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052154324X - U.S. Television News and Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960

Nancy E. Bernhard

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U.S. TELEVISION NEWS AND COLD WAR PROPAGANDA, 1947--1960

Television news and the Cold War grew simultaneously in the years following World War II, and their history is deeply intertwined. In order to guarantee sufficient resolve in the American public for a long-term arms buildup, defense and security officials turned to the television networks. In need of access to official film and newsmakers to build themselves into serious news organizations, and anxious to prove their loyalty in the age of blacklisting, the network news divisions acted as unofficial state propagandists. They aired programs that were produced, scripted, and approved by the White House and the Departments of State and Defense as news and public affairs programs. Ironically, these programs defined freedom as the absence of government control.

Based on extensive primary research, this book provides evidence of thoroughgoing collaboration between U.S. television networks and government during the early years of the medium, and it reveals how the Cold War was effectively “sold” to the American public.

Nancy E. Bernhard is Associate Editor of *The Long Term View*, a public policy journal published by the Massachusetts School of Law.

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NANCY E. BERNHARD



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To my parents,
Harry and Ruthe Bernhard

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The task of a public officer seeking to explain and gain support for a major policy is not that of the writer of a doctoral thesis. Qualification must give way to simplicity of statement, nicety and nuance to bluntness, almost brutality, in carrying home a point. It is better to carry the hearer or reader into the quadrant of one's thought than merely to make a noise or to mislead him utterly. . . . If we made our points clearer than truth, we did not differ from most other educators and could hardly do otherwise.

Dean Acheson, 1969 (recalling 1949)

How can you know history? You can only imagine it. Anchored though you may be in fact and document, to write a history is to write a novel with checkpoints. . . . A "definitive" history is only one in which someone has succeeded not in recreating the past but in casting it according to his own lights, in *defining* it. Even the most vivid portrayal must be full of sorrow, for it illuminates the darkness of memory with mere flashes and sparks, and what the past begs for is not a few bright pictures but complete reconstitution. Short of that, you can only follow the golden threads, and they are always magnificently tangled.

Mark Helprin, 1995

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|--|
| AP | Associated Press |
| ASNE | American Society of Newspaper Editors |
| BAC | Broadcasters Advisory Council |
| CIA | Central Intelligence Agency |
| CONELRAD | Control of Electromagnetic Radiation |
| DOD | Department of Defense |
| DOS | Department of State |
| ECA | Economic Cooperation Agency |
| FCC | Federal Communications Commission |
| IBD | International Broadcasting Division |
| IBF | International Broadcasting Foundation |
| INS | International News Service |
| MSA | Mutual Security Agency |
| NAB | National Association of Broadcasters |
| OC | Office of Censorship |
| OIC | Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs |
| OII | Office of International Information |
| OPI | Office of Public Information |
| OSS | Office of Strategic Services |
| OWI | Office of War Information |
| PA | Office of Public Affairs |
| PRWG | Public Relations Working Group |
| RFE | Radio Free Europe |
| UP | United Press |
| USAIC | United States Advisory Commission on Information |
| USIA | United States Information Agency |
| VOA | Voice of America |