprise. Following the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet pact many journalists were convinced that war in Europe was imminent, and waited for Hitler to make his next move. Most had already made up their minds concerning American intervention. Knox of the *Chicago Daily News*, once stridently anti-Roosevelt and isolationist, expressed his beliefs concerning the immediate course of American foreign policy in the tense days leading up to the outbreak of war in an editorial: “The FIRST step in such a program should be the immediate and outright REPEAL of the present neutrality law. It should never have been erected. It has shown to be worse than futile in every international crisis that has arisen since its enactment.” By the outbreak of war in Europe, Knox and the *Chicago Daily News* were convinced that Nazi Germany represented a direct threat to American security, and supported both military preparedness in the United States and increased aid to the Allies.⁹²

The *Times* quickly cast Germany as the instigator and aggressor in the war, and expressed sympathy for Germany’s victims. Following the British and

⁹¹ Kirchwey, “Europe’s Last Stand,” *Nation* 2 September 1939, 232-233; “Roosevelt’s Fight for Peace,” *Nation* 2 September 1939, 233-234; Villard, “Issues and Men,” *Nation* 2 September 1939, 247.

⁹² Knox, “If War Comes,” *Chicago Daily News* 26 August 1939.

French declarations of war, the *Times* praised both nations for exhausting every avenue to peace before making “the sacrifice of war.” The *Times* also praised Chamberlain, who previously was the subject of “widespread criticism” and “cruel humor.” But now, the *Times* argued, Chamberlain “has risen magnificently to the responsibility of a great decision.” Although the *Times* agreed with Roosevelt’s speech of 3 September, that “even at the outbreak of this great war, the influence of America should be consistent in seeking for humanity a final peace,” the newspaper clearly supported the democracies of Britain and France in the struggle against Germany. Britain and France shared many common bonds with the United States, as “the outposts of our own kind of civilization, of the democratic system, of the progress we have achieved through the methods of self-government and of the progress we still hope to make tomorrow.”⁹³

Gunther, who had spent the summer traveling around Europe, wrote about the British reaction to the outbreak of war from London. He had just returned from Moscow, his visit coinciding with the announcement of the Nazi-Soviet pact, and arrived in London on the eve of the war. With the outbreak of war in Poland Gunther described the British as “calm and confident,” but generally “fed-up” with Hitler. They were also a deeply “civilized people,” who “loathe the idea of making war.” But Gunther never doubted that the British would fight.

Following the British declaration of war Gunther interviewed Winston Churchill, the new First Lord of the Admiralty, and returned to the United States on 29

⁹³ “Tragedy in Europe,” *New York Times* 2 September 1939, 11; “The Sword Unsheathed,” *New York Times* 4 September 1939, 16;

September. Gunther was not surprised by the outbreak of war in Europe, and was even relieved that someone at last was making a stand against Nazi Germany.⁹⁴

At the *Nation* Kirchwey described the outbreak of war in Europe as the “fruits of Munich.” Kirchwey too viewed the war in Europe as a conflict between the forces of “fascist domination” and the democracies of the West, who were fighting “to hold on to their hard-won political and economic liberties, to prevent the spread of an organized system of persecution.” Villard, on the other hand, stuck to his pacifism, decried the armaments race as a symptom of war, and warned against the United States once again being drawn into the struggle as the “catspaw of the Allies” as had happened in 1917. Kirchwey argued that there was no comparison between the outbreak of war in 1914 and the current situation in Europe. In 1914 the *Nation*, along with many other Americans at the time, believed that the “great war was just another engagement in the unending struggle for power among the nations of Europe,” and preached the virtues of pacifism. But in 1939, Kirchwey argued “pacifism is a small voice, and pro-German feeling is limited to the few pro-Nazis among us.” She called for immediate revision of the Neutrality law in order to materially support Britain and France, “based on a profound and almost desperate belief that the survival of the democratic way of life depends on the defeat of Hitler.” Here Kirchwey clearly articulated the growing consensus, that Hitler and the other dictatorships in Europe, threatened

⁹⁴ Cuthbertson, *Inside: The Biography of John Gunther*, 169-174; Gunther, “Hitler’s Tactics Stiffen British,” *New York Times* 3 September 1939, 12; “Ocean Travelers,” *New York Times* 29 September 1939, 28.

the very survival of western civilization. For Kirchwey the best way for the United States to actually stay out of the war in Europe was through aiding Britain and France to defeat Germany. In the early weeks of the war Kirchwey used her own signed columns, as well as her influence as editor, to demand in the pages of the *Nation* revision of the Neutrality law.⁹⁵

In his speech of 3 September Roosevelt was careful not to publicize his personal belief, namely that the United States was compelled to aid Britain and France to ensure the defeat of Germany, but told the American people that the United States was neutral in this conflict, and promised “that every effort of your government will be directed toward” keeping out of the war. Two days later Roosevelt issued an official proclamation of American Neutrality. But in the first few weeks of the war Roosevelt renewed his push for revisions to the Neutrality law, seeking bipartisan agreement.⁹⁶ Roosevelt called a special congressional session for 21 September to discuss changing the Neutrality law. However, a group of isolationists, led by Senators Borah, Clark, Nye and Vandenberg, along with “radio priest” Father Coughlin, and Colonel Charles Lindbergh, mounted a national radio campaign against the president’s proposed revisions to the Neutrality law.

⁹⁵ Kirchwey, “Munich Bears Fruit,” *Nation* 9 September 1939, 259-260; Villard, “Issues and Men,” *Nation* 9 September 1939, 272; Kirchwey, “1939 Is Not 1914,” *Nation* 16 September 1939, 283-284; Kirchwey, “What Americans Want,” *Nation* 23 September 1939, 307-308.

⁹⁶ Roosevelt, “Fireside Chat: 3 September 1939,” in *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 149-151; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 199-200.

Thompson, who had opposed the Neutrality law from the beginning, and argued for revision, quickly attacked Senator Borah's radio broadcast of 14 September. She derided Borah's argument as "full of folly," and "blind." Lindbergh's national radio appeal on 15 September called for the United States to stay out of the "madness" of the European war, a war once again fought by the "Old World" over "the greed, the fear and the intrigue of European nations." He warned Americans to be wary of "foreign propaganda" aimed at pushing the United States "blindly into another war." In her column Thompson assailed Lindbergh, questioning his lengthy stays in Europe, his admiration for the German air force, the medals he received from the Nazis, and his general "inclination toward fascism." Lindbergh's radio address on 13 October insisted the war in Europe was not "a war for democracy," but "a war over the balance of power in Europe." He upheld "racial strength," the preservation of the white race, as more important than politics or ideology. Thompson answered Lindbergh once again in her column. She deftly argued that Lindbergh's speech was "a very short sketch for a larger blueprint of the role of the United States in the coming Germanic era," and pointed to his assertions of American imperialism in the Western Hemisphere, what he called "our hemisphere," and his racial statements, as indicative of Nazi doctrine: "No where on this soil has the Nazi concept of imperialism been so clearly stated as in Col. Lindbergh's second speech."⁹⁷

⁹⁷ "Lindbergh's Appeal for Isolation," *New York Times* 16 September 1939, 9; Thompson, "On The Record: Col. Lindbergh and Propaganda," *New York Herald Tribune* 20 September 1939; Thompson, "On The Record: For Freedom of Action," *New York Herald Tribune* 2 October 1939,

Roosevelt also gained a more unlikely ally in his fight for Neutrality revision. In early September Knox of the *Chicago Daily News*, wrote an editorial calling for the creation of a bipartisan committee to advise the president on foreign policy. The editorial position of the *Daily News* vocally supported the president's position on the European war, and after 1 September the "battle of the two colonels" raged in Chicago, between Colonel McCormick's *Tribune* and Knox's *Daily News* over the extent of American participation in the European war. Roosevelt enlisted Knox's aid, as well as other prominent Republicans like Alf Landon and Henry Stimson, to publicly respond to Borah and isolationist opponents of Neutrality revision.⁹⁸ However, Krock argued that Roosevelt had a tough fight ahead when faced with a united front of Republicans, isolationists and pacifists. Although there were many reasons why the United States would not get involved in the European war, Krock argued that certain events, such as the defeat of Britain and France, or a direct attack on the United States, may "turn the powerful peace structure of the United States into an engine of war."⁹⁹

While Roosevelt fought for Neutrality revision in the United States, events in Europe moved quickly. On 17 September the Soviet Union invaded eastern

13; Thompson, "On The Record: The Shape of Things to Come," *New York Herald Tribune* 4 October 1939, 21; "Lindbergh's Talk on Arms Embargo," *New York Times* 14 October 1939, 10; Thompson, "On The Record: Lindbergh Forsees New World Order Devised By Nazis," *New York Herald Tribune* 18 October 1939; Thompson, "On The Record: Col. Lindbergh Points Way to U.S. Imperialism," *New York Herald Tribune* 20 October 1939; Thompson, "On The Record: Col. Lindbergh's Imperialism," *New York Herald Tribune* 23 October 1939.

⁹⁸ *Chicago Daily News* 12 September 1939, 1; Schneider, *Should America Go to War?*, 14; Schneider, "The Battle of the Two Colonels," 4-33; Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 141; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 201.

⁹⁹ Krock, "Can We Stay Out of the War?" *New York Times* 17 September 1939, 100.

Poland. Lippmann immediately recognized the Soviet invasion as part of a “secret agreement” of the Nazi-Soviet pact, and argued that Finland, the Baltic states and Rumania appeared next on the list to be “invaded and partitioned” by either Germany or the Soviet Union. Lippmann’s fears were soon confirmed by news of Soviet demands on Finland.¹⁰⁰ Thompson praised the Polish resistance, describing the defense of Warsaw as “one of the Homeric, blindly heroic acts of history,” but no match against the “heartless, bloodless robots of modern war.” Her despair at the futility of the Warsaw defenders against the mechanized might of the Soviet war machine echoed earlier interpretations by American journalists of the Ethiopian conflict and the Spanish Civil War. Like her colleagues at the other leading newspapers, Thompson presented a romantic view of heroic defenders of homelands threatened and overwhelmed by the cold inhuman forces of mechanized warfare. The Soviet invasion of Poland, she argued, demonstrated that those who believed the Soviet Union might cast its lot with the Allies against Hitler were mistaken, for “Stalin detests the West. He is an Asiatic.” Thompson and McCormick interpreted Soviet foreign policy as indicative of the nation’s “Asiatic” character, inherently untrustworthy and anti-western. Here Thompson demonstrated the overlap and interplay of the interpretative lenses as her assessment of the Soviets’ “racial” characteristics supported her argument that the Soviets’ were “uncivilized” and bent on the destruction of western civilization.

¹⁰⁰ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Hitler-Stalin Pact,” *New York Herald Tribune* 21 September 1939, 25; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Paramount Issue of the War,” 12 October 1939, 25;

The Soviet invasion hastened Poland's defeat, and Poland was overrun by 1 October.¹⁰¹

The Roosevelt administration grappled with different interpretations of the Nazi-Soviet pact. When the Soviet Union invaded Poland, Roosevelt did not invoke the Neutrality law against the Soviets. Some within the administration believed that the Nazi-Soviet pact was a temporary measure, and would eventually dissolve due to inherent ideological and racial differences. Others feared what worried Thompson, that the revolutionary and totalitarian similarities between the two dictatorships would create a monstrous union that would dominate the European and Asian continents.¹⁰²

Roosevelt continued to push for revisions to the Neutrality act. On 27 October Roosevelt's Neutrality revision carried with a two-thirds majority in the Senate and passed in Congress a few days later. On 4 November Roosevelt signed the revised Neutrality Act permitting trade with belligerents on a cash-and-carry basis. The *New York Times* praised the repeal of the arms embargo as "the most effective action that could be taken to prevent this country from being involved in the war." The *Times* argued that it was essential for the democracies involved in the war to buy necessary materials quickly to ensure the defeat of

¹⁰¹ Thompson, "On The Record: A Call to Reason!" *New York Herald Tribune* 27 September 1939, 25; Thompson, "On The Record: American Peace Efforts," *New York Herald Tribune* 11 October 1939, 25.

¹⁰² Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 208; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 136-137; Bennett, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory*, 1-3.

Germany, thereby alleviating the need for the United States to be engaged directly.¹⁰³

The Soviet Invasion of Finland

The revision of the Neutrality act heartened many in America who hoped to see a quick Allied victory. Yet any assistance was too late for Poland, and the Soviet demands on Finland appeared as ominous portents. On 30 November the Soviet Union launched an invasion of Finland. Roosevelt was personally horrified and angry at “this dreadful rape of Finland.” The president sent messages to the Soviet Union and Finland urging the prohibition of the “inhuman barbarism” of civilian bombing. By not proclaiming the invasion as an act of war, Roosevelt left open avenues to allow Finland to borrow American funds, and sought ways to provide loans to the Finns. Americans overwhelmingly sympathized with the little Baltic state against the behemoth Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴ The *Times* described Finland as “the littlest and weakest of the victims of aggression,” and praised the “unexpected force of their resistance.” Americans held Finland in great esteem, as the only state that had continued to make full payments of its war debts to the United States.¹⁰⁵ Most American journalists also quickly took up the

¹⁰³ “The Senate Vote,” *New York Times* 28 October 1939, 14.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 209; Jacobs, *America and the Winter War*, 89.

¹⁰⁵ For background on American relations with Finland see: Benjamin Rhodes, “The Origins of Finnish-American Friendship, 1919-1941,” *Mid-America* 54 (1972) 3-19.

cause. They rallied for Finland, praising the brave, democratic, civilized state against the immoral, aggressive invader.¹⁰⁶

In religious language McCormick exalted the “brave resistance” of the Finns fighting “on the side of the angels” against the Soviets who “care nothing for moral judgments” and “scorn the codes and cannons of civilization.”

Lippmann argued that if Finland were to fall, Sweden and Norway would be next.

He supported all diplomatic and financial support the United States could muster to assist the Finns, “for what counts is that Scandinavia should be saved, not that we should exhibit our moral grandeur at a safe distance from the theater of war.”

But Lippmann worried that even if the United States approved assistance to Finland, it might not arrive in time to prevent Finland’s defeat, despite their “gallant and historic fight.” His concerns were justified. Throughout December and January Roosevelt pushed for loans to Finland with little success.¹⁰⁷

American public opinion openly sympathized with Finland against the Soviet Union, and the League of Nations also agreed, officially expelling the Soviet Union from the organization on 14 December.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ Roosevelt, “Appeal to Russia and Finland to Stop Bombing Civilians,” 1 December 1939; Bertram D. Hulen, “Roosevelt Pleas,” *New York Times* 1 December 1939, 1; “The Littlest Victim,” *New York Times* 6 December 1939, 23; Jacobs, *American and the Winter War*, 71.

¹⁰⁷ Dallek argues that Roosevelt’s inability to provide loans to Finland was due to legal and political constraints. Republicans and conservative Democrats opposed loans to Finland for armaments, arguing that such action was more likely to draw the United States into war with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt was also concerned that loans to Finland would undermine his re-election chance if he chose to run in 1940. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 208).

¹⁰⁸ McCormick, “Europe: Finland Fights Alone, but on the Side of the Angels,” *New York Times* 2 December 1939, 11; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Defense of Finland,” *New York Herald Tribune* 5 December 1939, 23; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Defense of the

Lippmann applauded the move by the League of Nations, but doubted whether expulsion would stop the Soviet war against Finland. Many in the United States wondered whether the Roosevelt administration should also take firm diplomatic steps, such as suspending relations with the Soviet Union. While Roosevelt publicly condemned the invasion, he did not break off relations with the Soviet Union for fear of pushing the Soviets closer to the Germans.

Lippmann agreed with the president's position, arguing that "the breaking off of diplomatic relations is the gravest step a nation can take when it is at peace. For it is the usual preliminary to a declaration of war." Krock agreed that such a response "might excite the people and contribute to a war psychosis." By the end of January, even though "nearly everybody in Congress, as in the country, wants Finland to win its struggle for independence," the issue of financial aid to the "gallant and beleaguered little nation," was not resolved.¹⁰⁹

For Thompson the Soviet invasion of Finland was another demonstration of "gangsterism," akin to German aggression against Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia, the Japanese in China, and the Italian invasion of Ethiopia.

Northern Democracies," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 December 1939, 15; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: American Policy and the Finnish Defense," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 December 1939, 17; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Case for a Finnish Loan," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 January 1940, 19; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Finnish Credit and American Involvement," *New York Herald Tribune* 18 January 1940, 21; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 209-212;

¹⁰⁹ Jacobs, *America and the Winter War*, 233; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: American Policy and the Finnish Defense," *New York Herald Tribune* 16 December 1939, 17; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 209; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Defense of the Northern Democracies," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 December 1939, 15; Krock, "In The Nation: The Problem of Making Effective Protest to Russia," *New York Times* 6 December 1939, 23; Krock, "In The Nation: Sources of Allied Assistance to Finland," *New York Times* 17 January 1940, 18; Krock, "In The Nation: The Problem of Aid to Finland Grows Thornier," *New York Times* 30 January 1940, 15.

According to Thompson the “little nations” of Europe, nations like Finland, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the former Czechoslovakia, represented true democratic civilization. She argued the United States should be committed to protecting and ensuring the continued existence of the “small neutrals.” The *Nation* also decried the Soviet invasion of Finland. Kirchwey praised the “amazing vigor” of the Finnish resistance, in the face of what appeared to be a Soviet drive to dominate the Baltic region. While Kirchwey and the *Nation* remained ideologically leftwing, she differentiated between the aggressive foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the ideology of socialism, criticizing the Soviet invasion as a threat to “every ideal that the working-class movement has stood for.” She also praised the president’s responses, and supported the administration’s decision not to break diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union. While Kirchwey’s articles and the *Nation*’s editorials continued to call for a more interventionist policy for the United States in the European war, Villard’s column pursued the possibilities of the president as an agent for a mediated peace. Kirchwey quickly countered Villard’s argument, stating that although she sympathized with the desire for a peaceful settlement, she believed that no mediation was possible “as long as Hitler remained in power.” As war raged in Europe, the *Nation* became a battlefield between Villard’s strict pacifism, and Kirchwey’s belief that Hitler must be defeated and the United States should assist the Allies in this endeavour.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Thompson, “On the Record: The Isolationist’s Dilemma,” *New York Herald Tribune* 6

A *New York Times* article reported that seventy-three percent of respondents favoured Finland's request to float commercial loans in the United States to back the war effort against the Soviet Union. Roosevelt continued his fight for financial aid to Finland throughout January and February 1940. Congress finally approved a \$20 million credit to Finland for non-military supplies, but it was too late for the resilient "little nation." Moscow offered a peace treaty to the Finns on 12 March, and they capitulated. Thompson decried the lack of help to Finland, stating the United States "gave Finns much rhetoric," but "no real aid." Writing from Paris McCormick recorded the French reaction to the Finnish defeat as a "severe jolt." Roosevelt publicly praised the "valor and resistance" of Finland against the Soviet Union, and feared for the security of other small independent states.¹¹¹ With the end of the war in Finland American journalists watched the "phony war," waiting for the next move.

Blitzkrieg in Western Europe

Hitler's invasion of Denmark and Norway on 9 April ended the lull. Denmark capitulated to the Germans after two hours while Norway declared war on Germany and fought for survival. The *New York Times* decried this latest

December 1939, 25; Thompson, "On the Record: Roulette With Destiny," *New York Herald Tribune* 19 January 1940, 19; Thompson, "On the Record: Little Nations," *New York Herald Tribune* 29 January 1940, 13; Kirchwey, "By Fire and Sword," *Nation* 9 December 1939, 639-640; Villard, "Issues and Men," *Nation* 27 January 1940, 101; Kirchwey, "Is Mediation Possible?" *Nation* 27 January 1940, 87-88.

¹¹¹ "Welles Trip Gets Approval in U.S.," *New York Times* 10 March 1940, 27; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 212; Thompson, "On The Record: Chronology of the Finnish War," *New York Herald Tribune* 15 March 1940, 19; McCormick, "Europe: Reason, Caution and Law Rule France, Even in Wartime," *New York Times* 16 March 1940, 8; McCormick, "Europe: French Wonder if War Pace Should Not Be Quickened," *New York Times* 18 March 1940, 16; "Roosevelt Praises Valor of the Finns," *New York Times* 14 March 1940, 1.

“gangster” move by Germany, as the “murder” of another free nation in “cold blood.” The *Times* editorial painted the Germans as brutish criminals, and the attacks on Denmark and Norway as crimes against civilization, “the finest flowering of the European spirit,” human decency and democracy. According to Krock the invasion of Scandinavia “evoked...sentiments of indignation, compassion and alarm” throughout Washington. Both isolationists and interventionists in the government viewed the events as reason to continue the United States’ program of national defense and military readiness. Roosevelt used this recent demonstration of German expansionism to warn the public of the dangers to America in a potential fascist victory in Europe. In a radio address on Pan American Day, the president declared: “Old dreams of universal empire are again rampant. We hear of races that claim the right of mastery...All this is not of mere academic interest. We know that what happens in the Old World directly and powerfully affects the peace and well-being of the New [World].” Roosevelt sought to enlist the news media in his effort to educate the American public of the threat to the United States posed by German victories in Europe. At a meeting of the American Society of Newspapers Editors, the president implored the gathered news media to clearly explain to the public how the international situation might impact the security of the United States. While Roosevelt attempted to link the situation in Europe with the safety and integrity of the United States in the public

mind, the administration made no overt moves towards intervention, and dutifully followed legal procedures, invoking the Neutrality act against Norway.¹¹²

Krock, Kirchwey and the others recognized the German victories as increasing the threat to the United States, but admitted that the geographical distance was yet too great for direct American intervention. Krock suggested that only a more “tangible threat to American security,” perhaps a bold move in the Pacific by Japan, would end American neutrality. Kirchwey agreed that the clash between democracies and dictatorships was not enough to push the United States to intervene on behalf of European civilization, “Americans will not listen unless the threat rolls close – geographically, not only ideologically close.”

Instead, the journalists emphasized the ability of Britain and France to withstand the Nazi onslaught. McCormick praised the “reserves of strength, stamina and wealth” of the British. For McCormick the British ability to withstand the Nazi menace was enshrined in the very character and spirit of the British people. It was a “spiritual force,” a “fire in the eye of the most stolid Britishner,” and “iron in the soul.” The French, on the other hand, were “fighting for Christian civilization.” McCormick’s article linked the racial and national characteristics of the British and the French to the essence of western civilization. The Germans, although they were able to withstand “privation better than other

¹¹² “Scandinavia Invaded,” *New York Times* 9 April 1940, 21; “Tragedy in the North,” *New York Times* 10 April 1940, 23; Krock, “In The Nation: Capital’s Reaction to War News is ‘Better Defense’,” *New York Times* 10 April 1940, 23; Roosevelt, “Radio Address Before the Pan American Governing Board,” 15 April 1940; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 219.

people,” were nonetheless “dogged, somber, weary.” She contrasted the British and French as fighting for “their spiritual heritage,” the Germans were merely “mobilized by the will of Hitler.” In her estimation, the morale of the British and the French was infinitely stronger and deeper. But despite McCormick’s belief in the inherent spiritual armouries of the British and French, their fighting resolve had not yet been tested in late April 1940.¹¹³

On 9 May Hitler’s forces invaded the small nation of Luxembourg, and proceeded through Belgium and the Netherlands on 10 May. The *Times* quickly condemned the Nazi invasions as “murder in cold blood,” and praised Belgium and the Netherlands as “a shining example to the people of this country and to true democracies everywhere.” The *Times* warned that this latest move was a threat “to the whole Atlantic world,” including the United States. The President publicly condemned the attacks on the Low Countries, telling the American people that Hitler’s actions were a “challenge to the continuance of the type of civilization” found in the United States. The *Times* went further, stating that the region under attack represented the western world: “our world, the democratic world, the world in which men live under systems of government deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” And, according to the *Times*, “Hitler means to destroy that world if he can do it.” The defenses of these western European nations were now “the outposts of our own kind of

¹¹³ Krock, “Out Policy Unchanged by the Spread of War,” *New York Times* 14 April 1940, 71; Kirchwey, “Can We Stay Neutral?” *Nation* 20 April 1940, 503-504; McCormick, “The Vital Force: Iron in the Soul,” *New York Times* 28 April 1940, 97.

civilization,” and it was of vital importance to the United States, and indeed to the very “democratic way of life,” that these defenses hold. The *Times* article was an excellent example of the powerful civilization versus barbarism rhetoric that sought to bolster American sentiment, and perhaps aid, for the European democracies.¹¹⁴

Britain was now led by Winston Churchill, who replaced Chamberlain following his resignation on 10 May. For many American journalists the change in British leadership was a welcome indication the British would not waver in their resolve to defeat Hitler. Although Chamberlain had eventually drawn the line in the sand at Poland, to many in the United States he was still irrevocably tainted by the legacy of appeasement. Gunther noted privately, “the feeling the British don’t really mean business [in the war] also tends to increase isolationism [in the United States]. ‘How can we believe in any war run by that bastard Chamberlain?’ is a general American feeling.” Thompson’s critical opinion of Chamberlain, encapsulated in her damning critique of the British Prime Minister as Alice in Wonderland, has been discussed previously. The *Times* believed that the change in government “should be a bugle call to courage” for the British people. Churchill, the *Times* argued, “should put new heart into the British people. He can give them the rallying cry, the thrilling leadership, which they deserve and need.” The relationship between Roosevelt and Chamberlain had

¹¹⁴ “Aggression Run Mad,” *New York Times* 10 May 1940, 21; Felix Belair, “America Angered, Says Roosevelt,” *New York Times* 11 May 1940, 1; “The Fateful Hour,” *New York Times* 11 May 1940, 14;

been typified by mutual distrust and suspicion. Cooperation between the United States and Britain was frequently strained by this relationship. The British, for instance, had been highly suspicious and disapproving of Sumner Welles' mission to Europe, believing the Americans would promote peace proposals without the input and at the expense of the British. By comparison, Roosevelt and Churchill developed a close working relationship, extensively documented in the scholarly literature. The change in British leadership therefore augmented the optimism of the journalists at center stage in this study who ardently believed the Allies would prevail.¹¹⁵

While hopes were buoyed by Churchill's advent to power, Hitler's armies moved into France. In the battle between Hitler's forces and the nations they attacked, American press coverage interpreted the story as a clear fight for the existence of western civilization. If these nations were to be defeated by Nazi Germany, the United States, "Fortress America," would be alone and severely vulnerable. Historian Robert J. Young comments on the "trip-wire vocabulary of civilization and barbarism" evident in the American press around the invasion of France. While Young demonstrates the prevalence of this discourse in the *New York Times* in relation to Germany and France in 1939-1940, many American

¹¹⁵ Gunther diary entry, 26 October 1939. ADD 1, Box 9, Folder "Clips from Diaries, Category Political Discussion," Papers of John Gunther, University of Chicago; "Chamberlain to Churchill," *New York Times* 11 May 1940, 14; Rofe, *Franklin Roosevelt's Foreign Policy and the Welles Mission*, 131; For the relationship between Roosevelt and Chamberlain see Rock, *Chamberlain and Roosevelt*. For works on the relationship between Roosevelt and Churchill see: Lash, *Roosevelt and Churchill*; Alldritt, *The Greatest of Friends*; Kimball, *Forged in war*; Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill*; Meacham, *Franklin and Winston*.

journalists utilized this discourse of civilization versus barbarism much earlier in their reports of Germany's aggressive policies.¹¹⁶ Thompson and Kirchwey, for example, had lamented the annexations of Austria and Czechoslovakia as the triumph of barbarism over democracy, culture and civilization. Likewise, they and their colleagues had decried the violence of *Kristallnacht* as a savage assault against civilization. But with Hitler's *blitzkrieg* moving swiftly westward, defeating every democratic and "civilized" state in its path, the journalists increasingly recognized this assault as an attack on American interests and beliefs.

The *New York Times* decried "the moral insanity" of Hitler's Germany, whose "war on all civilization... would spare neither the monuments of the past, historic cities or the homes and lives of peaceful civilians." For the *Times* the European war was between "madmen" and "the values of European civilization." And in this war the *Times* argued that "the very virtues of the democracies appear as weaknesses" compared to the "totalitarian enemy." Lippmann warned "our security is gravely jeopardized." According to Lippmann the security and fate of the United States was directly tied to the outcome of war in Europe: "For if the Allied power falls, there will fall with it all the outer defenses of the Western Hemisphere, and we shall be left isolated in a world dominated on both sides of our oceans by the most formidable alliance of victorious conquerors that was ever formed in the whole history of man." While Lippmann admitted that it was "a

¹¹⁶ Robert J. Young, "In the Eye of the Beholder: The Cultural Representations of France and Germany by *The New York Times*, 1939-1940," *Historical Reflections* 22:1 (1996) 192; Robert J. Young, "Forgotten Words and Faded Images: American Journalists before the Fall of France, 1940," *Historical Reflections* 24:2 (1998) 220.

grim picture,” he was not wholly pessimistic, praising the “valor and skill” of the Allied forces, and prompting the American government to accelerate national defense preparations.¹¹⁷

Writing from Paris, Thompson also interpreted the outcome of the war as fundamentally important to American interests, especially in light of the upcoming presidential elections. Although she had previously supported Republican candidates against Roosevelt, she admitted “the President’s handling of the foreign affairs of the United States has been masterly.” Thompson warned that since “Mr. Roosevelt has for the democratic world a magic that the world sorely needs,” a change in administration or break in policy could be disastrous for the national security of the United States at this time. As Thompson was writing her article Dutch forces surrendered. Back in America Kirchwey decried the “geographical security,” which permitted Americans “to watch the death grapple in Europe as an audience watches a melodrama, demanding with deep emotion that the villain get his just desserts but comfortably detached.” She called on the United States to furnish immediate aid to the Allies.¹¹⁸

With German military success, attention turned again to Italy. Would Italy remain out of Hitler’s war, or would the Italian dictator join his Axis partner? In April Roosevelt sent a “secret message” through Ambassador Philips in Rome to Mussolini, urging the Italian dictator to remain neutral. The

¹¹⁷ “A World in Flames,” *New York Times* 12 May 1940, 78; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Our Duty to America,” *New York Herald Tribune* 11 May 1940, 19;

¹¹⁸ Thompson, “On The Record: The 1940 Elections,” *New York Herald Tribune* 15 May 1940, 25; Kirchwey, “America is Not Neutral,” *Nation* 18 May 1940, 613-614

Roosevelt administration denied the “secret message” to the American press, but the president continued to pressure Italy, sending three more personal messages to Mussolini in May. According to McCormick who had recently visited Rome, “the shock of the German drive toward the Channel ports had shaken Italy as profoundly as it has shaken the United States.” She believed that Italy, despite the Rome-Berlin Axis and the Anti-Comintern pact, “belongs to the west,” for “Rome never forgets that it was the cradle of Western law and order.” In the battle between barbarism and civilization Mussolini may hold “the balance for Western civilization.” McCormick doubted that Italy would join Hitler’s war.¹¹⁹

Looking at France, the *New York Times* reported on the “intensive war effort” that had “mobilized the resistance of the entire nation.” But despite these efforts and the “valor and skill” of the resisting nations, events in Europe were black. Hitler’s forces drove quickly towards the channel, surrounding British and French forces at the port of Dunkirk. On 28 May Belgium surrendered. From 26 May to 4 June British and French forces were evacuated across the channel from Dunkirk, leaving France alone and vulnerable. Roosevelt’s address of 26 May called on the united power of American industries to continue rearmament, stating “at this time, when the world – and the world includes our own American

¹¹⁹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 220; Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 209; “Peace Plan Told,” *New York Times* 9 May 1940, 1; “President Acted Before,” *New York Times* 9 May 1940, 8; McCormick, “Europe: Italy, Poised on Brink of War, Dreads German Victory,” *New York Times* 25 May 1940, 10.

hemisphere – when the world is threatened by forces of destruction, it is my resolve and yours to build up our armed defenses.”¹²⁰

Returning from Europe McCormick predicted that the United States would soon be facing a “day of judgment,” the decision whether or not to intervene. For Thompson that “day of judgment” had already approached. In an article entitled “An Open Letter to the Congress of the United States,” she called for an immediate end to American neutrality, an effective declaration of war against Germany, and a declaration of alliance with Britain and France. Although Kirchwey had not yet abandoned completely the liberal-pacifist traditions of the *Nation* and did not join Thompson in her call for immediate American intervention, she demanded more American material supplies for the Allies, who were “defending a line that is, in a sense both actual and immediate, our own front line.” The *Nation* outlined several immediate steps that the United States needed to take to aid the Allies, including sending aircraft to the British and French, the extension of credits to the Allies for purchasing needed materials, and aid to war refugees. The *New York Herald Tribune* agreed that it was time for an end of neutrality for the United States. While not advocating a declaration of war, the *Herald Tribune* argued “the sympathies of the nation stood with the Allies from the start,” and strict neutrality impaired the United States from acting to “swiftly and forcibly to safeguard our shores against Nazi aggression.” The *Herald Tribune*’s stand elicited strong reaction from its readers, many of whom supported

¹²⁰ “France’s War Effort,” *New York Times* 25 May 1940, 10; Roosevelt address 26 May 1940, in Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 153-162.

the paper's position. The Roosevelt administration also quickly acknowledged the staunchly Republican *Herald Tribune's* editorial endorsement of the president's foreign policy of aid to the Allies.¹²¹

As German forces moved towards Paris the American press upheld the city as an icon of western civilization. Just like Vienna and Prague, praised in the press as centers of culture and civility, Paris was now threatened by the Juggernaut from the east. The *New York Times* described an assault on Paris as a tragedy, since Paris was more than just a mere city, but "the treasure house of the Western spirit." The *Times* continued its praise of the "outnumbered but undaunted" French forces, and excused the past "mistakes" and "irresolution of French leadership." According to the *Times* "France shows the iron that is in her soul." Despite the bombs raining down on Paris and the retreat of the French government to Bordeaux, McCormick predicted a long battle for France, "a struggle to exhaustion, to the death...the first battle in a long and universal war." But with the evacuation of the French government, the declaration of Paris as an open city, Norway's final capitulation, and Italy's declaration of war against Britain and France, 10 June was not an auspicious day for optimism.¹²²

¹²¹ McCormick, "Europe: America's Responsibility in the Day of Judgment," *New York Times* 27 May 1940, 17; Thompson, "On The Record: An Open Letter to the Congress of the United States," *New York Herald Tribune* 5 June 1940, 25; Kirchwey, "Saving the Front Line," *Nation* 8 June 1940, 695; "What American Can Do," *Nation* 8 June 1940, 696-698; "An End of Neutrality," *New York Herald Tribune* 4 June 1940, 26; "Extracts From Letters of Readers Commending an Editorial," *New York Herald Tribune* 8 June 1940, 14; Letter Alexander Sachs to Helen Reid, 6 June 1940, Papers of Alexander Sachs, Box 39, FDRL, Hyde Park.

¹²² "Paris," *New York Times* 4 June 1940, 22; "France Undaunted," *New York Times* 7 June 1940, 20; McCormick, "Europe: France is Fighting First Battle in a Long War," *New York Times* 10 June 1940, 16.

Italy's declaration of war was particularly troubling to Roosevelt. Since the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact, the Roosevelt administration had hoped that the Rome-Berlin Axis might be split and Mussolini could serve as an "honest broker." Yet when the darkest day dawned on Paris, Mussolini was "the hand that held the dagger [and] struck it into the back of its neighbor." Roosevelt condemned Italy's actions thus in an address on 10 June delivered at the University of Virginia. It was a theme echoed throughout the press, illustrated in a comic published in the *New York Herald Tribune* on 13 June. The comic entitled "Enter the Hero of Ethiopia" depicted the dark and menacing Hitler grappling with the ravaged female figure "European Democracy." The diminutive figure of Mussolini rushes onto the scene, poised to stab a dagger into the back the struggling and nearly overwhelmed "European Democracy."¹²³

On 14 June Paris, in the words of the *Times* the "citadel of civilization, a stronghold of the human spirit," was occupied by the Germans. The *Times* poetically argued that Hitler captured only the "shell" of Paris, for the real Paris, the Paris representing civilization itself, "they cannot traverse or conquer." The *Times'* managing editor, Edwin L. James, who was the former head of the paper's Paris bureau, wrote a stirring article after the fall of Paris. James echoed earlier press sentiments that interpreted the European struggle as a contest between humanity and mechanized modernity. According to James the war was a fight

¹²³ Schmitz, *The United States and Fascist Italy*, 202, 203, 205, 208-209, 211; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 228-229; "Enter the Hero of Ethiopia," *New York Herald Tribune* 13 June 1940.

between France, representing “all those who believe in life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” and Germany representing the “principle of robot life.” France was portrayed always in the feminine, while the German forces were the “Teutonic juggernaut.” With Paris captured and France on the verge of collapse, debate swirled regarding the next steps in military preparedness for the United States.¹²⁴

Thompson argued that compulsory universal military service was the next logical step. Using the example of Switzerland, she argued “an army of all democratic citizens is a democratic army.” Kirchwey also declared her support for conscription in an editorial in the *Nation*. This editorial brought to a head the brewing conflict between Kirchwey and Villard. Villard told Kirchwey he believed she had “prostituted The Nation,” to the point that there was no difference between the once staunchly liberal magazine and “Walter Lippmann, Dorothy Thompson, the New York Times or the New York Herald Tribune.” Villard tendered his resignation from the *Nation*.¹²⁵

Villard was by now in the minority, as American journalists reflected on the tragic causes and consequences of the fall of Paris. McCormick argued that Paris fell not as a result of “German strength,” but from “Allied weakness.”

¹²⁴ “The Citadel,” *New York Times* 12 June 1940, 24; “The Paris That Did Not Fall,” *New York Times* 15 June 1940, 14; Edwin L. James, “France Pays the Price in Battle for Liberty,” *New York Times* 16 June 1940, E3.

¹²⁵ Thompson, “On The Record: Democracy and Universal Service,” *New York Herald Tribune* 12 June 1940, 21; Kirchwey, “A Democratic Program of Defense,” *Nation* 15 June 1940, 724; Letter from Villard to Kirchwey, 13 June 1940, Box 8 Folder 136, Papers of Freda Kirchwey, Radcliffe College, Cambridge.

Allied military plans and material preparations for the German invasion were “too little and too late.” Thompson interpreted the Allied defeats as indicative of the “internal weakness of democratic societies,” in which individuals “have become complacent, provincial and comfort-loving.” With the fall of Paris, many American journalists feared the worst, that France was lost. The *Times* lamented “a French surrender seems to be inevitable.” And so the French, “the most civilized people in the world...now stand at the mercy of a barbarian.” On 22 June 1940 those fears were realized with France’s surrender.¹²⁶

From September 1938 to June 1940, from Hitler’s diplomatic triumph at Munich, to the Fall of France, the journalists discussed here increasingly interpreted events in Europe as a fundamental conflict between civilization and barbarism. “Civilization,” as represented by the European nations threatened and conquered by Hitler, and embodied at its finest in the United States of America, encapsulated the predominant positive traits of manliness: courage, justice,

¹²⁶ McCormick, “Europe: Swift Victories by Germany Leave Washington Stunned,” *New York Times* 15 June 1940, 14; Thompson, “On The Record: Thoughts After the Fall of Paris,” *New York Herald Tribune* 17 June 1940, 17; “Tragedy in France,” *New York Times* 18 June 1940, 22. This idea of the inevitability of the French collapse and surrender became a central tenet of interpretations of June 1940, both immediately after the event, and by a series of historians belonging to the “Malaise” school of interpretation. American journalists participated in the beginning of this interpretation as well as other contemporaries including the British commentators in the book *Guilty Men* (1940), eye-witness and historian Marc Bloch in *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence, Written in 1940*, works by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre who was captured by the Germans in 1940, and American journalist William Shirer’s *The Collapse of the Third Republic* published in 1969. Bloch pointed to not just the short-comings of the French High Command, but to the deeper problems within French society itself that caused the rapid French collapse and defeat. Bloch’s explanations for the French defeat became central to the “decadence” school. American journalistic interpretations of the fall of France are discussed in further details in the next chapter.

honesty, restraint, and reason.¹²⁷ “Civilization” was also understood in racial terms. Britain and the United States represented the most “civilized” nations and shared Anglo-Saxon racial heritage. The western and northern European states were also white and civilized, and were easier for Americans to identify and sympathize with in their plight against Nazi Germany. “Civilization” clearly meant democratic, which included individual rights and freedoms, and institutions to protect and promote these cherished ideals. “Civilization” also meant art and culture, the products of human imagination, versus the mechanized modernity of the German and Soviet war machines. By evoking this discourse American journalists down-played the differences between the Old World and the New World. Instead, they argued the war in Europe was a direct threat to the United States since it threatened the very ideals, beliefs, institutions, and way of life so cherished in America. With the Fall of France America’s most influential journalists insisted the United States must prevent the remaining bastion of European civilization, Britain, from being crushed by the barbaric Juggernaut of Nazi Germany.

¹²⁷ Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 18.

Chapter 5 – The Fall of France to Pearl Harbor June 1940 to December 1941

On 22 June 1940 France signed an armistice with Germany. In America several journalists reacted quickly to France's sudden defeat, providing various closely related interpretations of the French collapse. In the hopeful days prior to the French defeat many American journalists had reversed their earlier characterizations of the French as hesitant, pessimistic, and pacifistic. Instead, they praised the renewed vigor, courage, and moral fibre of the French as they braced for the Nazi onslaught, and defended their homeland. But the shock of the French defeat appeared to confirm the earlier interpretations of France's decadence. For those American journalists who were already calling for the United States to provide at least immediate material aid to the Allies, if not for actual American intervention in the European war, the Fall of France gave a renewed immediacy to their calls for action. The series of events that followed: the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact and the 1940 presidential election, the great debate over Lend-Lease to Britain, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the Atlantic Conference, and the undeclared naval war in the Atlantic, confirmed to this group of American journalists that Nazi Germany threatened not only the national security of the United States, but the very survival of western civilization.

These journalists' interpretations of these events stressed the world-wide menace of Nazi Germany, the solidarity of Anglo-American relations, and the

need for the United States to intervene and assume its rightful place as the world's great power and defender of western civilization, democracy, and liberty. By June 1940 one over-riding interpretative framework and explanation for the European war had coalesced: civilization versus barbarism. Some of the journalists, like Gunther and Thompson, reached this conclusion earlier than the others, but by June 1940 this interpretation was shared by all in this group. This explanation combined American exceptionalism, race, and gender. In their interpretations they stressed the crucial role of the United States as the pinnacle of western civilization. They argued that the United States had a mission not just to support its Anglo-Saxon brethren, Great Britain, but to spread throughout the world American values and institutions in what must become "the American Century." Yet the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union demonstrated the limitations of this interpretative framework, as journalists were unable to find bonds of common culture with the Soviet Union and could not explain the Nazi-Soviet conflict in terms of civilization versus barbarism.

The Fall of France

In an article published on the day of the armistice, Kirchwey feared the "unready European democracies" would succumb to the "terrifying union of organization and armed might." Although Kirchwey stopped short of calling for an immediate declaration of war against Germany, she argued the French surrender 'meant two significant things for the United States. The first was the need for immediate American assistance to Britain, which now represented "an

American fortress standing off the coast of Nazi Europe, a bastion between our shores and the most powerful aggressor the world has known.” Secondly, Kirchwey proclaimed “Franklin D. Roosevelt must be reelected,” for Roosevelt “stands alone as a symbol of the will to make democracy live.”¹ Her support for a possible third term for Roosevelt marked the culmination of a gradual change in the editorial position of the *Nation*. In July 1937, when rumours of a possible third term for Roosevelt began, the *Nation* produced a negative editorial entitled “Third Term: Bad Medicine.” The editorial called the two-term tradition “a living safeguard of our values,” and stated: “despite the high regard we have for the character, abilities and programs of Mr. Roosevelt” the journal could not support a third term. Yet by June 1939, when talk concerning a third term had reached the point of “hysteria,” the *Nation*’s editorial stance shifted. While the journal contended, “we believe that the traditional two-term limitation is a good one,” it argued “it is not a cardinal principle of Democratic faith,” and suggested that certain circumstances, including a war in Europe by 1940, might make a third term for Roosevelt necessary. Yet Villard clearly and absolutely opposed the concept of a third-term president, regardless of circumstances. For Villard a third term presidency represented “the beginning of dictatorship” and played into the hands of “fascist elements.”²

¹ Freda Kirchwey, “What Next?” *Nation* 22 June 1940, 743-744.

² “Third Term: Bad Medicine,” *Nation* 3 July 1937, 4-5; “Third-Term Hysterics,” *Nation* 17 June 1939, 687-688; Oswald Garrison Villard, “No Third Term for Roosevelt,” *Nation*, 11 June 1939, 702. Roosevelt did not officially announce his intent to run for a third term until 17 July 1940.

The growing dispute between Kirchwey and Villard over the editorial stance of the *Nation* came to a head with Kirchwey's support for universal military service in June 1940, precipitating Villard's resignation from the *Nation* after forty-six years. In his final contribution, Villard explained that his resignation was prompted by the editors' abandonment of the *Nation's* "steadfast opposition to all preparations for war, to universal military service, to a great navy, and to *all* war." Kirchwey countered that Villard, and other isolationists and pacifists, occupied a "dream world," far from the reality of the French defeat, and the dangers of Hitler's conquests. According to Kirchwey, democracy itself and all the ideals the *Nation* held dear, were threatened by Nazi Germany.³ For Kirchwey, as well as the other journalists in this study, the consequences of the Fall of France confirmed their belief that the United States must intervene to prevent European civilization from being overrun by Nazi Germany and the other European dictatorships. While some readers applauded the "courage" of the *Nation's* stance against Germany, others questioned the editorial direction of the magazine, especially its direction under a woman. Critics described Kirchwey's position as "shrill and hysterical," and "fearful" or "emotionally inconsistent." While these terms suggested gendered criticisms, others were more blatant in their attack: "Under the direction of women, the *Nation* is becoming unreadable... It is such emotional lack of consistency that makes the *Nation* a feeble imitation of

³ "Villard Quits the *Nation*," *New York Times* 28 June 1940, 11; Villard, "Issues and Men: Valedictory," *Nation* 29 June 1940, 782; Kirchwey, "Escape and Appeasement," *Nation* 29 June 1940, 773-774.

what it once was.”⁴ If for Kirchwey the Fall of France meant changes to the *Nation* these paled before the broader issues of national security, American assistance to Britain, and the requirements for national leadership leading into the 1940 election.

McCormick believed that the United States could materially meet the challenge of national rearmament and support for Britain. The United States, she argued, “has a genius for organization, a capacity for mass production, a personal initiative, a level of life and resistance, a reservoir of man power, far greater than the German.” While McCormick, like many other American journalists, praised the French spirit during the Nazi onslaught, she quickly returned to her previous characterizations in the wake of the French collapse. She blamed the “state of chronic internal crisis” that “frightened the [French] people more than the enemy at the gates.” France fell, she argued, because of years of internal political disintegration and stagnation, a “lack of vitality” likened to a “dusty museum” and “dry rot.” She blamed the “lack of moral courage” of the French leadership, and the defensive attitude of the French military establishment enshrined in the Maginot Line. McCormick’s interpretation of the causes of the French defeat

⁴Letter from subscriber to Kirchwey, 8 July 1940; Letter from reader, Stella Barnett, to editors of the *Nation*, 8 July 1940; Letter from subscriber to Kirchwey, 16 August 1940; Letter from subscriber to editors of the *Nation*, 28 June 1940; Letter from subscriber to editors of the *Nation*, 22 June 1940. The business manager of the *Nation* responded to the last letter on the 8 July 1940: “While we are not a suffragette magazine, we do not believe in the double standard, and would point out that the “direction of women” is certainly not the factor which determines our editorial policy. It is decided rather by what we sincerely believe to be for the best interests of the American people.” All letters from Carton 25, Folder 4963 “Villard, Oswald Garrison.” Papers of the *Nation*, Houghton College, Cambridge, MA. The *Nation* also published many of these letters to the editors from readers commenting on Villard’s resignation. See “Letters to the Editors,” *Nation* 20 July 1940, 58-60.

condemned French political institutions, and the hesitant, pacific, and defeatist French people themselves. Her views were widely echoed throughout the United States.⁵ The notion of a France defeated from within found a powerful resonance in the postwar historiography, including American journalist William Shirer's influential 1969 book *The Collapse of the Third Republic: An Inquiry into the Fall of France in 1940*.⁶

In the *Nation* Kirchwey described reactions to the surrender of France as “despair and a sense of shame.” The “humiliation” of the French defeat made many question the very virtues and strength of democracy itself: “If French democracy was so deeply infected, could democracy anywhere be healthy? Self-distrust and weakness seemed to spread from the surrendered nation, which had served the world as a symbol of militant democracy.” Thompson proclaimed the French defeat a disaster greater than any “in the entire history of great nations and communities of men.” The French defeat so shocked Americans, she argued, because France was “a society too much like our own...the very flower of middle-class civilization.” Like many she did not believe the French defeat was caused merely by a combination of French military inadequacy or German military superiority. “What collapsed in France,” Thompson argued, “was a social order. It was a world.” According to Thompson France was not defeated,

⁵ McCormick, “Europe: Hitler at Compiègne Opens Third Act of War Drama,” *New York Times* 22 June 1940, 14; McCormick, “Europe: The Lesson for Our Parties in the Fall of France,” 24 June 1940, 14.

⁶ For a discussion of the historiography of France's defeat see Julian Jackson, *The Fall of France: The Nazi Invasion of 1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 188-197.

but rather the rotted timber of long-decaying France fell: “That world proved to be a façade – a beautiful, intact façade upon a structure rotting from foundation to roof. It was not exploded by bombs. It collapsed with a push. It was a whited sepulcher.” In September 1940 Thompson wrote three articles on the defeat of France, in which she reiterated the notion of decadence. She assailed the idea of material comfort and commercialism in France, calling the Maginot line “an underground luxury hotel.” French society was dominated by pacifism, a “spirit of appeasement,” and escapism. While acknowledging the deep divisions in French society, between Labour and Capital, the Left and the Right, “a schism...like a gaping crack springing the walls apart,” Thompson placed the majority of the blame squarely on the shoulders of the middle-class. She decried “the decay of [the French] middle-class,” a middle-class too accustomed to material comfort and no longer willing to fight for change, progress and democratic values. This “spiritual inertia,” argued Thompson, caused the French collapse and defeat, and ultimately could infect America, unless Americans were ready to defend actively their values and civilization.⁷

In the days leading up to the French collapse Roosevelt sought to bolster British and French hopes, but was unable to venture beyond promises of

⁷ Kirchwey, “Help Britain Win!” *Nation* 10 August 1940, 106; Thompson, “On the Record: The Example of France,” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 September 1940, 12; Thompson, “On the Record: The Example of France II,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 September 1940, 23; Thompson, “The Example of France III,” *New York Herald Tribune* 20 September 1940, 21. Hurstfield describes Thompson’s writings as neatly encapsulating the most popular elements of American interpretations of the French defeat. (Hurstfield, *America and the French Nation*, 43-45).

American aid. Two-thirds of the American public supported assistance to Britain, but remained opposed to direct American involvement in the European war.⁸

Americans viewed the British Empire and especially the British fleet, as the outposts and lines of defense for the Western Hemisphere, and therefore for the United States. The loss of either the French or British fleets to the Germans, or the defeat of the British, would threaten the national security of the United States.⁹ In a message to the president on 18 June, Churchill pointed out that the ability of the British fleet to defend against a German invasion was in jeopardy, and urged the United States to augment the British fleet with old American warships. King George also sent a personal appeal to the president. In an effort to boost government and public support for increased aid to the Allies, Roosevelt brought two of the nation's most pro-Allied Republicans, Henry Stimson and Frank Knox, into his cabinet on 19 June as Secretary of War and Secretary of Navy. By replacing the two most isolationist members of his cabinet, Harry Woodring and Charles Edison, Roosevelt hoped to create bipartisan consensus for aid to Britain.¹⁰ In September 1939 Knox had publicly called for the creation of a bipartisan committee to advise the president on foreign policy. Roosevelt met with Knox several times during the fall of 1939 to discuss this idea. Roosevelt asked Knox to join his cabinet as Secretary of the Navy as early as December

⁸ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 231-232.

⁹ Letters to the editors of the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Urge Support of British Fleet," 26 June 1940, 24; Letters to the editors of the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Britain's Fleet Our First Defense," *New York Herald Tribune* 6 July 1940, 10.

¹⁰ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 232, 243; Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 169-170.

1939, although the official announcement was not made until June 1940.¹¹

Stimson and Knox supported compulsory military training, the raising of a large American army, the repeal of the Neutrality law, and full aid to Britain. Krock argued the appointments of Knox and Stimson appeared to indicate greater American aid to Britain would be forthcoming as well as perhaps signaling that preparations for eventual American intervention in the European war were being made.¹²

As this group of American journalists weighed in on the consequences of the French defeat for American policy what to do with the French fleet became a critical issue. On 3 July the British issued an ultimatum to the French fleet stationed at Oran in North Africa. If the French refused to take steps to prevent the fleet being used against the British, the British warned their navy would use “whatever force may be necessary to prevent [French] ships from falling into German or Italian hands.” The French fleet refused to comply, and the British navy subsequently disabled the French fleet at Oran. Roosevelt supported the British action. The *New York Times* also supported the British actions at Oran. An editorial in the *Times* argued the British had given the French ample opportunity to escape that fate, and “fair-minded opinion will agree that the British were right in what they did.” For Britain, the British navy was “Britain’s

¹¹ Editorial *Chicago Daily News* 12 September 1939, 1; Schneider, *Should America Go to War?*, 14; Letter Knox to Roosevelt, 15 December 1939, Box 4 Folder “General Correspondence 1935-1939,” Papers of Frank Knox, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Steele, *Propaganda in an Open Society*, 105.

¹² Krock, “Roosevelt Move Fails to Satisfy His Critics,” *New York Times* 23 June 1940, E3.

floating shield,” which was why, the *Times* argued, the British so desperately needed the old American destroyers. McCormick interpreted the British destruction of the French fleet as “unmistakable evidence that she means to fight to the finish.” Britain was fighting alone, and fighting a war on two fronts, against Germany and Italy.¹³

Britain “Alone”

Immediately following the Fall of France, Britain, heroic and solitary, assumed the mantle of fighting against Germany and Italy, as the bulwark of western civilization and American security. Historians generally agree that the Fall of France marked a turning point in Anglo-American relations.¹⁴ With France defeated and Britain standing alone against the Axis, both the Roosevelt administration and the American public supported significantly closer relations

¹³ “British Demands on French,” *New York Times* 5 July 1940, 4; Zahniser, “Rethinking the Significance of Disaster,” 266-267; “The French Navy,” *New York Times* 5 July 1940, 12; McCormick, “Europe: Battle of Oran is Challenge of War to Bitter End,” *New York Times* 6 July 1940, 14.

¹⁴ The historiography about the Fall of France is large. For works on France in the 1930s through the Fall of France see: Eugen Weber, *The Hollow Years: France in the 1930s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994); Robert Young, *France and the Origins of the Second World War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996); Jackson, *The Fall of France*; Ernest R. May, *Strange Victory: Hitler’s Conquest of France* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000). For works on Franco-American relations in this period see: Hurstfield, *America and the French Nation*; Zahniser, *Then Came Disaster*; Miller and Molesky. *Our Oldest Enemy*. For works on the significance of the Fall of France and American reactions see: Reynolds, “1940: Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century?” *International Affairs* (April 1990) 325-350; Zahniser, “Rethinking the Significance of Disaster”; Young, “In the Eye of the Beholder”; Young, “Forgotten Words and Faded Images.” For the Fall of France as a turning point in Anglo-American relations see: Reynolds, “FDR’s Foreign Policy and the British Royal Visit to the U.S.A.,” 471-472; Zahniser, “Rethinking the Significance of Disaster,” 267; Hurstfield, *America and the French Nation*, 31; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 108; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 244; Reynolds, “1940: Fulcrum of the Twentieth Century,” 332-334; Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 11-53.

with Britain.¹⁵ Through July and August 1940 the journalists focused on in this study reported on the debate raging in the United States over the extent of material and military support to Britain, and watched anxiously to see if the British could withstand the Axis assault. Isolationists led by influential public personalities such as Colonel Lindbergh and General Hugh Johnson, argued that American aid to Britain was likely to pull the United States into the conflict. The America First Committee, formed in Chicago, the heart of the isolationist mid-West, in September 1940, vocally opposed any American aid to Britain. On the other side, the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies, created by Kansas newspaper editor William Allen White in May 1940, supported increased American aid to Britain.¹⁶

Lindbergh quickly emerged as the most vocal public figure for the America First Committee, appearing at rallies, making speeches and radio broadcasts, to protest any American involvement in the European war. Thompson had previously sparred publicly with Lindbergh at the outbreak of war in September 1939. By the summer of 1940 other influential journalists devoted to increased American intervention joined the attack. In his column Lippmann

¹⁵ For works on Anglo-American relations from the Fall of France to the conclusion of Lend-Lease see: Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 95-191; Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail*, 122-148; Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 184-242; Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act*; Moss, *Nineteen Weeks: America, Britain and the Fateful Summer of 1940*.

¹⁶ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 231; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 92-95; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 363-371, 379-382. For the relationship between the Committee to Defend American by Aiding the Allies and Roosevelt see Lisa Namikas, "The Committee to Defend America and the Debate between Internationalists and Interventionists, 1939-1941," *Historian* 61 (1999) 843-863. The America First Committee grew out of a student organization at Yale University formed by R. Douglas Stuart, law student and vice-president of the Quaker Oats Company.

assailed Lindbergh's suggestion that the United States could comfortably live in the same world as "a Nazi-dominated Europe."¹⁷ He also attacked isolationists in the Senate who failed to foresee the disastrous implications a possible British defeat would have for the national security of the United States. The loss of British sea power, he argued, would mean "the withdrawal of the protection it has provided both in the Atlantic and the Pacific." Also, he concluded from the example of the French defeat, "a defeated Britain would fall into the hands of men prepared...to act as the vassals and allies of the Axis and its Japanese partner." Such a situation might also lead to a government of Nazi-sympathizers in neighbouring Canada. Lippmann repeated his support for destroyers for Britain, stating "we have not only insured ourselves somewhat against the defeat of Britain in Europe...we have also re-insured ourselves in case, God forbid, the British in Europe are defeated." Through his friend and current British ambassador to the United States, Lord Lothian, Lippmann became an early advocate of the destroyers-for-bases deal, and used his column to educate the American public of the dire necessity of maintaining British naval power to defend the Western Hemisphere. Lord Lothian quickly enlisted the influential Century Group to lobby for the deal. Lippmann was not a member himself, but

¹⁷ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Problem of the Destroyers," *New York Herald Tribune* 6 August 1940, 15.

his newspaper columns vocalized the arguments espoused by the Century Group.¹⁸

Thompson also painted a dire picture of a future British defeat, and the threat to the United States posed by a collaborationist British government. She argued that the United States had only two possible choices: “to accept Nazi domination and know what it will mean to American independence and American institutions, or to show such clarity of vision and such generosity that it includes everything for Britain except active military support.” For Thompson it was not even a choice, but a necessity. She wrote personally to the president, “We must before Congress adjourns repeal the Neutrality Act in order to have our hands free. We must be prepared to send our ships into the war zone with food...Tell them [the Am. People] what the British fleet means to America.” Thompson also

¹⁸ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: America and the Battle of Britain,” *New York Herald Tribune* 6 July 1940, 13; Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 384-385. The Century Group was a bipartisan, pro-British group of influential men who met in New York City. The group consisted of several prominent members of the American media, including *Time* publisher Henry Luce, *Louisville Courier* editor Herbert Agar, and *New York Herald Tribune* editorial writers Walter Millis and Godfrey Parsons. The Century Group also included influential figures such as Allen F. Dulles, Dean Acheson, Robert E. Sherwood and Ward Cheney. The Century Group met personally with Roosevelt on 1 August concerning the transfer of American destroyers to the British, and during the debate over Lend-Lease Roosevelt asked the Century Group to lobby in support of the legislation. (Seib, *Broadcasts From the Blitz*, 159; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 244, 248, 258; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 125; Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 214-215). For a detailed account of the Century Group and other interventionist pressure groups in the United States including the White Committee, the Fight for Freedom, and the Committee to Defend American by Aiding the Allies see: Mark Lincoln Chadwin, *The Warhawks: American Interventionists Before Pearl Harbor* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1968).

gave speeches at public Aid-to-Britain rallies in America, and in Montreal in July 1940.¹⁹

The editors of the *New York Herald Tribune* weighed in on the debate over supplying destroyers to Britain. The *Herald Tribune* called Britain the “last bulwark of the free and democratic world,” and warned Hitler intended “mastery, not of a continent or a hemisphere, but of the world.” Thus the *Herald Tribune* argued the defense of Britain was of “such overwhelming practical importance to the security and welfare of the United States,” that “no aid to that end which this country can offer should be withheld.” The *Herald Tribune* called on Congress to immediately furnish Britain with the destroyers so urgently required. While the publishers of the *Herald Tribune* systematically opposed Roosevelt’s domestic policies, the editorial position of the paper increasingly supported the president’s foreign policies, especially aid to Britain, viewed by the *Herald Tribune* as the defender of western civilization in the European conflict. The relationship between the United States and Britain, argued the *Herald Tribune*, was the “most immediate and important problem” facing the United States, and required “resolute and vigorous action” by the Roosevelt administration.²⁰

In the summer and early autumn of 1940, as the Battle for Britain raged, many American journalists in London and in America anxiously reported on

¹⁹ Thompson, “On the Record: Clarity at Last,” *New York Herald Tribune* 8 July 1940, 13; Handwritten letter from Thompson to FDR, 8 July 1940, PPF, Folder 6650 “Thompson, Dorothy,” FDRL, Hyde Park; Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 318.

²⁰ “Destroyers for Britain,” *New York Herald Tribune* 5 August 1940, 14; “America and Britain,” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 August 1940, 12.

British resistance. The Battle for Britain soon took on epic proportions in the America media, in newspapers, radio broadcasts, news magazines, news reels, and feature films.²¹ Historian Angus Calder argues the Battle for Britain quickly assumed the character of a heroic myth in large part due to the efforts of American journalists, and in cooperation with the newly formed British Ministry of Information. According to Calder the “propaganda construct” of the mythologized Battle for Britain was aimed at firming up American opinion, and also at fortifying British public opinion, since the propaganda was “all the more strongly accepted by Britons because American voices proclaimed it.” Of these American voices both Calder and Philip Selb agree that Edward R. Murrow, the London-based European director of the Columbian Broadcasting Service, was the single most important figure in disseminating the mythologized news of the Battle for Britain, and later news of the Blitz, to the American public. While Murrow may have been the preeminent American journalist involved in mythologizing the Battle of Britain, many others participated in presenting this heroic myth to the American public. In England Murrow was joined by well-known and respected American journalists including Negley Farson, a foreign correspondent for the

²¹ Calder’s *The Myth of the Blitz*, broadly discusses treatment of the Battle for Britain in American media, including newsmagazines, newspapers, radio, newsreels and film. Seib’s *Broadcasts from the Blitz*, examines specifically Edward R. Murrow’s coverage of the Battle for Britain through radio broadcasts. Todd Bennett’s article, “The Celluloid War: State and Studio in Anglo-American Propaganda Film-Making, 1939-1941,” *International History Review* 24:1 (2002) 64-102, examines coverage of the Battle for Britain through both newsreels and feature films. Historians agree that the media coverage of the Battle of Britain the Blitz, which emphasized “Churchill’s magnificent leadership, and the courageous performance of the RAF fighter pilots,” helped Americans to identify with the British and support aid to Britain (Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 375; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 95-99).

Chicago Daily News, special correspondent for the *New York Times* Walter Duranty, foreign correspondent Vincent Sheean, and John Gunther.²²

Gunther was a noted Anglophile and well acquainted with the British from his days in London as a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. Writing from London during the Battle of Britain and the Blitz, Gunther retained his admiration for the British character. Even at the height of the Blitz, he explained, the British remained “good-humored, staunch, tolerant, and united.” According to Gunther, the British demonstrated a spirit of resiliency during the Blitz which should serve as a lesson for Americans. Unlike the French, the British would not capitulate, despite the hardships and trauma inflicted on the average British civilian. “The British,” he argued, “endure hardships almost inconceivable to us.” Yet despite these privations Gunther asserted the British had not “lost their sense of balance, their instinctive fairness of mind, their humor, above all their kindness.” Gunther claimed that the British retained their deeply human and civilized character despite the horrors of the Nazi attack.²³

McCormick described England as “standing alone at the barricades,” the last great fortress in Europe defending against the Nazis. In her articles she reinforced the widely held American view of a pastoral England, described by Calder as “a Disneyland conception of England as a country of villages, green

²² According to Calder, Murrow was directly involved with the British Foreign Office and Ministry of Information in the creation of a structure to “feed information into American channels, cultivating...the makers of American opinion and particularly the growing number of American broadcasters in the United Kingdom.” (*Myth of the Blitz*, 211-212).

²³ Gunther, “Inside London,” in Allen Churchill (ed.) *Eyewitness Hitler: The Nazi Fuhrer and his Times as seen by Contemporaries, 1930-1945* (New York: Walker and Company, 1979) 209.

fields and Wodehouseian eccentrics.” McCormick linked this “Deep English landscape” with the “mental quality” of its inhabitants. “Peace has brooded over the English countryside for so many centuries that it has become an atmosphere,” she argued. According to McCormick this atmosphere of peace and the “island ideology,” produced the “serenity characteristic of the English people,” whose nerves were inherently “steadier” than the French and Germans, “people tight-packed between national frontiers on a continent.” Commenting on the bombing of London she praised the “will and spirit of the ordinary people.” The Londoners “thumbing their noses at the German bombers,” proved “tougher and steadier than any army or defense system the Nazi forces have yet encountered.”²⁴ Lippmann also praised the “awe-inspiring courage of the British people.” According to Lippmann, the British people were “a great people,” led by a remarkable statesman Churchill. The French on the other hand, had been led poorly, by men who “lost their heads as they lost their courage.” The British people retained their conviction, “the determination of civilized men to survive an onslaught of barbarism which is the most terrible and the most formidable in many centuries.” Lippmann’s articles praising the British character and lobbying for American aid to Britain in the fall of 1940 reveal a drastically different form of journalism than that he had been known for. He was renowned for his reasoned and detached analysis and interpretation. In two articles published in

²⁴ McCormick, “Europe: Ship Sale to Britain is Made Urgent Issue by Nazi Drive,” *New York Times* 17 August 1940, 14; Calder, *Myth of the Blitz*, 209-210; McCormick, “Europe: Unknown Quantities Will Decide Battle for England,” *New York Times* 13 July 1940, 12; McCormick, “Europe: London Again Demonstrates Power of People’s Spirit,” 14 September 1940, 11.

November 1940, however, he described Britain as “an everlasting nation of brave and believing men,” and a “shield” and “barrier” protecting the United States from the Axis. According to Lippmann it was “in the vital interest of America” that Britain resists the Nazi onslaught, and the United States must continue to aid Britain.²⁵ Lippmann’s lofty rhetoric emphasized his belief that Britain represented the western civilization that Hitler’s barbaric forces ultimately sought to destroy.

While Thompson described the collapse of France as “an unparalleled catastrophe,” she praised the British resistance as a “miracle.” For Thompson the “miracle” of British resistance versus the French defeat, was based primarily on the character of the British people. The core of the British character was the “virtue of courage,” combined with a deep sense of pride, honour, “gentlemanliness” and knightly heroism. While Thompson, like many other American journalists, criticized the highly stratified British class system, specifically the ruling class, described by Thompson as “a decadent aristocracy fatly nourished by a plutocracy,” she flatly denied Churchill represented this class. Her articles also contributed to the mythologizing of the British evacuation at Dunkirk. Calder argues that along with the “myth of the Blitz,” American journalists similarly presented the British evacuation at Dunkirk as a heroic tale,

²⁵ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Reasoned Courage of the British,” *New York Herald Tribune* 17 September 1940, 22; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Great Precedent,” *New York Herald Tribune* 22 August 1940, 19; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Chamberlain and the Philosophy of Appeasement,” *New York Herald Tribune* 12 November 1940, 19; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Meaning to America of a British Defeat,” *New York Herald Tribune* 19 November 1940, 23.

which enhanced American opinion of the British. Thompson described Dunkirk as a “miracle,” which had the “magical quality of a great Biblical story, of a King Arthur Legend.” At Dunkirk, she argued, the “little men of England,” not “men in top-hats and striped trousers,” saved England, and at Dunkirk the war became “a people’s war.”²⁶ Thompson’s articles emphasized the democratizing effects of the Battle of Britain, challenging the widespread American opinion that Britain was not truly democratic, but deferential and hierarchical. Through her emphasis on the heroic “everyman’s” contribution to the war effort, Thompson painted Britain as an attractive democratic ally. For Thompson and her colleagues the common cause and civilization shared between the United States and Britain overcame earlier interpretations and fears of old world politics and entanglements. Britain represented the European frontier of western civilization, and these journalists argued that the United States had a duty to protect the last outpost of Anglo-Saxon civilization in Europe.

Buoyed by growing public support, a successful media campaign, vocal lobby groups, and the private assurance from Republican candidate Wendell Wilkie that he would not criticize it, Roosevelt concluded the destroyers for bases deal with Britain on 2 September. The American public reacted favourably to the agreement, with its territorial gains for the United States.²⁷ An editorial in the

²⁶ Thompson, “On the Record: The Example of England I,” *New York Herald Tribune* 23 September 1940, 15; Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz*, 1; Thompson, “On the Record: The Example of England III,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 September 1940, 23.

²⁷ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 246-247; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 125. A Gallup conducted in August 1940 returned results of over

New York Times praised the deal as indicative of the “community of interest” between the United States and Britain in defense of the North Atlantic, and a common “way of life” against Nazi “aggression.” The *New York Herald Tribune* called the deal “wholly admirable and long overdue.” Even the isolationist *Chicago Tribune*, which generally criticized the transaction, called the acquisition of the bases “a triumph” for the United States. While many assailed the methods used by the president in securing the deal, especially the lack of open congressional debate, most, like Krock, praised the agreement as favourable for the United States, and for establishing a defense policy parallel and in coordination with Britain.

Like Lippmann, Krock was often praised for his objective, detached journalism. But like Lippmann, Krock’s articles describing the British resistance during the Blitz also reveal a different side of the curmudgeonly Washington bureau chief. In the article “An Abridged Dictionary of Valor” Krock described the “spirit” of the British “race.” According to Krock the British were “stubbornly” defending the very “tower of democracy” against the Nazis. Like Thompson, he emphasized the democratizing effects of the war, which united “all classes in Britain.” The “rigid caste and preferment system” that previously characterized British democracy and “seemed absurd and objectionable to

60% in favour of transfer of over-age American destroyers to Britain. (“Ship Deal Backed in Gallup Survey,” *New York Times* 6 September 1940, 12.) For the noninterventionist opposition to the destroyer-for-bases deal see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 370-375.

American critics,” were suspended, argued Krock, as the nation united under Churchill’s leadership.²⁸

The Axis and the 1940 Election

On 21 September McCormick reported on a meeting between Mussolini and Ribbentrop in Rome. McCormick warned of the ominous portents of such a meeting, for although Mussolini and Hitler “may quarrel inside the ring,” the partnership between the dictators was still strong as “they fight against everybody outside the ring.” McCormick’s hunch soon proved correct. On 27 September the Tripartite Pact was signed by Germany, Italy and Japan in Berlin, with the stated intention to cooperate together to “establish and maintain a new order of things.” The Tripartite Pact appeared as a military alliance between the three powers, though historians doubt whether any of the three powers trusted one another enough to create a true military alliance. Justus Doenecke argues the Tripartite Pact was signed by Japan to deter the United States from resisting its expansion in East Asia. Mark A. Stoler agrees that the Tripartite Pact was a “diplomatic bluff” by both Germany and Japan, essentially threatening the United States with a possible two-front war to deter Roosevelt from opposing their intentions. Dallek suggests that in light of the recently concluded destroyers for

²⁸ “Defense of the Atlantic,” *New York Times* 4 September 1940, 21; “Comment By Press on British Accord,” *New York Times* 4 September 1940, 13; Krock, “In the Nation: The Quid Pro Quo That Was Always Indicated,” *New York Times* 4 September 1940, 21; Krock, “In the Nation: An Abridged Dictionary of Valor,” *New York Times* 25 December 1940, 18.

bases deal, the Tripartite Pact was meant to dissuade further American aid to Britain.²⁹

McCormick bluntly stated the Tripartite Pact was “obviously a bloc against us,” the intention to “scare us from interfering with [Japanese] designs in the Pacific and...to keep us from moving in the Atlantic.” The Tripartite Pact was clearly “designed to prevent the United States from entering the war by threatening us with battle on two fronts.” Krock described the Tripartite Pact as “a matter of most vital concern to the United States.” According to Krock the danger from Japan was “more visible to the average American citizen than was furnished by the collapse of France and the German drive to crush Great Britain.” The Tripartite Pact, he argued, made foreign policy concerns even more relevant in the upcoming presidential campaign. In his analysis of the agreement Lippmann also concluded that the pact was meant to threaten the United States: “The purpose of the pact is to threaten us with war in the two oceans at once.” He believed the Tripartite Pact was a warning to the United States to cease its support of Britain, “to convince us that effective aid is not an alternative to war but the road to war.” Yet he argued that the Tripartite Pact was reason more than ever to continue assisting the British, for if Britain fell, the United States would be surrounded by the Axis. Thompson viewed the Tripartite Pact as indicative that

²⁹ McCormick, “Europe: Reunion in Room Means Axis Partners Must Plot Anew,” *New York Times* 21 September 1940, 11; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 140; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy”; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 241. Kershaw argues that the destroyers-for-bases deal hastened the negotiations which concluded with the Tripartite Pact, and asserts the Pact was aimed at deterring the United States from intervening directly in the war. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 219).

the war was not merely a “European war,” but “a world revolution for redistribution of the entire planet.” For Thompson the move by the aggressor states was “an ultimatum to the United States.” Given such an interpretation, she pressed for further aid to Britain, arguing that the “Battle for Britain,” was actually “the Battle for the Atlantic Ocean...the Battle for the Mediterranean and the seaways to Africa, the Near East and Asia.” Furthermore, she argued the United States needed to establish allies, and to increase the program for national defense and war preparations.³⁰ The journalists’ common interpretation of the Tripartite Pact was an instance of the growing uniformity of their beliefs about the European war.

American journalists believed that the Tripartite Pact was aimed at the United States, and this interpretation affected their assessments of the 1940 presidential campaign. Unlike the 1936 election, which was widely seen as a test of New Deal Progress, the press interpreted the 1940 presidential campaign in terms of American foreign policy and war. McCormick did not weigh in on the “third term” debate. However, she clearly believed that the election was pivotal not only for American politics, but for the war in Europe: “Europe hangs on our choice – because Europe hangs on America.” Roosevelt, she contended, had

³⁰ McCormick, “Europe: Hitler Extends the Axis to Fit a New Time-Table,” *New York Times* 28 September 1940, 9; McCormick, “Europe: Munich to Tri-Power Pact: A Two-Year Journey,” *New York Times* 30 September 1940, 14; Krock, “Foreign Crisis Enters Campaign Calculations,” *New York Times* 29 September 1940, 67; Lippmann, “The U.S.A. and the Triple Axis,” *New York Herald Tribune* 31 December 1940, 13; Thompson, “On the Record: The New Pact,” *New York Herald Tribune* 30 September 1940, 15; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 249.

invaluable experience and knowledge of foreign affairs, and had already demonstrated his material support for Britain. Krock perceived foreign policy and national defense to be the pivotal issues of the 1940 campaign. These issues, he argued, put Roosevelt at an advantage, since “for almost four years...[the president] has believed that war in Europe was inevitable and from time to time has sought to impress his belief upon the American people.”³¹ Gunther publicly declared his support for Roosevelt, joining a group of prominent writers backing the president. At the *Nation* Kirchwey had already come out in support of a third term for Roosevelt, arguing that the president’s leadership was indispensable while Europe was at war. During the 1940 campaign she wholeheartedly supported reelection.³²

Lippmann initially endorsed Wilkie, as did the editors of the *New York Herald Tribune*. Yet as the election drew closer and Wilkie bowed to the isolationists in his party, Lippmann lost faith in his campaign. Lippmann did not publicly change his endorsement to Roosevelt, but refused to make his choice known in his column.³³ For Thompson, the 1940 presidential campaign was the pivotal issue that altered her relationship to the Roosevelt administration and the publishers of the *Herald Tribune*. Like Lippmann, Thompson initially threw her

³¹ Saylor, “Window on an Age,” 327; McCormick, “Eyes of the World Turn to America’s Election,” *New York Times* 3 November 1940, 81; Krock, “Campaign Arguments on Indispensable Man,” *New York Times* 15 September 1940, 75;

³² “Group of Writers Backs Roosevelt,” *New York Times* 23 September 1940, 19; Kirchwey, “Pre-Mortem on Wilkie,” *Nation* 12 October 1940, 317-318.

³³ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 371, 375-377, 379, 384-387, 389, 391.

support behind Wilkie.³⁴ However, on 9 October Thompson's column argued that only Roosevelt had the experience, prestige and assets to face the crisis in world affairs created by the war in Europe.³⁵ Her abrupt reversal shocked the readers and publishers of the *Herald Tribune*. A political maelstrom ensued. The *Herald Tribune* quickly distanced its editorial position from Thompson and devoted several columns to printing letters from leaders critical of Thompson. Readers attacked Thompson's "flip-flop" and described her reversal in condescending ways, interpreting her change of opinion as indicative of the weakness of her sex. Readers described her as "emotionally and mentally unstable," as someone who "thinks with her heart instead of her head."³⁶ *Time* used similarly gendered language in its description of Thompson's political reversal, calling it her public

³⁴ Thompson, "On the Record: Some Thoughts on Presidential Candidates," *New York Herald Tribune* 15 January 1940, 13; Thompson, "On the Record: The President's Latest Move," *New York Herald Tribune* 12 February 1940, 17; Thompson, "On the Record: The Next President," *New York Herald Tribune* 5 April 1940, 19; Thompson, "On the Record: The 1940 Elections," *New York Herald Tribune* 15 May 1940, 25; Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 320.

³⁵ Thompson, "On the Record: The Presidency," *New York Herald Tribune* 9 October 1940, 25. Morris Ernst, the American lawyer who founded the American Civil Liberties Union, was instrumental in securing Thompson's defection to the Roosevelt campaign. Ernst arranged meetings between Thompson and Roosevelt at the White House in June 1940 and again in early October 1940. See Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 321; memo Miss Dennison to Gen. Watson, 27 September 1940: "[inform the President] that Morris Ernst phoned...that he is bringing down on Monday Dorothy Thompson, swinging over to Roosevelt." PPF Folder 6650 "Thompson, Dorothy," FDRL, Hyde Park.

³⁶ "Readers Disagree with Dorothy Thompson," *New York Herald Tribune* 10 October 1940, 23; Letters to the Editor, *New York Herald Tribune* 10 October 1940, 23; Letters to the Editor, *New York Herald Tribune* 11 October 1940, 21. Several letters to the editor that were not published in the *Herald Tribune* used even stronger, gender specific language in their criticisms of Thompson. Thompson was described as "unbalanced emotionally," whose work constituted "hysterical outpourings." Readers suggested that Thompson's reversal of opinion occurred because she "allowed herself to be carried away by Mr. Roosevelt's charm and personality. After all, she is a woman." (Letters from readers to Helen Reid, 18 October 1940, October 22 and 30 October 1940, Box 1:D255 Folder "New York Herald Tribune: Dorothy Thompson, correspondence concerning," Reid Family Papers, Part I: Helen Rogers Reid, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

“skirty cartwheel.”³⁷ For the Roosevelt administration Thompson’s reversal was a political coup, and she actively participated in the campaign by providing Roosevelt’s speechwriters with important information on international politics.³⁸ The Roosevelt campaign clearly recognized Thompson as an important spokesperson and as a great asset in the election.

On 5 November 1940 Roosevelt won his unprecedented third term election bid with 55 percent of the popular vote. Krock explained Roosevelt’s victory as directly related to foreign policy and the war in Europe. The Democratic campaign, he argued, stressed the danger in interrupting the Roosevelt administration’s foreign policy. Roosevelt’s election victory also meant “the national defense effort is sure to go forward more rapidly and more completely.” Kirchwey argued that it was the force of Roosevelt’s personality and leadership abilities that won him the election.³⁹ Dallek argues that the conflict in Europe did in fact give Roosevelt the advantage. In terms of national defense and foreign policy the Republican nominee generally supported the president’s initiatives. And in the last few weeks of the campaign Roosevelt

³⁷ “Minds Made Up,” *Time* 21 October 1940; Letter Thompson to Mrs. Luce, 26 October 1940. Box 1 Folder 5, Dorothy Thompson Papers, Syracuse University. Clare Luce later commented how her very public disagreement with Thompson over the 1940 presidential campaign was frequently portrayed in gendered terms: “Two men disagree, and it’s a disagreement. Two women disagree and right away they’re shouting ‘cat fight...hair pulling contest!’” (Ralph G. Martin, *Henry and Clare: An Intimate Portrait of the Luces* (New York: G.P. Putman’s Sons, 1991) 204); Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 322; Mark Sullivan, “Dorothy Thompson is Answered in Own Words on One-Man Rule,” *New York Herald Tribune* 31 October 1940, 21; Thompson, “On the Record: The Axis and the Campaign,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 October 1940, 24; Editorial “The Axis and the Campaign,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 October 1940, 26.

³⁸ Gordon, “Why Dorothy Thompson Lost Her Job,” 298; Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 331-332.

³⁹ Krock, “Big Electoral Vote,” *New York Times* 6 November 1940, 1; Krock, “In the Nation: Satisfaction for All, Especially Democracy,” *New York Times* 7 November 1940, 24; “Why Roosevelt Won,” *Nation* 9 November 1940, 434.

sought to downplay allegations that he was a warmonger by publicly declaring his peaceful intentions with promises that “this country is not going to war.”

Reynolds too agrees that the war in Europe was of “major importance” to the outcome of the 1940 election, and maintains that Roosevelt had not even decided to run for a third term until after the Fall of France.⁴⁰ The 1940 election clearly showed that Americans were better aware and more concerned about events in Europe – and were willing to take those concerns to the voting booth.

The Great Debate over Lend-Lease

Following Roosevelt’s election win, the American press and the American people waited to see the president’s next foreign policy move. Roosevelt’s answer was to press for continued and expanded material support to Britain, and he introduced the concept of Lend-Lease at a press conference on 17 December. Using the analogy of a neighbour lending his garden hose to another to put out a fire, Roosevelt argued that the survival of Britain, representing both the front-line of American defense and the survival of international democracy, was more important than dollar signs. Roosevelt’s explanation of the necessity for Lend-Lease reiterated the interpretations and arguments utilized by the journalists. Roosevelt expanded on Lend-Lease in a fireside chat broadcasted to the American people. The president reiterated that the Tripartite Pact represented an

⁴⁰ Winfield, *FDR and the News Media*, 128; White, *FDR and the Press*, 70; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 270; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 101. Cole argues that Roosevelt’s third term was directly related to the Hitler and the war in Europe. (Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 383). For the isolationist opposition to Roosevelt’s third term and the 1940 election see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 383-405.

“undeniable threat” to the security of the United States, and stressed that American security was linked to Britain’s fight against “this unholy alliance.” To meet this threat, to aid Great Britain, and to keep the United States out of the war, Roosevelt proclaimed that the industrial might of the United States needed to be directed to national defense and supplying aid to Britain, in order to make America “the great arsenal of democracy.” Roosevelt introduced the Lend-Lease Bill 1776 to Congress on 30 December. Historians agree that the debate over the Lend-Lease Bill was “one of the great foreign policy debates of U.S. history,” and galvanized the opposing forces over the extent of American participation in the European conflict.⁴¹

The immediate public response to Roosevelt’s fireside speech was positive. Nearly 75 percent of the public heard or read Roosevelt’s speech, and 61 percent of the public approved of the president’s Lend-Lease plan.⁴² Reaction in the press, on the other hand, was clearly split between those supporting greater aid to Britain, and those who disapproved of Roosevelt’s foreign policy. Of the latter, the Hearst press and Colonel McCormick’s *Chicago Tribune* were predictably two of the strongest isolationist voices against Lend-Lease. Both the

⁴¹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 255; Frank L. Kluckhorn, “Aid Plan Outlined,” *New York Times* 18 December 1940, 1; Roosevelt fireside chat, 29 December 1940 in (eds.) Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 163-173; Moser, *Twisting the Lion’s Tail*, 142; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 37; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 132; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 110; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 124; Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 227-232; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 414. Warren F. Kimball’s work, *The Most Unsordid Act: Lend-Lease, 1939-1941* is the best single study on Lend-Lease. For a discussion of the importance of Lend-Lease see Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 184-242.

⁴² Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 257; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 108; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 131.

Hearst press and Colonel McCormick's *Tribune* blasted Bill 1776 for giving the president too much power, and for possibly drawing the United States into the European conflict. The *New York Daily News*, on the other hand, had ardently supported Roosevelt's New Deal initiatives during his first and second terms, but stridently opposed the Lend-Lease bill, which it called the "Dictatorship Bill," as it bestowed extraordinary power on the president.⁴³ *Time* also commented on the "enormous powers" that Bill 1776 would give to the president, but suggested that a clear majority of Americans supported Lend-Lease. The *New York Times* also argued that the "overwhelming majority" of the American people backed the president's Lend-Lease Bill. Editorials in the *Times* clearly supported the president's Lend-Lease Bill, arguing that the "survival of Britain is absolutely essential to our security." The *Times* recognized the enormous powers the Bill would give to the president, but believed "there is less risk in the temporary surrender of some of our traditional democratic safeguards at home than in the utter destruction of democracy at the eastern gates of the Atlantic Ocean." For the *New York Times* the Lend-Lease Bill was an important weapon in the "struggle to save democracy." Editorials in the *New York Herald Tribune* praised the public support for the Lend-Lease Bill and pleaded for Congress and the Senate to put aside partisan politics to pass the bill. The *Herald Tribune* argued that the national security of the United States might "hang upon this momentous vote."

⁴³ "Hot & Bothered & Cold," *Time* 24 February 1941; "All in the Family," *Time* 24 February 1941; White, *FDR and the Press*, 54. The *New York Daily News* boasted on of the largest circulations in the United States at the time. For the isolationist and non-interventionist opposition to Lend-Lease see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 409-422.

Although the *Herald Tribune* had opposed Roosevelt's third term, the perceived threat posed by the war in Europe overrode partisan politics in the debate over Lend-Lease.⁴⁴ The *Times* and *Herald Tribune* editorials stressed the idea that Britain represented the outpost for democracy and western civilization in Europe, and that the United States had a duty to defend it.

Lend-Lease was also seen as pivotal for the outcome of the war in Europe. Thompson argued that Roosevelt's electoral victory, and the "will of an overwhelming majority of the nation" that supported Lend-Lease, meant the bill should pass. She assailed opponents for "paralyzing the government...disrupting unity...creating the breeding ground for dissension...stimulating fear...fostering distrust." For Thompson Lend-Lease was important "as a means of efficiently integrating our own defense effort with support for Britain." Thompson appeared before the House committee debating Lend-Lease on 28 January, arguing that the defeat of Britain and a Nazi-dominated Europe would irrevocably threaten the security of the United States. Her testimony in favour of Lend-Lease, and thereby in favour of expanding the powers of the president, contrasted starkly with her 1937 testimony against Roosevelt's Supreme Court Reform bill. By 1941 the

⁴⁴ "First Act," *Time* 20 January 1941; "No. 1776," *Time* 20 January 1941; "The President's Bill," *New York Times* 11 January 1941, 16; "The Lend Lease Bill," *New York Times* 3 February 1941, 16; "The Lend Lease Bill," *New York Times* 10 February 1941, 16; "Two to One for Lend Lease," *New York Herald Tribune* 1 March 1941, 10.

threat of Nazi hegemony in Europe overrode Thompson's previous fears of expansion of executive power in the United States.⁴⁵

Lippmann also weighed in on the debate over Lend-Lease on the side of the Roosevelt administration. In his column Lippmann argued against those who opposed the bill on the assumption that Lend-Lease "gives the President new power for war and dictatorship," including fellow *Herald Tribune* columnist Mark Sullivan. During the heated debate over Roosevelt's plans to reform the Supreme Court, Lippmann had been one of the most vocal critics against expanding the power of the Executive. But in the debate over Lend-Lease he demonstrated that the bill did not give powers to the President that he did not already possess. Lippmann's arguments for Lend-Lease reiterated his earlier characterizations of the "British-American Connection." He described the "ancient and deep" relationship, characterized by a "common civilization" between Britain and America. Thus, according to Lippmann "the survival of Britain is an American interest," since "the British are the first line of our defense and we are the final citadel of the British defense against all who invade the ocean which connects the homelands of the English-speaking peoples." He blasted the isolationists "who have ruled this country for twenty years," for pursuing a policy of "refusal,

⁴⁵ Thompson, "On the Record: For the Strengthening of Authority," *New York Herald Tribune* 13 January 1941, 13; Thompson, "On the Record: The Race Against Freedom," *New York Herald Tribune* 7 March 1941, 17. During her testimony Edith Rogers of Massachusetts questioned Thompson's reliability as a witness pointing to Thompson's dismissal of Hitler in 1931. House Committee on Foreign Relations, *Lend-Lease Act: Hearings on H.R. 1776, 77th Congress, 1st Session, 1941, 644-45, 647.*

division, separatism, weakness, and escape.” Lippmann believed the time had come for the United States to act “efficiently and swiftly” in support of Britain.⁴⁶

Krock, on the other hand, did not whole-heartedly support the president’s Lend-Lease bill. In an article titled “Will We Stay Out?” Krock agreed that the war in Europe was a threat to the security of the United States, since “American democracy has been candidly marked by Hitler as his next goal of destruction after he has finished with the British.” He also believed that the American people, while generally hoping to avoid direct intervention in the European war, supported aid to Britain, seeing “common cause” with the British. Yet Krock actively supported the recently resigned American Ambassador Joseph Kennedy’s opposition to Lend-Lease. Kennedy resigned 2 December following a series of published remarks undermining the British war effort. The *Nation* happily approved of Kennedy’s resignation, arguing “Mr. Kennedy’s appointment in London was inept...His defeatist talk, calculated to discourage effective aid to Britain, appears to be rooted in a preference for the national socialism that Berlin would inflict on England.” Krock lauded Kennedy’s accomplishments as ambassador to England, especially his efforts to keep the United States out of the war. When the debate erupted over Lend-Lease, Kennedy gave testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee. He maintained his non-interventionist

⁴⁶ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Opposition to the Lend-Lease Bill,” *New York Herald Tribune* 1 February 1941, 13; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The British-American Connection,” *New York Herald Tribune* 4 February 1941, 17; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Tried and Found Wanting,” *New York Herald Tribune* 27 February 1941, 17; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Measure of the Risk,” *New York Herald Tribune* 13 March 1941, 21.

position, warning that the United States was unprepared for war, and questioned the widespread powers that would be given to the president under the Lend-Lease bill. While not rejecting aid to Britain, Kennedy's testimony placed him in the ranks of the isolationists opposing Lend- Lease. Krock praised Kennedy's testimony as "in harmony with the American constitutional practice and the nation's minimum security requirements." Despite Kennedy's resignation, Krock remained a supporter of the ambassador and criticized the far-reaching powers that Lend-Lease would give Roosevelt.⁴⁷

McCormick indirectly weighed in on the debate over Lend-Lease in her account of an interview with the president in early March. Her article praised the president's intentions to use the "full, bold and unshackled" powers of Lend-Lease "to save Britain without involving the United States." McCormick's early praise of Mussolini's regime, and her support for Roosevelt's bid to reform the Supreme Court, indicated that she was willing to accept some measure of authoritative government, for as she explained "in great emergencies men and nations throw overboard their excess baggage and hold on to the things they value most." Furthermore, she argued that Roosevelt possessed the characteristics, "superhuman skill and sagacity...courage and self-confidence," to wisely and

⁴⁷ Krock, "Will We Stay Out?" *New York Times* 12 January 1941, SM3. Kennedy was quoted saying "Democracy is finished in England. It may be here," and also stating "It isn't that [Britain] is fighting for democracy. That's bunk. She's fighting for self-preservation, just as we will if it comes to us," in the *Boston Globe* 10 November 1940. *Nation* 7 December 1940, 518; Kirchwey, "Watch Joe Kennedy!" *Nation* 14 December 1940, 593; "Ambassador Kennedy," *New York Times* 3 December 1940, 22; Turner Catledge, "Kennedy Opposes Full Power Given in Lend Lease Bill," *New York Times* 22 January 1941, 1; Krock, "In the Nation: The Hearings on the Lend Lease Bill," *New York Times* 22 January 1941, 20. Kennedy had supported ardently the policy of appeasement carried out by the British.

effectively use these vast new powers. At the *Nation* Kirchwey vigorously supported the president's Lend-Lease bill. However, she went further than many other interventionist journalists, recognizing that Lend-Lease might not be sufficient to prevent Britain's defeat. While not calling outright for American military intervention in the European war, she argued for whatever possible aid was required to prevent a Nazi victory.⁴⁸

The debate over Lend-Lease captured the attention of the public. The hearings were front page news, and the argument raged in newspaper columns, editorials, letters to the editor, radio discussion programs, public rallies, and town hall meetings throughout the nation. Lend-Lease galvanized isolationists and interventionists. Roosevelt approached the Century Group and the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies to mobilize support for Lend-Lease. For the isolationists, the fight over Lend-Lease would be not only their most vigorous campaign for American neutrality, but also their "last stand" in this fight.⁴⁹

Time noted the diverse anti-war groups that publicly opposed Lend-Lease, including the "leftist" American Youth Congress, the America First Committee

⁴⁸ McCormick, "The Roosevelt of the World Crisis," *New York Times* 9 March 1941, SM3; McCormick, "Europe: The President's Powers and the New World Order," *New York Times* 13 January 1941, 14; Kirchwey, "President Roosevelt Reports," *Nation* 11 January 1941, 34.

⁴⁹ The public interest in the Lend Lease debate was illustrated by a poll conducted at the end of January 1941 that showed that 82% of Americans were aware of the bill. Two weeks later this percentage rose to 91%. (Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 124). Kimball argues that the public was very well informed about the Lend-Lease bill. (Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act*, 241). For Roosevelt and interventionist groups see Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 258; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 110-111; Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act*, 153; Chadwin, *The Warhawks*. Historians agree that Lend Lease was the last issue that united non-interventionists in a widespread public campaign. See Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 111; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 124; Moser, *Twisting the Lion's Tail*, 142, 144; Rhodes, *The United States' Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 175; Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 414.

prominently represented by Lindbergh and economist-writer John T. Flynn, the “pro-Nazi” German-American National Alliance, and women’s groups like the Mothers’ Crusade and the Women’s Neutrality League. According to the *Time* article and historian Margaret Paton-Walsh, several anti-war women’s groups publicly fought against the Lend-Lease bill. During the interwar period women figured prominently in many national and international peace movements, based on the assumption that women were inherently maternalistic, nurturing, and therefore pacifistic.⁵⁰ The America First movement, formed in 1938, was a mostly female social movement supporting American neutrality and isolationism. Historian Laura McEnaney describes its specific gendered message: “Patriotism and isolationism, America First-style, was fundamentally a defense of the nuclear family structure and the conventional gender roles...America First, therefore, infused the traditional political and diplomatic meanings of isolationism with a social meaning.” Within the America First movement were various right-wing “mothers” anti-interventionist groups. One group, the Detroit’s Mother’s of the U.S.A., hung from a tree an effigy of interventionist Senator Claude Pepper. Another group, Mothers Crusade to Kill Bill 1776, waving banners reading “Kill Bill 1776, Not Our Boys,” attempted to hang an effigy of Thompson from the

⁵⁰ Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 124. For women’s involvement in peace movements see Leila J. Rupp’s “Constructing Internationalism: The Case of Transnational Women’s Organizations, 1888-1945,” *American Historical Review* 99:5 (1994); Harriet Alonso’s *Peace as a Women’s Issue: A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women’s Rights* (Syracuse: Syracuse University press, 1993) and *The Women’s Peace Union and the Outlawry of War, 1921-1942* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Susan Zeiger, “Finding a Cure for War: Women’s Politics and the Peace Movement in the 1920s,” *Journal of Social History* 24:1 (1990) 69-86.

gates of the White House. A placard attached to Thompson's effigy read:

"Eleanor R. and Dottie T., too; With the greedy Sol Bloom-Hillman crew; are shouting to spend for war again; A million boys' lives in blood and pain."

McEnaney argues that these "mothers" groups targeted Thompson and Eleanor Roosevelt because their outspoken political activities, and in the case of Thompson her blatant interventionism, appeared the "embodiment of family and gender disorder on the homefront." The Mother's Crusade to Kill Bill 1776 also protested outside interventionist Senator Carter Glass' office, causing "a noisy disorder," as Glass described, of which "any self-respecting fish-wife would be ashamed." For these women their defense of American neutrality and isolationism was a defense of "traditional" American social, family and gender roles.⁵¹

Isolationist Senators Wheeler, Nye and Clark also spoke out against Lend-Lease. Lindbergh's public remarks and testimony before the House Committee predictably garnered much attention, and also vigorous rebuttals by the likes of Thompson and Lippmann. Lindbergh argued that the national security of the United States was not dependent on the survival of Britain since the United States

⁵¹ McEnaney, "He-Men and Christian Mothers," 47, 48, 51-52, 55; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 148; "Effigy of Writer Seized in Capital: Anti-Aid-Bill Women Protest Dorothy Thompson's Stand," *New York Times* 24 February 1941, 7; "It's Not Allowed," *Washington Post* 24 February 1941, 4. Representative Sol Bloom was the chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Relations. Sidney Hillman was head of the National Defense Advisory Committee. A group of "grey-haired women" calling themselves "the mothers of Minnesota" protested the First Lady's speech in St. Paul, with signs reading "Who is President? Eleanor or Franklin?" ("First Lady Urges Guard For Our Way," *New York Times* 8 June 1941, 41). "Glass is Besieged by Sit-Down Women," *New York Times* 1 March 1941, 7. See also Jeansonne, "Furies: Women Isolationists in the Era of FDR," and *The Women of the Far Right*, for the actions of isolationist women's groups.

was not directly threatened militarily by Germany. He called for a negotiated peace to end the European war. Thompson blasted Lindbergh's statement, replying that Lindbergh showed "a complete lack of knowledge of history and of naval, economic and cultural factors." The *New York Times* rejected Lindbergh's view that a negotiated peace was possible with Nazi Germany, stating "it would mean a blackout of culture over a large part of the earth's surface, a turning back of the tide of human progress everywhere, a lonely world in which our island of democracy was ringed by hostile Powers."⁵²

In the midst of the vigorous national debate, Henry Luce, publisher of *Time* and *Life*, wrote an editorial titled "The American Century" for *Life*. Luce argued that the United States was already in the war, "to defend and even to promote, encourage and incite so-called democratic principles throughout the world." According to Luce, the United States had a "duty" and great "opportunity" to spread American ideals, which he defined as "a love of freedom, a feeling for the equality of opportunity, a tradition of self-reliance and independence and also of co-operation," to the rest of the world. Luce's editorial clearly enunciated a vision of Americanism and American exceptionalism. The United States, he asserted, was the "inheritors of all the great principles of Western civilization – above all Justice, the love of Truth, the ideal of Charity." Luce envisioned the twentieth century as "the American Century," if the United

⁵² "Hot, Bothered & Cold," *Time* 24 February 1941; "No. 1776," *Time* 20 January 1941; "Lindbergh's Formal Statement Before the House Committee," *New York Times* 24 January 1941, 7; Thompson, "Footnote to Lindbergh," *New York Herald Tribune* 3 February 1941, 7; "Peace When There is no Peace," *New York Times* 24 January 1941, 16.

States fulfilled its “manifest duty” to “bring forth a vision of American as a world power which is authentically America.”⁵³ Luce’s article elicited strong reactions from interventionists on both the right and left. Thompson proclaimed Luce’s editorial as a truly “American document.” Luce’s editorial echoed Thompson’s own beliefs that the European war was fundamentally a battle between the forces of western civilization, defined as Christian, democratic and Anglo-Saxon, versus the forces of barbarism. Thompson too believed that the United States had a duty to be the beacon of western civilization.⁵⁴ Kirchwey, on the other hand, cautioned that Luce’s editorial and Thompson’s endorsement suggested a “new American imperialism.” She found fault with the expression of “Anglo-Saxonism” that she called “nothing more than Kipling in modern dress.” Though Kirchwey supported American aid to Britain, and even direct intervention in the war, her left background remained suspicious of new brands of imperialism. She believed in an “American way,” but one that highlighted co-operation and egalitarianism over arguments based on race and domination. While she viewed the European war as a battle between civilization and barbarism, Kirchwey rejected the equation of civilization with either Christianity or Anglo-Saxonism.⁵⁵

Despite the widespread anti-war, pacifist, and isolationist protests against Lend-Lease, the bill passed with a margin of 260 to 165 in the House and 60 to 31

⁵³ Henry Luce, “The American Century,” *Life* February 1941, 61-65.

⁵⁴ Thompson, “The American Century,” *Washington Post* 21 February 1941, 13; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 146-147.

⁵⁵ Kirchwey, “Luce Thinking,” *Nation* 1 March 1941, 229-230; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 147-148.

in the Senate. Roosevelt signed the bill on 11 March. The passage of Lend-Lease was a victory for interventionists. For anti-interventionists, it was a resounding defeat, and in their view the end of American neutrality. Roosevelt sought and successfully garnered widespread public consensus on Lend-Lease. While die-hard isolationist newspapers remained opposed to Lend-Lease and any suggestion of American intervention in the European conflict, the press generally supported Roosevelt's Lend-Lease bill and all-out aid to Britain.⁵⁶

The Invasion of the Soviet Union

Following the passage of Lend-Lease the Roosevelt administration faced a series of obstacles and problems concerning supplying aid to Britain. The main concern was the escort of convoys between America and Britain to safely ferry Lend-Lease aid. Roosevelt was unwilling to use American ships to directly escort convoys, and instead established a policy of patrolling a much increased area of the Atlantic.⁵⁷ While Roosevelt remained reluctant to place American warships in

⁵⁶ "Press Supports Roosevelt's Plea," *New York Times* 17 March 1941, 5; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 110, 113; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 124, 153; Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 177; Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 37. Kimball argues that Lend-Lease "marked the point of no return for American policy regarding Hitler's Germany." (Kimball, *The Most Unsordid Act*, 9) According to Cole, "Lend-lease was very nearly an act of war by the United States against the Axis; so the isolationists charged, and so the Axis states could have contended." (Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 422). A poll taken on 23 January 1941 showed that 68% of Americans supported aid to Britain even at the risk of war.

⁵⁷ Doenecke describes Roosevelt in the spring of 1941 as having the "appearance of being a pilot without a compass." (Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 38). Kershaw likewise described Roosevelt at this time "hesitant...cautious to the point almost of immobilization." (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 236). Roosevelt increased the hemispheric security zone, originally set out in the 1939 Declaration of Panama as three hundred miles, to one thousand miles, thereby encompassing Greenland. (Stoler, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 133-134). Dallek states Roosevelt's reluctance stemmed from the president's reading of public opinion. Indeed, a public opinion poll conducted on 8 April 1941 showed 50% opposed to escorting ships and also 50%

positions that might make them targets from German submarines, an editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune* proclaimed “War if Necessary.” Since the Fall of France the *Herald Tribune* had backed Roosevelt’s foreign policy initiatives for aid to Britain. In early April 1941 the *Herald Tribune* argued that “aid short of war” was no longer enough in the struggle to prevent the defeat of Britain and the victory of Nazi Germany. According to the *Herald Tribune*, in a world ruled by aggressive totalitarian states like Nazi Germany, “neither the American way of living, nor democracy, nor the civilization of the Western World, could survive.” For the editors of the *Herald Tribune*, as well as the journalists in this study, Nazi Germany represented the antithesis of the civilization and values they believed characterized the United States. They argued that the United States had a duty to fight to preserve western civilization. The United States, argued the *Herald Tribune*, must make clear to the “dictators of Europe,” the possibility of the United States entering the war. The *Herald Tribune*’s editorial elicited a variety of opinions from readers. Some praised the paper’s position as “courageous and out-spoken,” while others damned the editorial as evidence the paper had “sold out to the warmongering [Roosevelt] government.”⁵⁸

While Roosevelt continued working out effective Lend-Lease aid to Britain, a series of Nazi victories in the spring of 1941 made the survival of Britain appear in doubt to American observers. German forces reversed British

opposed to going to war in the event German submarines were to sink American ships conveying merchant vessels. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 261).

⁵⁸ “War if Necessary,” *New York Herald Tribune* 3 April 1941, 26; “Excerpts From Readers’ Letters on a Recent Editorial,” *New York Herald Tribune* 9 April 1941, 24.

gains in North Africa, overwhelmed Yugoslavia in only eleven days, and forced the surrender of Greece in under a month. For McCormick the image of Hitler victoriously touring the Greek Acropolis, “the citadel of a great civilization,” was cause for great alarm and despair. According to McCormick, the message from the recent German victories was clear, the British “cannot win this war alone.” Lippmann also commented on the German successes, arguing “the support of British sea power in the Atlantic is more than ever an absolute necessity for the defense of the West Hemisphere,” and approved the American defense of Greenland. For Lippmann it was clear “that the European war is expanding into a world war,” and the United States was being encircled by hostile forces.

Lippmann was one of the most influential exponents of Atlanticism, the belief in the common values and civilization between the United States and Great Britain, and the need for common defense and war aims between the two sides of the Atlantic. In a fireside address on 27 May, Pan American Day, Roosevelt emphasized the changing threat to the United States and the Western Hemisphere. The president included Greenland, Iceland, and the far-flung Azores and Cape Verde islands, in his definition of the Western Hemisphere. Roosevelt espoused “Atlanticism,” and the characterization of the war in Europe as a battle between civilization and barbarism. According to the president the world was split between two opposing camps: “between human slavery and human freedom – between the pagan brutality and the Christian ideal.” To deal with this unprecedented challenge, Roosevelt declared a state of “unlimited national

emergency,” and stressed the need to continue aiding the British in the European war.⁵⁹

The astounding German victories in April were followed by Hitler’s “surprise” invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June. While there was evidence of the build-up of German troops and military equipment in Eastern Europe, Hitler’s move against the Soviet Union, and his swift initial success, shocked many in the United States.⁶⁰ McCormick too had commented on the “mysterious shadow-play on the German-Soviet frontier.” In March Krock examined the American diplomatic “guessing game” towards the Soviet Union, and the hope that someday the Soviets might be used as allies against the Axis powers.⁶¹ Churchill expressed this aim in a radio broadcast on 22 June, pledging British assistance to the Soviet

⁵⁹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 262; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 123; McCormick, “Europe: On Seeing Hitler Ascending the Acropolis,” *New York Times* 26 April 1941, 14; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Western Hemisphere Now,” *New York Herald Tribune* 12 April 1941, 13; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The Encirclement of America,” *New York Herald Tribune* 15 April 1941, 19. Reynolds argues that Lippmann was one of the “most influential exponents” of Atlanticism, as demonstrated in Lippmann’s article in *Life* magazine in April 1941 titled “The Atlantic and America.” (Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 128-129). Lippmann carried forward this idea of “Atlanticism” in his support for the American occupation of Iceland in July 1941. He argued that “the Atlantic Ocean is one ocean, not two oceans divided by an imaginary line between the “western” and “eastern” hemispheres.” Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Iceland and the Atlantic,” *New York Herald Tribune* 10 July 1941, 17; Roosevelt fireside chat, 27 May 1941 in (eds.) Buhite and Levy, *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 175-187. For another important proponent of “Atlanticism” in this period see Priscilla Roberts, “Lord Lothian and the Atlantic World,” *The Historian* 66:1 (2004) 97-127.

⁶⁰ Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 205; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 134. According to Roberts Stalin had received information from the Allies concerning the German invasion, and did believe that a German attack was imminent, but did not believe it would occur before 1942 since Hitler would not risk a two-front war and would issue an ultimatum first. Stalin therefore disregarded the warnings in the spring 1941, “Stalin believed that the warnings of an attack coming into Moscow were the result of a combination of German bluff tactics and a British plot to precipitate an immediate crisis in Soviet-German relations.” (Roberts, *The Soviet Union and the Origins of the Second World War*, 136-137)

⁶¹ McCormick, “Europe: Effect of the First German-Made ‘Incident’,” *New York Times* 14 June 1941, 16; Krock, “In the Nation: The Diplomats’ Guessing Contest Over Russia,” *New York Times* 5 March 1941, 20.

Union for the common purpose of defeating Nazi Germany. At a press conference on 24 June Roosevelt also promised aid to the Soviet Union. Yet Roosevelt, according to several historians, proceeded with caution concerning aid to the Soviet Union. Reynolds and Dallek argue that Roosevelt's hesitation was directly related to his perception of the negative public opinion regarding the Soviet Union. Doenecke contends that this was another lost opportunity for Roosevelt to actively educate the public concerning the necessities of American national security.⁶²

For Thompson, Krock and the others the German invasion of the Soviet Union and the question of American aid to the Soviets challenged their previous perceptions and interpretations of the Soviet Union. McCormick and Thompson had emphasized the Soviet's "Asiatic" characteristics, which they argued made the Soviets unreliable allies. They interpreted the Nazi-Soviet Pact as indicative of the shared characteristics between the two totalitarian regimes.⁶³ The *Nation* previously supported co-operation with the Soviet Union, but was traumatized by the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Lippmann and Krock had interpreted the Nazi-Soviet Pact as indicative of the "back room" and secret deal diplomacy of the "Old World," and as providing another reason why the United States could not trust European

⁶² Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 135-136; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 278; Doenecke, "The Roosevelt Foreign Policy," 39.

⁶³ Reynolds comments on the use of the term "totalitarianism" to describe the dictatorships of Germany, Italy, Japan, as well as the Soviet Union. The term "totalitarianism" was applied frequently, even by Roosevelt, following the Nazi-Soviet pact. Yet following the German invasion of the Soviet Union Roosevelt stopped using the term in effort to distinguish the Soviet Union from the other dictatorships to garner public support for extending Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union. (Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 136-137).

leaders. But with Hitler's invasion, the Soviet Union now appeared as an enormous new ally in the fight against Nazi Germany.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union demonstrated the limitations of the civilization versus barbarism discourse American journalists were using to explain the European war. The six journalists at the centre of this study had a difficult time establishing a "community of values" between the United States and the Soviet Union, as they had described the relationship between America and Britain. The Soviet Union, a repressive dictatorship lacking personal freedoms, liberal institutions, and representing a purposeful break from the traditions of western civilization, did not fit into the American understanding of Anglo-Saxon civilization. Ultimately, McCormick and the rest of the group relied on a depiction of the new relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union that emphasized cold political expediency: the enemy of one's enemy is one's friend.

McCormick argued that "Russia is the victim of German aggression," and thereby justified Churchill's proclamation of support for the Soviets. She described the Soviet Union as a "mammoth," and the fight between the two dictators as "an elemental drama," and "one of the great battles of all time." The very scale of the drama unfolding, "the biggest battle in the biggest campaign in the biggest war in the history of man," nearly overwhelmed American spectators. McCormick commented that ordinary measurements did not apply to the "Battle of Russia, because of the sheer size of the battlefield." Besides the protection

afforded by its enormous land-mass and the Soviet policy of “blackened earth,” McCormick praised “the fierce resistance of the Soviet battalions” for the surprising ability of the Soviet Union to withstand Hitler’s assault. Hitler’s rapid victories earlier in the war had created an image of Nazi invincibility, especially compared to the Soviet army decimated by the purges of 1937-1938, and the poor showing of the Soviet military against Finland in the Winter War. Not only did Hitler’s army soon find the Soviet Union to be “a formidable enemy,” but by early August the Soviet resistance had “changed the outlook of London, Washington and Europe-in-Exile.” According to McCormick, “every day the Red Army resists is counted a gain in weakening the German Army.” The long hoped for breach between the Nazis and the Soviets, plus the formidable Soviet resistance, buoyed the hopes of many in America that the tide of war could be turned against Germany without the direct military intervention of the United States. Yet McCormick warned that the German invasion of the Soviet Union, as well as the Japanese move into French Indo-China and recent “unrest and violence” in South America, created a scenario in which the United States appeared encircled by hostile forces, and might be driven to act. While McCormick praised the Soviet forces, she never exalted them like she did Hitler’s other “victims,” the “heroic” defenders of Poland, Finland, France and Britain. She also did not use the same civilization versus barbarism discourse as she had in her interpretations of Hitler’s previous conquests. Her analyses of the German invasion of the Soviet Union concentrated on how the Soviet resistance benefited

the Allies. McCormick acknowledged that the Soviets “were not fighting to save freedom or Christian civilization,” as she insisted were the British. Nonetheless, she recognized that “the Red Army is weakening Hitler and therefore helping to destroy the most dangerous foe of freedom and Christian civilization.”⁶⁴

Lippmann optimistically concluded that Hitler’s war against the Soviet Union indicated Hitler was unable to conquer Britain, and therefore provided an important respite to the British and American war preparations, especially for the acceleration of American aid to Britain. In his interpretation of the meaning of the German invasion of the Soviet Union for the United States, Lippmann pointed to the proximity of the Soviet Union to the United States in the northern Pacific. He concluded that the United States should intervene diplomatically to convince the Soviet Union and Japan to “be faithful to their treaty and to maintain the status quo in Siberia.” Unlike McCormick, Lippmann did not even praise Soviet resistance. His analysis concentrated on cold geopolitical realities and policies for American defense. In the debate over aid to Britain, Lippmann had been one of the most outspoken and passionate advocates, stressing the common bonds between the United States and Britain, and exhorting the discourse of civilization

⁶⁴ McCormick, “Europe: Crash of the House of Lies That Hitler Built,” *New York Times* 23 June 1941, 16; “Moscow’s Fate, Not Man’s,” *Time* 20 October 1941; McCormick, “Europe: The Solar Plexus of the Soviet Union,” *New York Times* 7 July 1941, 14; According to McCormick military experts in both the United States and Britain had “assumed the Wehrmacht could cut through the Red Army like a knife through soft cheese.” McCormick, “Europe: Plan and Time-Table in the Russian Campaign,” *New York Times* 12 July 1941, 12. Historian Reynolds also argues that officials in Washington shared this perception of the Soviet army. Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 134; McCormick, “Europe: Will Hitler Destroy the Red Army, or Vice Versa?” *New York Times* 4 August 1941, 12; McCormick, “Europe: Trouble on Three Horizons at Once,” *New York Times* 26 July 1941, 14; McCormick, “Europe: Religious Freedom in the Soviet Union,” *New York Times* 6 October 1941, 16.

versus barbarism. Like McCormick, Lippmann used no such interpretations in his argument for aid to the Soviet Union.⁶⁵

Krock detailed many of the reasons why the Roosevelt administration was cautious concerning American aid to the Soviet Union. The Roosevelt administration faced several immediate obstacles preventing it from quickly fulfilling the 24 June announcement of assistance. Domestic opposition to any cooperation with the communist regime, argued Krock, was a powerful problem for the administration. In the United States the majority of Americans opposed giving aid to the Soviet Union on the same basis as aid to Britain. While the Pope did not come out on the side of the Axis' "crusade" against the communist Soviet Union as many isolationists had hoped, these same forces in the United States quickly decried any alliance with the Soviet Union. In a speech at an America First rally Lindbergh announced that he would rather see the United States allied with Germany, than with the Soviet Union. Krock also listed several other logistical problems facing the administration, including the geographical obstacles, and the need to maintain production and shipment of aid to Britain.

⁶⁵ Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: The Russian Campaign," *New York Herald Tribune* 24 June 1941, 19; Lippmann was referring to the Soviet-Japanese Neutrality Pact concluded 13 April 1941. (see Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 197-198). Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Toward a Clarification of Our Russian Policy," *New York Herald Tribune* 26 June 1941, 21; Lippmann, "Today and Tomorrow: Russian Policy and American Defense," *New York Herald Tribune* 28 June 1941, 13; Lippmann had been an early advocate of American recognition of the Soviet Union. But Lippmann, like many, found the Nazi-Soviet pact intolerable. (Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 335).

Like Lippmann, Krock's article on aid to the Soviet Union lacked the enthusiasm exhibited for aid to Britain.⁶⁶

Thompson too put aside personal ideological conflicts with the Soviet Union, and endorsed the extension of Lend-Lease aid to the Soviets. Although she had been highly critical of the Nazi-Soviet pact, seeing more in common between the two totalitarian regimes than between the Soviet Union and the western democracies, Thompson saw an opportunity with the German invasion. According to Thompson the Soviet resistance provided important breathing room for Britain. Furthermore, she saw another possibility: "The fate of Russia now lies in the hands of the democracies – not the fate of the democracies in the hands of Russia... Why in the world, under those circumstances, should we fear Russia? For the first time there is a chance of an evolution in Russia toward a socialist democracy." Thompson too interpreted the German invasion as a possible turning point for the Allied campaign to defeat Nazi Germany.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Krock, "Obstacles in the Way of Our Aid to Russia," *New York Times* 29 June 1941, E3; "Pope Prays as World Awaits Radio Talk: Address Expected to Be Anti-Communitic," *New York Times* 29 June 1941, 7; Herbert L. Matthews, "Pope Keeps Silent on Axis 'Crusade': Homily on Divine Providence Seeks to Comfort World Amid Days of Strife," *New York Times* 30 June 1941, 1; "Back to the 16th Century," *Time* 7 July 1941; "Lindbergh Assails Tie With Russia," *New York Times* 2 July 1941, 2; Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 173; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 278.

⁶⁷ Thompson, "The Wave of the Future Has Passed into Hands of Churchill and Roosevelt," *New York Post* 29 June 1941. Thompson moved to the *New York Post*, a less prominent but explicitly more liberal paper than the *New York Herald Tribune*, in March 1941 after the *Herald Tribune* did not renew her contract. Her political detour from the paper's Republican editorial position during the 1940 presidential campaign was considered intolerable to the publishers of the *Herald Tribune*. Helen Reid claimed that Thompson was hired with the understanding that her column would not diverge markedly from the *Herald Tribune's* editorial position, for although Lippmann's column in the paper often expressed pro-Roosevelt liberal views, "one Lippmann was enough." Although Thompson claimed that her initial agreement with the paper provided "a guarantee of freedom to write as I please, provided that I remain within the cannons of good taste

At the *Nation* Kirchwey quickly and predictably endorsed the extension of American aid to the Soviet Union. Unlike many of her journalistic colleagues, Kirchwey stressed that Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union still remained a struggle between the forces of barbarism and civilization: "Hitler must be defeated and destroyed, not because yesterday he was in league with Stalin or because he is fighting Stalin today, but because he represents the one overwhelming menace to the Western democracies and to freedom throughout the world. This most Americans realize." Kirchwey recognized the problem of anti-communism in the United States and aid to the Soviet Union, but insisted "Russia's war is democracy's opportunity, perhaps its last one for a long time to come."⁶⁸ *Time* too stressed the ideological hurdles that needed to be overcome in the United States before the Roosevelt administration could garner domestic support for aiding the Soviet Union, but emphasized the necessity of this action:

From Herbert Hoover down to the smallest hater of Communism, far too many U.S. citizens reacted with an emotional belch. They apparently forgot two essential realities: 1) the Soviet Union, far from rising as a new danger, was fighting for its life; 2) the better fight it puts up, the more it weakens the power of Nazi Germany to destroy democracy throughout the world."⁶⁹

and with the libel laws," she agreed with the publishers' decision, for she felt "an unbridgeable hostility to me in the Tribune, which makes my position there difficult and undignified." (See: Letter Thompson to Eleanor Roosevelt, 29 January 1941, Box I Folder 6, Papers of Dorothy Thompson, Syracuse University; Kluger, *American Cassandra*, 288, 328; Gordon, "Why Dorothy Thompson Lost Her Job," 280-304; Letter Thompson to Helen Reid, 20 January 1936 and Letter Thompson to Helen and Ogden Reid, 8 January 1941, Box I:D254 Folder "Thompson, Dorothy," Reid Family Papers, Part I: Helen Rogers Reid, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Letter Thompson to John Gunther, 28 March 1947, Box 2, Folder 34, Papers of Dorothy Thompson, Syracuse University; "Miss Thompson to the Post," *New York Times* 13 March 1941; "Moving Day for Columnists," *Time* 17 March 1941).

⁶⁸ Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 174; Kirchwey, "We Have But One Aim," *Nation* 28 June 1941, 740; Kirchwey, "Hitler's Political Front," *Nation* 5 July 1941, 4-5; Kirchwey, "Shall We Declare War?" *Nation* 26 July 1941, 64-65;

⁶⁹ "Back to the 16th Century," *Time* 7 July 1941;

This group of journalists clearly viewed the German invasion of the Soviet Union as a turning point in the Allied fight against Nazi Germany. As the tenacious Soviets held out against the German forces, American commentators viewed the “Russian diversion” as providing a much needed respite for Britain’s war preparations, as well as weakening the German army. While they did not respond with the same enthusiasm for their newfound ally, the common cause overcame many of their ideological differences. American public opinion clearly favoured the Soviets over the Germans in the battle for the Soviet Union, yet Americans were still hesitant to supply aid to the Soviet Union on the same basis as to Britain.⁷⁰

Although sensitive to public opinion, Roosevelt did act to fulfill his promise of aid to the Soviet Union. On 24 June Roosevelt freed \$39 million of frozen Soviet assets, and the next day announced that he would not invoke the Neutrality Act against the Soviet Union. Roosevelt also sent his closest advisor and confidant Harry Hopkins, chief of the Works Progress Administration and Secretary of Commerce, to Moscow to confer with Stalin on the Soviet need for American aid. Historians argue that the combination of the surprising Soviet resistance, as well as Hopkin’s favourable report from Moscow effectively erased

⁷⁰ Roosevelt called the German invasion of the Soviet Unions the “Russian diversion” on 26 June. Quoted in Dallek *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 278; A Gallup poll published on 13 July indicated that only 4% favoured Germany, while 72% favoured the Soviet Union (Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 136), but the majority of Americans opposed giving aid to the Russians on the same basis as the British. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 278). Another poll conducted on 5 August showed only 38% in favour of Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 296).

Roosevelt's doubts about assisting the Soviet Union.⁷¹ Wary of Catholic opposition to Soviet support, in early July Roosevelt joined the British in appealing to the Vatican concerning assistance to the Soviets, and again to the Pope in early September. Roosevelt also tried to explain to the American public that the Soviet constitution supported freedom of conscience, and that the Germans were intent on destroying Christian religion to replace it with a Nazi creed.⁷² The president's efforts were rewarded and by early November Congress approved Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union.

Atlantic Charter

While working to secure public and congressional support for extending Lend-Lease to the Soviet Union, Roosevelt met with Churchill off the coast of Newfoundland from 9 to 12 August. The Atlantic Conference and the resulting Atlantic Charter were important events in the development of the Anglo-American alliance. Reynolds argues that the meeting cemented the personal relationship between the two leaders and also produced substantial symbolic

⁷¹ Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 178; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 278-281; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 136-138; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 198-199; Kimball, *The Juggler*, 35, 39. According to Dallek Roosevelt's hesitation had "largely disappeared" by 6 July following positive appraisals of the capacity of Soviet resistance supplied by Joseph E. Davies, former ambassador to the Soviet Union. Hearden also points to Davies' influence on the president in this respect. Reynolds argues that Hopkin's reports from Moscow "persuaded the president to move decisively to aid Russia." Kimball also emphasizes the importance of Hopkin's Moscow mission in convincing Roosevelt that aid to the Soviet Union was a "good bet."

⁷² Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 279, 296-297, 298; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 199-200; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 154. Dallek argues that Roosevelt did not believe his own rhetoric concerning freedom of religion in the Soviet Union, and nor did the American public. Yet according to Dallek Roosevelt was attempting to convince the American public that the Soviet Union shared "Anglo-American ideals," in the hope that by contrasting "freedom and totalitarianism" Americans might also be convinced to eventually participate militarily in the fight against Nazi Germany.

meaning through the joint Sunday worship and the expressed common war aims enshrined in the Atlantic Charter. He describes the Atlantic Charter as “a community of Anglo-American values to complement the new Atlanticist framework for U.S. security.” According to Dallek the Atlantic Conference was viewed by Roosevelt as a way to “dramatize” to Americans the common interests and aims of the Anglo-American relationship in the war. Doenecke and Stoler both compare the Atlantic Charter to Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, and Roosevelt’s own conception of a postwar world order. Stoler argues that the meeting helped establish a strong relationship between the two leaders and presented to both the American and British people a symbol of Anglo-American unity.⁷³

For Roosevelt the principal purpose of the Atlantic Conference was the declaration of joint Anglo-American aims. After days of discussion, and frequent disagreements, the Atlantic Charter encapsulated eight points, or “certain common principles” between the United States and Britain, “on which they base their hopes for a better future for the world.” These points were the renunciation of any Anglo-American “aggrandizement” or undemocratic territorial changes, the principle of self-government for all peoples, global free trade and open access to raw materials, universal labour standards and social security, established and

⁷³ Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 144-145; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 213-214; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 281; Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 39; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 134-135. Kershaw agrees that the value of the Atlantic Conference and the Atlantic Charter lay in its propaganda value, and for cementing the personal relationship between Churchill and Roosevelt. (Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 317).

lasting peace after the “final destruction of the Nazi tyranny,” freedom of the seas, and finally general disarmament following the establishment of a “permanent system of general security.” Unlike many of his other foreign policy initiatives, Roosevelt actively promoted the Atlantic Charter to the American public following its announcement on 14 August.⁷⁴

Lippmann was quick to point out that the Atlantic Charter was not simply a repeat of Wilson’s Fourteen Points. He argued that the Charter represented a “binding commitment” between the United States and Britain, unlike Wilson’s unilateral declaration. According to Lippmann the “binding commitment” of the Atlantic Charter was not merely a temporary wartime agreement, but heralded postwar cooperation between the United States and Britain to establish “a nucleus of order around which the liberated people can rally.” For Lippmann, an early and enthusiastic advocate of Anglo-American collaboration, the Atlantic Charter encapsulated unity and common purpose between the English-speaking peoples.⁷⁵

For Krock the unprecedented meeting at sea between Roosevelt and Churchill appeared to confirm several stories he had previously published (and

⁷⁴ The greatest points of disagreement between Roosevelt and Churchill concerned point four, free trade and access to raw materials, and point eight, concerning the establishment of a permanent system of general security. Churchill did not want the Atlantic Charter to contradict the Ottawa Agreement, the system of imperial preference between members of the British Commonwealth. Roosevelt feared point eight would arouse the suspicions of isolationists who rejected American participation in any international body that resembled the League of Nations. The issue of British imperialism and colonialism was also a point of disagreement regarding point three and the principle of self-determination and self-government. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 283-284; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 146-147); “The Atlantic Charter, 14 August 1941,” in *Debating Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policies*, 104-105; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 284.

⁷⁵ Lippmann assisted President Wilson in drafting the Fourteen Points. Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow,” *New York Herald Tribune* 16 August 1941, 13;

had been publicly discredited by the Roosevelt administration) concerning the president's desire for a conference at sea.⁷⁶ McCormick drew upon Krock's articles in her interpretation of the Atlantic Conference and the Atlantic Charter. While she insisted that Roosevelt was still first and foremost "the peacemaker" in international affairs, McCormick recognized the Atlantic Conference as a "war council" despite the official non-belligerency of the United States. The points of the Atlantic Charter represented a "promise of victory" for Europe, a hope for the future to keep "the fighting spirit alive."⁷⁷ An editorial in the *New York Times* stressed the historic and extraordinary nature of the meeting. Roosevelt and Churchill represented the personal incarnation of the forces of democracy, "the two democracies are united by a common idea and are determined to pursue together to the end their common purpose." According to the *Times* the Atlantic Conference and the Atlantic Charter enunciated to the world the Anglo-American partnership, not just during the war, but for the "work of postwar reconstruction." The Atlantic Charter, argued the *Times*, meant "the end of isolation" and "the beginning of a new era in which the United States assumes the responsibilities which fall naturally to a great World Power."⁷⁸ For the editor of the *Times* and the journalists in this study, the Atlantic Charter articulated their belief in the

⁷⁶ Krock, "A Vision Come True," *New York Times* 15 August 1941, 4; Krock had published stories in August 1936 and April 1939 about Roosevelt's vision for a conference at sea.

⁷⁷ McCormick, "Europe: Give-and-Take Between Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill," *New York Times* 16 August 1941, 14;

⁷⁸ "The Rendezvous with Destiny," *New York Times* 16 August 1941, C16.

mission of the United States to be a leader in world affairs, to protect and spread the values of western civilization throughout the world.

At the *Nation* Kirchwey insisted that for the Atlantic Charter to become “a rallying cry for every democratic force in the allied countries and in the countries under fascist domination,” it needed to be followed by firm action and commitment by the United States to see through the destruction of Nazi Germany. Although the president denied the Atlantic Charter meant that the United States was closer to war, she argued that the United States had committed itself in the Charter to whatever actions were necessary to ensure the defeat of Germany, including direct American intervention: “We must realize that the death of freedom in Europe spells disaster to this country as certainly as the loss of our shipping routes in the western Pacific. We must learn while there is still time to act.”⁷⁹ Although Kirchwey and other interventionist American journalists viewed the Atlantic Charter as “tacit acknowledgement of the reality of American involvement,” the isolationist press decried the Charter as commitments outside the president’s authority. Others criticized the Charter for failing to recognize the important freedoms of religion and speech. In general, Roosevelt was disappointed with the public response to the Atlantic Charter, which only hardened opinions on either side of the interventionist/isolationist divide.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Kirchwey, “Prelude to Action,” *Nation* 23 August 1941, 152-153; Kirchwey, “What War is Our War?” *Nation* 30 August 1941, 172-173.

⁸⁰ Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 177; “Views of U.S. Press on the Parley at Sea,” *New York Times* 15 August 1941, 6; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 285-286. For the

Undeclared Naval War

Historians argue that at the Atlantic Conference Roosevelt told Churchill that he was basically willing to wage war against Germany in the Atlantic, but was not yet willing (or able) to openly declare war. Dallek states that by the time of the Atlantic Conference Roosevelt did actually wish to bring the United States into the war. Reynolds, on the other hand, suggests that Roosevelt's reluctance to extend American naval patrols convoys to British ships was an indication that the president wished to avoid formal war in the autumn of 1941. However, other historians characterized Roosevelt as acting like a "sly fox," and pursuing "a devious course" to provoke an "incident" to provide public support for a declaration of war. Furthermore, historians contend that when the *Greer* incident occurred, the president manipulated public opinion by deliberately distorting facts to push for undeclared naval warfare against Germany.⁸¹

On 4 September the American destroyer *Greer* exchanged fire with a German submarine in the North Atlantic. In his public account of the incident Roosevelt stated that the submarine fired first and was unprovoked, and deemed German submarines "rattlesnakes of the Atlantic." The president's account left out several key facts from the incident, including how the *Greer* and a British

non-interventionist and isolationist reaction to the Atlantic Charter see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 492-495.

⁸¹ Churchill recounted Roosevelt's remarks to the British cabinet upon his return from the Atlantic Conference. See Rhodes, *The United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 179; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 149; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 214-217; Doenecke, "Roosevelt's Foreign Policy," 41; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 202; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 285; Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 301, 317-318. For Roosevelt's "sly" and "devious" actions see Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 201.

patrol plane had stalked the submarine, and that the submarine was unlikely to have known it had fired on an American ship. Roosevelt used the *Greer* incident to announce American convoys for the shipment of Lend Lease supplies across the North Atlantic. Shortly after the *Greer* incident the president also announced a “shoot on sight” order against Axis ships in the Atlantic. A public opinion poll showed 62% in favour of Roosevelt’s policy.⁸²

Interventionist journalists supported Roosevelt’s policy in the *Greer* incident. Kirchwey called the *Greer* incident “an act of war” and argued that the American people were “overwhelmingly committed to the policy of helping the powers resisting Nazi aggression.” However, Kirchwey wanted the president to be more direct and upfront with the American public, to prepare them “for the war that will sooner or later emerge from the policy to which the country is now committed.” She argued that the United States should be prepared to go to war

⁸² Historians generally agree that Roosevelt intentionally misled the American public concerning the *Greer* incident, establishing a “dangerous precedent of presidential duplicity.” (Doenecke, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 42). See also: Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 179; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy*, 288-289; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 203-204; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 150; Reynolds, *The Creation of the Anglo-American Alliance*, 216; Stoler, “Roosevelt’s Foreign Policy,” 135; Gerhard Weinberg, “World War II: Comments on the Roundtable,” *Diplomatic History* 25:3 (2001), 492. Weinberg, citing German naval historian Jurgen Rohwer, argues that American naval intelligence decrypts of German submarine movements were used to avoid confrontations – not to stage them, an observation which suggests that Roosevelt did not want war or an incident. Roosevelt fireside chat, 11 September 1941, in *FDR’s Fireside Chats*, 189-196; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 288. The isolationists did not cease their fight against American intervention in the fall of 1941. Lindbergh gave his infamous speech an America First rally in Des Moines, Iowa, on 11 September. Lindbergh identified the three groups he held responsible for the conspiracy of American intervention: “the British, the Jewish and the Roosevelt Administration.” The United Mothers of America fought against revisions of the Neutrality Act in October 1941. (Paton-Walsh, *Our War Too*, 178-180; Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 292). For an in-depth study of American foreign policy during this period see: Bailey and Ryan, *Hitler vs. Roosevelt: The Undeclared Naval War*.

“for freedom and our democratic institutions.”⁸³ Thompson also agreed that the United States should be prepared to go to war, not over a naval “incident,” but for the “defense of humanity” against the Nazis and their fascist allies. According to McCormick, Roosevelt personified the “voice of America,” for he felt “the profound reluctance of this country to go to war,” but also understood that the United States could not back down from the Nazi threat in the Atlantic.⁸⁴

German submarine attacks on the American destroyers *Kearny* and *Reuben James*, resulting in the deaths of American seamen, solidified opinions. To many it appeared clear that the United States was engaged in a shooting war with Germany in the Atlantic, and the great majority of the press supported the president’s move to revise, if not outright repeal, the Neutrality Act. By this point polls also indicated that the American public believed the defeat of Hitler was more important than the United States remaining out of the war.⁸⁵ Lippmann argued that it was clear “the vital interests of America have been threatened by the lawless acts of Hitler’s government,” and the United States could not be at peace as long as Hitler remained in power, for “Hitler’s power has grown too great for

⁸³ Kirchwey, “After the *Greer*,” *Nation* 13 September 1941, 212-213; Kirchwey, “The Roosevelt Strategy,” *Nation* 20 September 1941, 242-243.

⁸⁴ Thompson, “Questions, by Dorothy Thompson, to be Answered by the American People,” *New York Post* 5 October 1941; McCormick, “Europe: Looking Back on the Zigzag of War Policy,” *New York Times* 13 September 1941, 16. For isolationists’ reactions to the *Greer* incident see Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists*, 443-445.

⁸⁵ A German submarine attacked the *Kearny* on 16 October, killing 11 sailors. The German attack on the *Reuben James* occurred on 31 October, killing 115 sailors. Roosevelt asked for the repeal of article six of the Neutrality Act, which banned the arming of U.S. merchant ships. Congress narrowly approved the repeal on 17 October. A Gallup Poll conducted in October indicated 72% in favour of arming merchant ships, and another poll published 5 October resulted in 70% favouring the defeat of Hitler over American non-intervention. (Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 291; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 155-156; Stoler, “The Roosevelt Foreign Policy,” 135).

American security.” For Kirchwey the attacks on American vessels had turned American opinion toward the reality of American intervention in the war: “War will not be declared as the result of this affray, but war will have been accepted as inevitable by a great many Americans who had refused to believe it until the torpedo struck.”⁸⁶

With most eyes focused on the incidents in the Atlantic, the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of 7 December shocked American observers.⁸⁷ The next day the United States was officially at war with Japan. Germany, and then Italy, declared war on the United States on 11 December, and the United States was at last at war with the Axis powers.⁸⁸ Roosevelt and Churchill were both relieved that the United States was finally officially at war. For Lippmann it

⁸⁶ Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: The American Case,” *New York Herald Tribune* 4 November 1941, 21; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Two Confusing Phrases,” *New York Herald Tribune* 18 November 1941, 23; Kirchwey, “We Move into War,” *Nation* 25 October 1941, 388-389;

⁸⁷ For Japanese-American relations leading up to Pearl Harbor and reactions to Pearl Harbor see: Dorothy Borg and Shumpei Okamoto (eds.) *Pearl Harbor as History, Japanese-American Relations, 1931-1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973); Akira Iriye, *The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific* (London: Longman, 1987) and *Pearl Harbor and the Coming of the Pacific War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999); Barnhart, “The Origins of the Second World War in Asia and the Pacific,” 241-260; Walter LaFeber, *The Clash: A History of U.S.-Japanese Relations* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997); Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁸⁸ Most historians agree that Hitler’s declaration of war against the United States has “never been logically explained.” See Rhodes, *United States Foreign Policy in the Interwar Period*, 212; Reynolds, *From Munich to Pearl Harbor*, 169. Kershaw does supply a limited explanation for Hitler’s declaration of war, “as necessary to ensure as far as possible...that Japan would remain in the war.” (Kershaw, *Hitler*, 445). Kershaw expands on Hitler’s rationale in *Fateful Choices*, arguing that Hitler’s declaration of war was Hitler’s “anticipation of the inevitable,” and characteristic of Hitler’s attempt to always gain the initiative in foreign policy. (*Fateful Choices*, 423,430). Hitler’s declaration of war on the United States is also discussed in a series of articles in the *SHAFR* newsletter. See: Harvey Asher, “Hitler’s Decision to Declare War on the United States Revisited: (A Synthesis of the Secondary Literature)” *SHAFR* September 2000; Richard Hill, “Hitler’s Misunderstood Declaration of War on the U.S.” *SHAFR* June 2002 and “Why did the United States Declare War on Nazi Germany? Leading Historians Reverse Themselves,” *SHAFR* April 2004.

was the ultimate “wake up” call for the United States, to see the nation at last in “a war of our coalition against the Axis coalition,” a war in which the “American spirit” would ultimately triumph. McCormick expressed relief that “there could no longer be any doubt or uncertainty in this country.” Hitler declared war on the United States, she argued, because America represented the “true antithesis to [Hitler’s] system, the eternal obstacle to his aims.” According to Kirchwey, “the fate...of Western civilization” largely rested with the United States’ involvement in the war. American journalists believed that the United States was finally taking its rightful position as the leading nation of western civilization, democracy and liberty, in the war against barbarism and fascist aggression. Even Krock, who remained suspicious of Roosevelt’s reaction to the “incidents” with German submarines in the Atlantic, admitted that national unity trumped all other considerations after Pearl Harbor. Yet he was quick to point out the dangers to journalistic freedom following the declaration of war, as government control of information and censorship of the press began.⁸⁹

With the attack on Pearl Harbor Roosevelt was at last able to proclaim “we are now in this war.” To the American people Roosevelt defined the war as the struggle between “gangsters” and the “mechanized might” of the Axis, versus

⁸⁹ Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy*, 311-312; Hearden, *Roosevelt Confronts Hitler*, 221; Lippmann, “Today and Tomorrow: Wake Up, America,” *New York Herald Tribune* 9 December 1941, 25; McCormick, “Europe: For Americans the Question Period is Over,” *New York Times* 8 December 1941, 22; McCormick, “Europe: Hitler was Forced to Declare War on the Ultimate Enemy,” *New York Times* 13 December 1941, C20; Kirchwey, “The Fruits of Appeasement,” *Nation* 13 December 1941, 599-600; Krock, “In the Nation: The Greer Incident and Hitler’s Iceland Policy,” *New York Times* 16 October 1941, 20; Krock, “In the Nation: Disclosure of Enough of the Truth,” *New York Times* 11 December 1941, C26; Krock, “Freedom of the Press Restricted for the War,” *New York Times* 21 December 1941, E3.

the United States and all the other “free peoples” of the world. The United States, he proclaimed, would direct its entire force to meet this challenge, “toward ultimate good as well as against immediate evil.” The United States, announced Roosevelt, would “win the war,” as well as “win the peace that follows.” Roosevelt also addressed the American press, “all those who reach the eyes and ears of the American people,” and charged them to follow “the ethics of patriotism” to present fair and accurate information to the American public over the course of the war.⁹⁰ While the relationship between Roosevelt and American journalists was frequently stormy and sometimes outright combative as both sides wrestled for control of the political education of the American public, American journalists believed all along they were following “the ethics of patriotism.” The journalists covered here viewed and interpreted European events through lenses shaped by their belief in American exceptionalism. After the Fall of France journalists framed their interpretations of the European war and the need for American intervention as essential in the struggle of civilization versus barbarism. With the announcement of the Tripartite Pact, they were convinced that the dictatorships of Germany, Italy and Japan were threatening the national security of the United States. They endorsed further aid to Britain, explaining to the American public that the United States and Britain were ultimately connected as the leading representatives of western civilization who shared common bonds of history, language, religion, political institutions, and all the tenets of Anglo-Saxon

⁹⁰ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Fireside chat, 9 December 1941, in Buhite and Levy (eds.) *FDR's Fireside Chats*, 198-205.

civilization. Thus by the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor these journalists were already convinced that the United States had a duty and a mission to fulfill as a world power: to defeat the forces of barbarism that threatened to destroy western civilization, and to spread the ideals and values of Americanism to the rest of the world.

Conclusion

The European War and the “American Century”

On 11 December 1941 the United States formally entered the Second World War. After the initial shock from the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor Gunther, Kirchwey, Krock, Lippmann, McCormick and Thompson expressed relief that the United States had entered the conflict. McCormick summed it up, “The immediate reaction was relief that the period of indecision was over. The next was a universal desire to do something – at once.”¹ Military intervention had become a goal for all of them. War meant vindication. The road to war had been a twisted one. In 1933 these six journalists held disparate opinions about Hitler, Mussolini, the League of Nations, and the United States’ role in European affairs. As events in Europe turned dire and the threat of the dictatorships overwhelming, their conflicting and differing outlooks coalesced into agreement by June 1940 - agreement that the United States must intervene in the European war to save western civilization.

From Europe to the Nation describes the intersection and interplay of ideologies, beliefs, core ideas, and “unspoken assumptions” that influenced the journalists’ interpretations of European events and American foreign policy. Shifting beliefs in American exceptionalism, in a racial hierarchy dominated by Anglo-Saxons and in a gendered understanding of the world combined to shape their interpretation of European events. None of these core ideas were

¹ McCormick, “Europe: Hitler was forced to declare war on the Ultimate Enemy,” *New York Times* 13 December 1941, C20.

monolithic, but fluctuated in importance and impact. For much of the period covered the journalism of Lippmann and his colleagues was not reducible to one core tenet, though after the Fall of France as a group their analyses coalesced around the notion that what was at stake was nothing less than a struggle between civilization and barbarism. The Fall of France was a turning point in these journalists' analyses since they believed there was a real possibility that Hitler and the other European dictatorships might defeat Britain and thereby destroy democracy in Europe.

Journalists acted as “antennae, as interpreters and expositors” of how Americans perceived themselves and the place of the United States in relation to Europe. They helped to develop and disseminate the ideology that the United States had a mission to defend western civilization and to spread American values and institutions throughout the world in the “American Century.”² Thompson and her colleagues also played active parts in the formation and articulation of the ideology behind American foreign policy. But the process was not a simple one. The notion of American exceptionalism that prevailed after the Fall of France has a history. It did not spring full grown from a mythical American character. It was, instead, created by people over time. This study stresses the importance of recognizing the agency of journalists in the development of the concept because of their critical role as intermediaries between the crises occurring on the other side of the Atlantic and the American public's understanding of what these events

² Heald, *Transatlantic Vistas*, xiii.

meant for the United States. Charting journalists' changing perceptions during the interwar years shows the active process of ideology creation and dissemination. This study is therefore not just about journalists and journalism history. Although journalists are central to this work, this thesis uses journalists as tools to show the development of an American ideology that argued for American intervention in the European war and was used after the war to justify continued American intervention throughout the world. This ideology was elastic and highly effective, utilized for propaganda purpose not just for American intervention, but also to rally the home-front throughout the war and to legitimize Cold War American foreign policy.

Journalists' interpretations of European events were informed in part by their belief in American exceptionalism, that the "new world" politics of the United States were superior to "old world" ways. They condemned Anglo-French policies like the Hoare-Laval plan and the appeasement of Hitler at Munich as indicative of the secret deals that characterized European politics, viewed by many Americans as a cause of the First World War. Yet both Gunther and McCormick conveniently ignored Austria's increasingly undemocratic government. Instead they presented Vienna as a bastion of western civilization. Journalists also ignored the undemocratic characteristics of Mussolini's fascist regime. Lippmann and McCormick praised the stability of Mussolini's "mature" fascist state, and believed that Hitler was subordinate to and could be moderated by Mussolini. The Roosevelt administration shared their evaluations of Mussolini

as a peacemaker, a stabilizing force in Italy and a bulwark against communism in Europe.

The belief in a racial hierarchy dominated by Anglo-Saxons suffused journalists' interpretations of European events as well. Frequent comparisons between the national characteristics of France and Germany emphasized so-called racial traits. Journalists viewed the French as impetuous and hot-headed, ruled by their emotions and a deep-seated pessimism. They portrayed the Germans, on the other hand, as martial and disciplined. When evaluating problems with Anglo-French cooperation, like their failure to respond to the German remilitarization of the Rhineland, journalists argued that the British were restraining the "hot-headedness" of the French. Racial interpretations extended to their analysis of the Soviets, who were viewed by nature of their "Asiatic" characters as shrewd, suspicious, secretive and mysterious. The Soviets, clearly, could not be trusted as demonstrated by the failed Anglo-French-Soviet collective security agreement and the Nazi-Soviet pact. Finally, journalists utilized racial interpretations in the language of common values and civilization between Britain and the United States articulated, for example, in the spring of 1939 on the occasion of the Royal visit. This brotherhood became a significant interpretative theme and rallying point for interventionist journalists following the outbreak of war in Europe.

Many journalists, especially Thompson, used strong gendered language initially to dismiss Hitler as an inconsequential "little man," but events like the Reichstag Fire, Germany's withdrawal from the Geneva Disarmament Conference

and the League of Nations, and German rearmament, forced journalists, including Thompson, to reevaluate the power, intentions, and masculine leadership qualities of Hitler. Early interpretations of the Nazi regime were also coloured by American journalists' evaluations of Fascist Italy. McCormick described Mussolini as charming and swashbuckling, praising the masculine qualities of the fascist dictator. But his invasion of Ethiopia was cause for many American journalists, including the majority in this study, to reevaluate their previous opinions of Mussolini as a peacemaker and moderate dictator. Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia marked the high-point of gendered interpretations of European affairs.

After Ethiopia, the interchangeable interpretative lenses of American exceptionalism, race, and gender journalists employed to explain events in Europe gradually came together into a single overarching explanation: civilization versus barbarism. In their new interpretations journalists began to stress the crucial role of the United States as the pinnacle of western civilization, and they viewed the European dictatorships as threats to western civilization as a whole. This simpler view developed in reaction to several events, including the bombing of Guernica, the *Anschluss*, *Kristallnacht*, the occupation of Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet invasion of Finland. As Hitler's *blitzkrieg* moved westward, swiftly defeating every democratic and thus "civilized" state in its path, the journalists increasingly recognized this assault as an attack on American interests and core beliefs. In this altered interpretation Paris became an icon of western civilization. Just like

Vienna and Prague, praised in the press earlier as centers of culture and civility, Paris was now threatened by the juggernaut from the east. Gone were earlier characterizations of the French capital as decadent, full of pacifists and pessimists. Thus by the Fall of France, several years of worsening news had reduced the disparate perspectives of informed and opinionated journalists into the far simpler struggle for the existence of civilization.

They argued that the United States had a mission to support its Anglo-Saxon brethren in Great Britain and to spread throughout the world American values and institutions in what *Time* publisher Henry Luce called “the American Century.” However, journalists had difficulty using this explanation for the European war as justification for American assistance to the Soviet Union. There was no clear “community of values” between the United States and the Soviet Union. But if the emerging civilization versus barbarism consensus was not airtight it was certainly elastic. The journalists shut their eyes to the characteristics of the Soviet Union that contradicted their noble view of civilization and supported American aid to the Soviets by employing the stock geopolitical rationale “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” By December 1941 these American journalists had helped to create an elastic view of American foreign policy that portrayed the United States as the defender of western civilization - destined to take a lead in world affairs and spread American values and institutions to the rest of the world.

This new worldview dominated American foreign policy throughout the immediate post-war period and the Cold War. Policymakers justified George Kennan's containment strategy and the Truman doctrine through this American ideology. Kennan argued that the United States was required to prevent further Soviet expansion through the containment of the Soviet Union – now barbaric enemies of free society - in Eastern Europe. President Truman justified American economic and military aid to Greece and Turkey as a continuation of the United States' rationale for intervening in the Second World War, "to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes."³

Paradoxically, while the journalists studied here helped early on to create and impose the belief that the United States had a duty to defend western civilization from barbarous regimes, they did not necessarily extend this ideological argument to American foreign policy after 1941. Lippmann, for example, criticized American policy during both the Second World War and the Cold War. He rejected a post-war world based on a new League of Nations and argued for the continuation of war-time alliances, including one with the Soviet Union. Lippmann stressed *realpolitik* in Soviet-American relations, accepting a Soviet sphere in Eastern Europe. He openly criticized Kennan's containment policy and called the Truman doctrine "an ideological crusade."⁴ In the post-war

³ Robert D. Schulzinger, *US Diplomacy Since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 208-209; President Harry S. Truman's address before a joint session of Congress on 12 March 1947.

⁴ Schulzinger, *US Diplomacy Since 1900*, 208-209; Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 405-407, 409.

years Lippmann became increasingly critical of the United States' Cold War strategy, resulting in a public falling-out with President Johnson over American involvement in Vietnam.⁵ Up until his very last "Today and Tomorrow" column in 1967, Lippmann's influence and prestige in American journalism and politics never waned, and he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1958 and 1962.⁶

Lippmann was not alone in his condemnation of American ideological Cold War foreign policy and involvement in Vietnam. In his last "In the Nation" column published in 1966, Krock denounced the war in Vietnam: "The United States, acting on a new geopolitical concept of domestic security and an evangelistic concept of world stewardship of national self-determination, has also discarded the most fundamental teaching of the foremost American military analysts by assuming the burden of a ground war between Asians in Asia." Krock remained critical of the "swollen powers of the president" that had developed under Roosevelt.⁷ Like Lippmann, Krock remained an influential political columnist, his work "intimidated and edified Washington officialdom and informed *Times* readers the world over."⁸

Like Lippmann and Krock, Gunther's star continued to rise during and after the war. Gunther was among the last Americans to leave Europe following the United States' entry into the war. Driven by patriotism and a desire to

⁵ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 572; James Reston, "His Thoughts and Writings Are Very Much Alive Today," *New York Times* 15 December 1974, 66.

⁶ Steel, *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*, 583; James Reston, "His Thoughts and Writings Are Very Much Alive Today," *New York Times* 15 December 1974, 66; "Walter Lippmann: An Appreciation," *New York Times* 15 December 1974, 237.

⁷ Krock, "In the Nation Finis," *New York Times* 29 September 1966, 46.

⁸ "Arthur Krock of the Times is Dead at 87," *New York Times* 13 April 1974, 1;

participate in the war effort, Gunther wrote scripts for war documentaries produced in Hollywood under the American government's Office of War Information, and gave radio broadcasts for NBC. Gunther returned to Europe in 1943 and worked as a war correspondent.⁹ Buoyed by the success of *Inside Europe* Gunther continued to write interpretative journalistic books including studies on the United States, Africa, the Soviet Union, and South America.¹⁰ From his work as a foreign correspondent to his popular *Inside* books, Gunther was influential in educating the American public about not only Europe, but many other parts of the world.

Thompson, on the other hand, never eclipsed the influence and prestige she had as a columnist with the *New York Herald Tribune*. During the war Thompson continued her column, albeit with the *New York Post*, and worked on an anti-Nazi radio campaign broadcast by CBS into Germany. She was devastated by the death of her stepson Wells Lewis, who died serving in France, and shocked by the "savagery" and evidence of "monstrous crimes" that she viewed on a tour of Dachau in 1945.¹¹ Yet Thompson soon became critical of Jewish immigration to Palestine following her visit to the region that year. For years before the outbreak of war in Europe Thompson had been one of the most outspoken critics of Nazi Germany's treatment of Jews, and an advocate for

⁹ "Last U.S. Ship Arrives From Europe with 189," *New York Times* 24 December 1941, 8; Cuthbertson, *Inside*, 205-206, 209, 211-223.

¹⁰ Gunther's books include: *Inside Asia* (1939), *Inside Latin America* (1941), *Inside U.S.A.* (1949), *Behind the Curtain* (1949), *Inside Africa* (1955), *Inside Russia Today* (1958), *Inside Europe Today* (1961), *Inside South America* (1967).

¹¹ Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 360, 370, 374-375.

increased acceptance of Jewish refugees to the United States. But soon after the war Thompson warned that uncontrolled Jewish settlement in Palestine constituted “the recipe for perpetual war” in the region and voiced criticism for American support for the idea of Israeli statehood. She became active in the organization American Friends of the Middle East, working as an advocate for the Palestinians. In 1947 the *New York Post* dropped Thompson’s column. Thompson believed, as did many others, that her burgeoning criticism of Jewish claims to Palestine was the cause.¹² “On the Record” continued to appear in papers of the Bell Syndicate until its discontinuation in 1958. She also criticized the anti-communist hysteria of McCarthy, calling the trials “the most ridiculous and scandalous performance of irresponsible sleuths in our history.”¹³ In the years following the Second World War Thompson found herself on the wrong side of the dominant American ideology she had a hand in creating. She died in 1961, but was eulogized by her colleagues as “for a time [the United States’] most admired woman journalist.”¹⁴

In contrast to Thompson, Kirchwey was a vocal advocate for an independent Israel, writing in 1948 to President Truman hoping that “action will be taken by you to ensure the recognition of the Jewish state as a means of maintaining the prestige of this country.”¹⁵ In domestic politics Kirchwey shared

¹²“Dorothy Thompson Dead at 66; Newspaper Columnist, Author,” *New York Times* 1 February 1961, 35; Quoted in Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 383.

¹³“Dorothy Thompson Dead at 66; Newspaper Columnist, Author,” *New York Times* 1 February 1961, 35; Quoted in Kurth, *American Cassandra*, 392.

¹⁴“Dorothy Thompson,” *Washington Post* 4 February 1961, A8.

¹⁵ Letter Kirchwey to Truman, 10 May 1948; Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 200.

Thompson's disdain for McCarthyism, but found herself criticized by the American left for "white-washing" the Soviet Union's undemocratic state and its suppression of Eastern European nations. Long-time *Nation* contributor Louis Fischer broke with Kirchwey and the magazine over the magazine's defense of the USSR.¹⁶ Kirchwey also shared Lippmann's disdain for the Truman doctrine, which she called "Manifest Destiny, 1947," and American Cold War ideology.¹⁷ Kirchwey resigned editorial control of the *Nation* in 1955, but continued to crusade for disarmament, civil and women's rights.¹⁸

Of all the journalists in this study McCormick remained the most consistent and unchanging in her views of American foreign policy. Even after Mussolini's expulsion from power in 1943 she remained somewhat apologetic for the fascist dictator. McCormick never laid blame on Mussolini himself for his fall from power, but on the apathy of the Italian people.¹⁹ McCormick's close relationship with the Roosevelt administration was the cause yet again of professional jealousy from her colleague at the *Times*, Krock, after she was invited by the Secretary of State in 1942 to become a member of the Advisory Committee on Post-War Foreign Policy.²⁰ Krock complained to Sulzberger that McCormick's "confidential job with the State Department" and her "private relationship" with the Secretary of State was an intrusion into his realm as

¹⁶ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 162-164, 175-177

¹⁷ Alpern, *Freda Kirchwey*, 184

¹⁸ "Freda Kirchwey, 82, Dies; Long Editor of The Nation," *New York Times* 4 January 1976, 47.

¹⁹ McCormick, "Abroad: The Curtain Falls on the Fascist Drama," *New York Times* 26 July 1943, 18.

²⁰ Letter from the under-Secretary of State to McCormick, 9 Feb. 1942, Anne O'Hare McCormick Papers, New York Public Library, Box 2, Folder Jan-March 1942.

Washington bureau chief.²¹ McCormick remained staunchly anti-communist, and supported American Cold War foreign policies as necessary “to hold the free nations together.” After the war McCormick continued her regular column of foreign affairs in the *New York Times* until her death in 1954.²²

Why did many of these architects of the American Century ideology reject it soon after America entered the Second World War? It is difficult to say with certainty without going into far greater research than this study allows. What is certain is that these journalists believed in the aftermath of the Fall of France that the European dictatorships could possibly defeat Britain if the United States did not intervene. After the dictatorships were defeated, and European civilization saved from annihilation, these journalists largely questioned the continuation of America’s wartime mission.

As the varied post-war stances of this group suggest, they did not necessarily see American foreign policy similarly. And yet, they came to share a belief in a set of core ideas that influenced their understanding and interpretations of foreign events. By the Fall of France in 1940 these journalists argued that the United States had a mission to intervene in the European war to prevent the destruction of western civilization by the European dictatorships. This ideology was used as justification for American intervention in the Second World War, and

²¹ Letter from Sulzberger to Krock, December 1943; Letter from Krock to Sulzberger, December 1943; Letter from McCormick to Sulzberger, December 1943. Box AHS Bio-44, Folder “McCormick, Anne O’Hare.” Arthur Hays Sulzberger Papers, *New York Times* Archives, New York.

²² “Anne O’Hare McCormick is Dead; Member of Times Editorial Board,” *New York Times* 30 May 1954, 1.

also formed American Cold War ideology that was manifested in the Truman Doctrine and American intervention in other conflicts like the Vietnam War. Much as they might quail at the notion, Lippmann, Krock, Gunther, Thompson, Kirchwey, and McCormick were all contributors to the making of the American national security state.

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