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Cultural Ambassadors: American Academics in the Soviet Union, 1958-1991

Kayla Brooke Hester

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Cultural ambassadors: American academics in the Soviet Union, 1958-1991

By

Kayla Brooke Hester

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in History
in the Department of History

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Cultural ambassadors: American academics in the Soviet Union, 1958-1991

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In response to the emerging Cold War conflict, American policymakers adopted cultural diplomacy as a permanent component of US foreign policy for the first time. In an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the worlds' people, American leaders utilized international cultural outreach, through methods such as exchanges of students, teachers, and scientists, traveling exhibitions, radio and television broadcasts, publications, and tourism, among others. In recent decades, many historians have begun to explore the significance of these efforts. However, none of these works have examined the experience of those individuals who actually participated in the exchanges. This work begins to fill that void by focusing on American academics who travelled to the Soviet Union on educational exchange during the Cold War. By exploring their personal reports and recollections of their time behind the Iron Curtain, this study illuminates how they perceived their own nation, its values, and their own sense of national identity and purpose. Ultimately, I argue that these Americans used the image of the inferior Soviet "other" to cement a more unified national identity and affirm their feelings of American exceptionalism. Still, though their belief in American superiority remained constant

throughout, their commitment to actively serve as America's cultural representatives abroad waxed and waned at different points in the Cold War. Namely, although at the start of the program in 1958 exchangees enthusiastically assisted in spreading American values abroad, when American public opinion shifted against the Vietnam War their efforts immediately ceased. This shows specific examples of how conceptions of American ideology changed in this period. For a time, these Americans, and probably many others, abandoned a tenet that had long been central to American identity- the belief that the United States had the duty to assert its ideology globally. It was not until the last years of the Cold War, when American and Soviet leaders made significant improvements in superpower relations, that these individuals felt confident enough to serve again as cultural ambassadors. These fluctuations provide a case study of the direct and personal effects of major political and foreign policy shifts on ordinary Americans.

DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my family, my husband Simon, and our first child who will be arriving in a just a few short months.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people who have helped me to get to this point. First, I would like to mention the History Department at Mississippi State University. I could not have asked for a more positive graduate school experience than the one I received here. I had the great opportunity to work with talented professors who constantly challenged me to be a better historian, including my advisor Dr. Richard Damms. I had the privilege to work alongside a group of incredible graduate students who consistently helped and encouraged each other. No matter where we all end up, I will cherish the friendships I made in Starkville, Mississippi.

Though just a “thank you” seems incredibly inadequate, I also want to thank my family. I was the first in my immediate family to go to college, and although it was a learning process for all of us, they never doubted my abilities or faltered in their commitment to my education. To my dad, thank you for being a constant source of support and such a great example for my brother and I. To my mom, your continuous kindness (and unbelievably good food) has always been such a great source of comfort. To my grandparents, thank you for all the guidance, advice, and encouragement you’ve given me all along the way. And to my brother Jonathan, thank you for being my best friend for twenty-five years.

I also cannot imagine going through this whole process without having my husband Simon by my side. I was a brand new Ph.D. student when we met four years

ago, so you have been with me through every victory, every failure, and every hurdle. On the hard days you kept me going, and I will always be grateful for the happiness you have brought to my life. We are also lucky enough to have some important four-legged companions who I cannot avoid mentioning. Haleigh and June sat with me through countless nights of reading, researching, and writing. Thanks for every tail wag.

Lastly, this dissertation is also dedicated to a person who is not here yet. Our first child will arrive in just a few months and I am so excited that he or she will be there to see me receive my diploma. I hope to instill in you a love of learning and give you all the love and encouragement I have been fortunate enough to receive.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. PRESENTING A “FULL AND FAIR” IMAGE OF AMERICAN LIFE, 1900-1958	17
III. “AN ABNORMAL PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE,” 1958-1968	59
IV. “REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP,” 1969-1979	113
V. “A LIVING DOCUMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE,” 1980-1991	156
VI. CONCLUSION	195
REFERENCES	204

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In 1961, James H. Billington, an American professor of Russian history at Harvard University, sat with three Soviet academics onboard a car traveling the Trans-Siberian Railway. Participating in an educational exchange of guest lecturers facilitated by his institution and the University of Leningrad, Billington had in this instance one of many opportunities to speak freely and directly with Soviet citizens. While partaking generously from a bottle of the latest imported Cuban rum, the three men began discussing their thoughts on the United States. They made sure to preface their opinions on American society with their admiration for the professor personally. Billington recalled: “‘We like YOU,’ the heaviest consumer of the Cuban beverage repeatedly assured me, addressing me as ‘Ivan Ivanovich’ since ‘we can’t translate your name into Russian, but want to accept you as one of us.’” While he did not seem to take terrible offense to his newly given Russian name, Billington, however, did become concerned about these educated and intelligent men’s perceptions of American life. He remembered one of the men declaring, “It must be sad to live in an imperialist country.” Another asked genuinely, “Why can’t Negroes publish works in their native language?”¹

This Harvard professor was not alone in his concern about these misconceptions, though, as American policy-makers also regretted these negative sentiments perpetuated

¹ James H. Billington, “They Know So Much, Understand So Little,” *New York Times*, August 13, 1961, SM7.

by the Soviet government and its citizens. Through various methods of cultural diplomacy, American politicians and strategists throughout the Cold War tried numerous ways to part the Iron Curtain and relay positive information about life in the United States through direct contacts with those living under Soviet rule. One particular technique involved individuals like Billington who participated in academic exchange programs with Eastern Europe.

Numerous historians have provided examinations of Cold War cultural exchange, along with Soviet-American academic exchange in particular, and the purposes the American government had in establishing these programs. However, no scholar has conducted an analysis of the academics who actually participated in the exchanges, or how they perceived the program, its role in the Cold War, and their own sense of national identity and purpose. This project utilizes the words and recollections of those individuals to fill that void. The organizations that operated US-Soviet educational exchange during the Cold War required participants to write follow-up reports after their return to the United States. These reports were intended to be kept relatively confidential; they were not disseminated outside these agencies and their only purpose in addition to providing feedback for exchange organizers was to be included anonymously in a handbook containing advice for the following year's participants. These reports were also generally freeform. Though the agencies periodically suggested topics that exchangees might include in their reports, the format, specific content, and length of these reports varied from participant to participant. Therefore, these sources would appear to give an honest view of how these Americans perceived their experience in the Soviet Union while on the exchange program.

The first aim of this project is to provide an in-depth understanding of American efforts at cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. As the US government got increasingly involved in directing cultural exchange in this era, policymakers created numerous new methods aimed at promoting direct interaction between the American and Soviet people. This included exchanges of students, teachers, athletes, doctors, artists, and scientists, traveling exhibitions, radio and television broadcasts, publications, and tourism, among others.² To fully understand how cultural exchange functioned during this period, though, this work focuses on just one of those methods-- academic exchange-- with the idea that such an emphasis can illuminate Cold War cultural exchange more clearly and precisely, both from the perspective of exchange organizers and the exchangees themselves.

The second, and more significant, objective of this research is to provide a lens into Americans' sense of national identity during the Cold War. By examining the memories and recollections of Americans on academic exchange to the Soviet Union, I seek to recount their conceptions of American values and how they evolved during a period in which national ideology was particularly important. In describing the Soviet Union, the reports of these individuals can offer great insight into how Americans perceived not only their communist rival but also their own nation, its people, its institutions, its mission, and its values.

It is important to note that the individuals examined here do not necessarily speak for the entire American population nor do their views always correspond with other groups of Americans. After all, this subset of Americans consisted of only educated

² Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 42.

individuals and those who had the economic means to obtain higher education. Most of these individuals were white and a majority, especially in the first decade of the exchange, were male. Still, though their viewpoint may not be completely representative, they are certainly significant. First, their reports provide a direct look into the thoughts and values of relatively “ordinary” Americans. While most historical examinations of the Cold War and cultural diplomacy often focus only on policymakers and politicians and their ideas and perceptions, this approach illuminates how the views of ordinary individuals formed and evolved throughout this period. Second, these Americans’ ideas are particularly important because most of them were very well-informed about the Soviet Union, especially compared to the majority of their fellow Americans. Most exchangees travelled to the Soviet Union to research a Russian or Soviet topic, the majority of them spoke Russian, and many traveled to the region multiple times. These exchangees viewed the Soviet Union from an academic perspective that encouraged them to be objective and dispassionate. Therefore, the fact that ideas about American exceptionalism and national identity appeared in their reports suggests the truly powerful and pervasive nature of these ideas. That even these Americans, who approached the Soviet Union from a scholarly perspective, saw it through the lens of popular American Cold War values makes it very likely that many other Americans viewed the conflict and their country in similar ways.

Tied closely with the previous objective, the third and final aim of this work is to illustrate how national policy and shifts in America’s political landscape affected individual citizens. The following chapters progress in three roughly decade-long periods because each represents a distinct political era. The first, from 1958 to 1968, was not only

the first decade of the exchange program, but it was also an era when the American commitment to containing communism was generally (though not wholly) unquestioned. The second, from 1969 to 1979, was a period of flux in American Cold War values. With growing doubts about the legitimacy of the Vietnam War, shocking government scandals, and a swelling crisis of confidence among the American people, American Cold War policy was under more scrutiny than ever before. However, this changed in the third period from 1980 to 1991. President Ronald Reagan's initial antagonistic rhetoric toward the Soviet Union reasserted that the Cold War was primarily a battle of ideas, and his subsequent negotiations with the Soviet leadership reestablished the possibility that American values could be transplanted abroad, even within the communist bloc. Examining the recollections, perceptions, and beliefs of American exchangees throughout each of these periods can illuminate the exact impact of these political shifts on this particular set of Americans.

The foundation of this project builds on several important theoretical concepts developed by historians and other scholars, especially ideas about culture, national identity and the construction of the "other," and analyses of travel writing. As a work that seeks to interpret the perceptions of individuals, the methods of cultural studies are especially integral. The work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz is an important influence, especially his ideas about the significance of culture. He claims that culture, at its most basic level, is a *context* for the actions and behaviors of individuals. Therefore, in gathering historical records, "what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people's constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to." Taking that into account, with this project I have attempted to take a deeper look at the accounts of

American exchangeees, striving to unpack their sense of self and identity both by what they said and what they did not say. Geertz claimed that mankind has a drive to “make sense out of experience” by using symbolic activities, such as ideology, to create a framework for understanding and comprehending the world.³ This project seeks to extract that framework and get a precise picture of the values and ideals these Cold War Americans held. Another central concept in this project, in addition to Geertz’s ideas about culture, is Benedict Anderson’s notion of nationalism. In his monograph *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argues that “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.” Nations are imagined in the sense that, even though most citizens of a nation will never meet one other, they form constructed values and ideologies that connect them together and give them a sense of unity.⁴ This work assumes that Anderson’s concept of nationalism is applicable to twentieth-century Americans. Therefore, it seeks to extract, analyze, and show the changes in notions of nationalism and national identity among Americans during the Cold War era.

Several historians of the past few decades have deployed Geertz’s and Anderson’s concepts to develop the field of cultural history, and this project also draws on the work of those scholars. For instance, historian Michael H. Hunt in *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* is clearly influenced by Geertz in his definition of ideology as “an interrelated set of convictions or assumptions that reduces the complexities of a particular slice of reality to easily comprehensible terms.” Though Americans have traditionally resisted the idea

³ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Culture: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 9, 14, 140-141.

⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 6.

that they were dogmatic or ideological, Hunt's research shows that such a national consciousness was present throughout American history.⁵ My work utilizes the arguments of Geertz and Hunt, further illustrating that Americans did indeed have a strong, if sometimes unconscious, national ideology, especially during the Cold War. Other historians have expanded upon this idea as well, such as John Fousek in his book *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Roots of the Cold War*. Fousek seeks to understand popular perceptions of US foreign policy and underscores the importance of examining public discourse and popular culture in order to reconstruct American Cold War ideology. The Cold War consensus, he argues, was upheld by the general public's acceptance and perpetuation of America's nationalist ideology. While Fousek mainly focuses on discourses in the media and within African American and labor union publications, I seek to expand on his model by using the accounts of American academic exchangees.⁶

This project also draws heavily from research on national identity and the concept of the "other." The ideas of literary critic Edward Said, presented in his seminal work *Orientalism*, are imbedded throughout this research. Said posited that nineteenth-century Western imperial powers constructed the exotic, strange, and inferior image of the East in order to solidify Westerners' notion of their own superiority. In other words, the West defined itself by its contrasting image of the "other," namely the Orient.⁷ Through my research, I have applied Said's concept of the "other" to Americans living in the shadow of the Cold War. During this turbulent time, the image of the Soviet Union as the primary

⁵ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), xi, 13.

⁶ John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), ix, 2.

⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 12-26.

enemy-other provided a stabilizing force for American national identity. Though Americans debated and renegotiated their sense of self many times throughout this period, the notion of their superiority to the Soviet other provided one of the few unifying foundations for their national ideology.

Some historians have studied this “othering” phenomenon in relation to the Cold War, such as Walter Hixson in *The Myth of American Diplomacy*. Hixson explores how culture and ideology shaped American foreign policy throughout its history, and he claims that the Soviet Union “merged into the long line of enemy-others dating back to Indian conquest and critical to the reaffirmation of the mythically rooted imagined community.”⁸ While Hixson’s work is broad in scope, drawing from secondary sources on American history from the nation’s founding to the twenty-first century, I seek to apply his ideas to a single group of exemplary Americans in order to understand if and how it was exhibited by individuals. Another historian, David S. Foglesong, also utilized Said’s framework in his book *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire.”* Foglesong contends that, from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first century, organizations and movements focused on “freeing” Russia strongly influenced how Americans perceived themselves, “particularly by offering proof of American idealism and reassurance about the special place of the United States in the world.”⁹ My research seeks to further test this notion by putting it against those Americans who actually travelled to the Soviet Union.

Lastly, my research is also influenced by scholarly literature on travel writing. Professor of literature Tim Youngs defines the term “travel writing” as “first-person

⁸ Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 166.

⁹ David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire”: The Crusade for a “Free Russia” Since 1881* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 6.

prose accounts of travel that have been undertaken by the author-narrator.”¹⁰ In *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Youngs underscores the important ways that scholars of travel writing have utilized the ideas of Edward Said. Namely, Said’s analysis shows that travel writings cannot be taken as pure factual accounts. Instead, travelers-- and thus their writings-- are heavily influenced by the culture in which they originate, which prohibits the traveler from objectively viewing the location he or she is visiting. Therefore, according to Youngs, travel writing illuminates how people define themselves and how they define others.¹¹ Another literature scholar, Carl Thompson, agreed that studying travel writing “can yield significant insights into the ideologies and practices that sustain the current world order” and is a way to “reveal something of the culture from which that writer emerged.” This is because of the process of constructing a travel narrative, he argues. A traveler cannot simply record every single moment of his or her trip abroad. Therefore, travelers must choose events they deem significant and translate them into narratives. This introduces a “fictive dimension” into the travel text and thus illuminates the writer more so than the subject being written about.¹² Thus, my research does not aim to provide a glimpse into Cold War Soviet society through the writings of American exchange participants. Though many of these exchangees’ reports recount in detail the workings and characteristics of life in the Soviet Union, my analysis proceeds with the assumption that these accounts offer more valuable insight into the ideology and ideals of their authors than they do into the environment being observed.

¹⁰ Tim Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 3.

¹¹ Youngs, *The Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, 1-9.

¹² Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 10, 27.

With these foundational concepts in mind, this work argues that many Americans during the Cold War used the image of the Soviet enemy-other to cement a more unified national ideology and assert their feelings of American exceptionalism. Though Americans faced new challenges to their national values at different points in the Cold War, the accounts of American academic exchangees show that their internalization of American superiority, coupled with their consistent critiques of Soviet society, provided a constant method of reaffirming their sense of American identity and purpose. During the first decade of the exchange program, from 1958 to 1968, Americans worried about the spread of communism and the prospect of the Soviet Union surpassing the United States in national strength and technology. Exchangees dealt with these fears by promoting American exceptionalism and touting the belief that the Soviet people could easily be convinced to emulate the American way, both in terms of its democratic values and its consumer culture. The second decade of the exchange, from 1969 to 1979, was a time of ideological crisis for many Americans. The growing opposition to the Vietnam War forced Americans to confront the possibility that the containment of communism might not be feasible or worth the cost in many areas of the world. Still, while most American exchange participants of this decade abandoned their previous desire to spread American values to the Soviet people, they held on to their notions of American exceptionalism through their consistent criticisms of the inefficiencies and hardships of Soviet life. In the third period, from 1980 to 1991, President Ronald Reagan “re-othered” the Soviet Union with his aggressive rhetoric and shifted the purpose of the Cold War back to being a battle of ideas. His subsequent “reversal,” in advocating for a better relationship with the Soviet Union, convinced American exchange participants that it was worthwhile for them

to serve again as America's cultural ambassadors. Such a change in national policy made these Americans believe, like their president, that the Soviet Union was capable of major reform. Thus American exchangeees in the final years of the Cold War believed it was their duty to instill superior American values into the Soviet people, in particular the importance of free intellectual expression and critical thinking. These trends show that the major political and foreign policy shifts of the Cold War had deep and personal effects on individual Americans. In particular, the fluctuating health of US-Soviet relations and changing public opinion about American international policy convinced them of the feasibility or futility of their efforts to service as America's cultural representatives.

This research fits into the growing historiography within the field of American foreign relations that focuses on culture and international cultural transfer. According to diplomatic historians Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, the field's turn toward cultural history was the most significant development of the early twenty-first century. They cite two main strands of analysis used by historians in this emerging realm of study: those who study cultural exchange or "cultural transfer" between the US and other nations and those who analyze how culture affects American foreign policy and the worldview of American policymakers. Furthermore, Hogan and Paterson assert that this trend also changed the types of sources diplomatic historians utilize. With the new cultural turn, many began using archives of institutions such as the US Information Agency or the Agency for International Development, while others even increasingly

look to non-governmental records.¹³ This trend is especially true for American historians of the Cold War. As Robert Griffith outlines in this article “The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies,” before the 1990s there were very few works on Cold War culture and even fewer that explained the Cold War as a cultural phenomenon. By the turn of the twenty-first century, though, more and more historians, along with their peers in American studies, anthropology, literature, and sociology, created a plethora of scholarship on American Cold War culture and “how that culture shaped and was in turn shaped by the Cold War.”¹⁴ Other scholars in the field, such as Scott Lucas and Walter Hixson, concur that the study of the Cold War has much to gain from cultural insights. Lucas contends that “there are signs that culture, which was integral to the quest for supremacy in the Cold War, will finally receive due recognition.”¹⁵ In other words, as Hixson asserts, diplomatic historians had begun to not only focus on American interactions abroad but also “the narratives that produced consent behind foreign policy.”¹⁶

Similarly, this work seeks to add to the increasing body of scholarship on American identity and ideology, especially in the context of the Cold War. In the broader field of diplomatic history, many scholars of the last three decades have begun to explore the centrality of ideology to American foreign policy. One of the first historians to take this approach was Frank A. Ninkovich in his work *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950*. While he admitted that American leaders consistently relegated cultural relations to a minor role in their international strategies,

¹³ Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson, *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 7-8.

¹⁴ Robert Griffith, “The Cultural Turn in Cold War Studies,” *Reviews in American History* 29 (2001): 150.

¹⁵ Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher, eds., *Cultural and International History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 206.

¹⁶ Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 3.

examining the methods and messages put forth by America's cultural diplomacy can illuminate broader notions of "national character" and "the larger cultural forces at work."¹⁷ A few years later, Michael H. Hunt expanded on this concept even further in *Ideology and US Foreign Policy*. He contended that national ideology was central to explaining American foreign policy throughout the nation's history. Most notably, American ideology has always centered around three notions in particular: the existence of a racial hierarchy, a hostility toward and resistance of "un-American" leftist revolutions, and the connection between national greatness and the desire to spread American democracy abroad. Still, he asserted, leaders have constantly reshaped or reassembled these notions throughout American history, and thus American ideology has never been completely fixed or static.¹⁸ Finally, historian Walter L. Hixson reinforced these earlier works in his book *The Myth of American Diplomacy*. He argued that "national identity drives US foreign policy" and those notions, especially the idea that the United States is destined to be a "beacon of liberty" and assert its power globally, is at the heart of America's aggressive foreign policy.¹⁹

Building on these works, other scholars have more recently examined the influence of ideology specifically on America's Cold War policy. American studies professor Scott Lucas, in his book *Freedom's War*, agreed with Hunt on the centrality of ideology, asserting

The United States, just like the Soviet system with which it contended for so long, has an "ideology." It may not be as rigidly presented as Marxism-

¹⁷ Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 2-4.

¹⁸ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 12-17, 171, 172.

¹⁹ Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 1-2.

Leninism...however, it still serves to justify and, to some extent, to organize political, economic, and cultural activity.²⁰

Therefore, his central argument concluded that the Cold War was, at its heart, a clash of ideologies, and in this clash, America's guiding force was the idea that the United States had the duty to spread freedom abroad. Furthermore, this ideology was not imposed on an "unwilling or passive [American] public" but was instead willingly advocated by private groups such as the National Committee for a Free Europe, the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia, American Friends of Russian Freedom, and many others.²¹ Additional studies, such as the aforementioned works by John Fousek, concur with Lucas and further reinforce the importance of ideology and national identity in driving American foreign policy. My research seeks to bolster those arguments and also add a new consideration to this strain of diplomatic history. Ideology was not only important in shaping how American policymakers interacted with the world or in justifying US Cold War foreign policy. Notions of America's values also helped determine how ordinary Americans conceptualized the world and their nation's place in it. This project shows specifically how one segment of Americans interpreted and utilized prevailing views of American ideology in their interaction with Soviet society at different points throughout Cold War.

In addition to contributing to the growing scholarship on American ideology, this research also fits into the recent push by diplomatic historians to consider the importance of non-governmental actors in American foreign policy. Historian Akira Iriye describes these as individuals or groups "outside of the formal state apparatus" who do not view

²⁰ Scott Lucas, *Freedom's War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 1-2.

²¹ Lucas, *Freedom's War*, 2.

direct political activities as their primary objective. Iriye was one of the first diplomatic historians to assert the importance of such people in his article “A Century of NGOs.” American non-governmental organizations, all of which promoted international outreach or cultural interchange, grew dramatically in the twentieth century, reaching over 1,500 by the 1980s. Therefore, he argued, the American government was not the only entity shaping perception of the United States abroad, but instead these groups played a significant role as well.²² Additional scholars have since taken this less government-centered approach to American foreign affairs. Historian Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht applauded these efforts, noting that these new works were creating a more diverse field of diplomatic history. Because of scholars’ growing attention to private actors, she contended, international history had taken on “a profound pluralism,” including “a growing awareness that the state is only one out of many principal agencies in the international arena.”²³ One of these scholars includes Justin Hart and his look at Cold War public diplomacy in his recent work *Empire of Ideas*. He argues that American policymakers’ incorporation of public diplomacy and cultural exchange into their larger Cold War strategy meant that “ordinary people played the defining role in creating the image of ‘America’ projected to the world.” While American leaders could do their best to shape that image, it came down to individual Americans on the ground to decide how exactly they wanted to present the United States to peoples abroad.²⁴ My work agrees with these scholars that, especially during the Cold War, individual Americans played a

²² Akira Iriye, “A Century of NGOs,” *Diplomatic History* 23 (Summer 1999): 421-435.

²³ Jessica C. E. Gienow-Hecht and Frank Schumacher, eds., *Culture and International History* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 5.

²⁴ Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 10-12.

vital role in shaping the global perception of the United States. Still, in terms of those on academic exchange to the Soviet Union, they appear to have had less power than Hart conjectures. The Cold War consensus, explored at the end of the following chapter, and American ideology more broadly was a powerful force in this era. The fact that American exchangees reshaped their tactics and rhetoric in direct correlation with broader political shifts show that they could only stray so far from those prevailing and pervasive notions of American identity. Specifically, they consistently confirmed the idea of American exceptionalism through their actions and behavior while abroad. So while this research underscores the importance of these non-governmental actors, it also places them within a larger Cold War context that they played a part in perpetuating.

This work will begin by outlining the development of American cultural exchange. It will trace the first major instances of these international interactions in the late nineteenth century and then follow the increasing involvement of the American government in adopting these once-private sector methods. This second chapter will culminate with the 1958 cultural exchange agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union, which allowed for the first official US-Soviet academic exchanges to begin. Subsequent chapters will trace the exchange through three periods, 1958-1968, 1969-1979, and 1980-1991, showing how political and cultural shifts and larger foreign policy happenings of these eras changed both the health and size of the exchange program and also affected how the American participants themselves perceived of the program and their purposes abroad.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTING A “FULL AND FAIR” IMAGE OF AMERICAN LIFE, 1900-1958

Though United States government-supported cultural exchange became a relatively well accepted method of advancing American interests by the latter half of the twentieth century, this was a fairly new phenomenon. Various private groups had promoted cultural interchange in the pre-Cold War era, but the United States government had mostly kept itself detached from these incursions into the cultural sphere, especially during peacetime. As made apparent by the history of American cultural exchange throughout the twentieth century, American leaders very begrudgingly took up the mantle of cultural purveyors. The ideologically-charged Cold War necessitated a peacetime exchange program, and American leaders finally established new government organizations that sought to guide the message and means of these intellectual transmissions, including those that specifically targeted the Soviet Union. Still, each post-war presidential administration encouraged private actors to help facilitate these exchanges, including educational exchange, in order to avoid the negative connotation many Americans associated with government propaganda. This chapter will serve as a foundational background to subsequent chapters, providing a synthesis of historical works that have explored how the United States government became involved in cultural exchange and how such programs came to be extended to the Soviet Union after World War II. It will also show that the vast majority of existing historical scholarship on

American cultural exchange only examines these efforts from the perspective of those high officials, either in the private or public sphere, who organized them. While historians have given thorough examinations of the motivations of these individuals, almost no literature exists that examines the ideals, perceptions, and experiences of the exchange participants who actually travelled abroad as representatives of America. Subsequent chapters will use the experience US-Soviet academic exchangees to began remedying this omission.

The earliest efforts to disseminate American values across the globe began in the nineteenth century with the activities of several private groups. Missionaries in particular, driven by a sense of American exceptionalism coupled with evangelical fervor, travelled to Latin America, Africa, and Asia to promote uplift and “civilization” through spreading Protestant Christianity. They especially focused on building schools and providing education as a means not only to promote the Gospel, but also to foster American ideals such as democracy and individualism. American missionaries even singled out promising young locals to send back to the United States to receive a Western education. With such training, missionaries postulated, these individuals could come back to their homelands and become influential Christian leaders in their respective communities.²⁵ Throughout most of the nineteenth century, this was almost the entire scope of American student exchange programs. This was partially because international scholars generally held European universities in much higher esteem than American institutions. While many Americans travelled abroad for higher education, very few students had an interest in

²⁵ Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 4; Liping Bu, *Making the World Like Us: Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2003), 15-17.

studying in the United States. By the mid-nineteenth century, students from regions in Asia, such as China and India, did begin to enroll in American colleges, but reciprocal exchanges remained rare.²⁶

Likewise, academic exchange between the United States and Russia, as well as cultural exchange more broadly between the two nations, remained essentially nonexistent in the nineteenth century. Unlike America's missionary zeal for other foreign regions, Americans were largely indifferent to the plight of Russians before the twentieth century. Political leaders, diplomats, and the American people tended to view Russia as backward, economically weak, and a seedbed of radical activity. Though a "free Russia" movement did develop in the 1880s and 1890s, with American activists collaborating with Russian revolutionaries to end tsarist oppression, no official or unofficial cultural exchange programs between the two nations emerged in that period.²⁷

The first years of the twentieth century would bring about an increase, however gradual, in efforts aimed at American cultural transmission. As in previous years, these endeavors generally stemmed from private initiatives and, increasingly in the early 1900s, from philanthropic foundations. Organizations such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, founded in 1910, and the Rockefeller Foundation, established in 1913, laid the groundwork for future large-scale cultural exchange programs, and especially focused on promoting academic interchange. These efforts were spurred on, in part, by economic incentives. Leaders of the Rockefeller Foundation, for instance, believed that spreading education through exchange programs helped grow the middle

²⁶ Teresa Brawner Bevis and Christopher J. Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 31, 34.

²⁷ David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" Since 1881* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7.

class in the developing world and thus provided burgeoning markets receptive to American business.²⁸ However, as historians have recently uncovered, these major philanthropic foundations were also driven by a desire to promote American foreign policy interests, showing that even in this early period, the heart of cultural exchange was in improving America's image worldwide.²⁹ John D. Rockefeller, Jr. believed that international academic ties in particular would help create friendly relations between the United States and other nations.³⁰ The first president of the Carnegie Endowment, Elihu Root, concurred, asserting the need to utilize cultural connections to assist in remedying international conflict. In carrying out this objective, the Carnegie Endowment initiated what would become the standard cultural programs of the Cold War period in the years soon after its founding in 1910; these included the exchange of students and professors, the exchange of publications and books, English language instruction abroad, and the exchange of experts in various professional fields. These early initiatives focused mostly on parts of Latin America and the Far East.³¹ Still, even though private efforts, especially through philanthropic foundations, dominated the cultural diplomacy of the early twentieth century, the American government soon made its first forays into what political scientist Joseph Nye has termed "soft power" strategies.³²

²⁸ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 5; Richard T. Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, Inc., 2005), 22.

²⁹ Edward H. Berman, *The Ideology of Philanthropy: The Influence of the Carnegie, Ford, and Rockefeller Foundations on American Foreign Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 3.

³⁰ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 5.

³¹ Frank A. Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: US Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 8-12.

³² Political scientist Joseph S. Nye, Jr. first coined the term "soft power" in the early 1990s. According to Nye, "soft power" is defined as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments," and "it arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies." [Joseph S. Nye, Jr. *Soft Power: The Means of Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004),

The United States government first delved into cultural exchange programs by promoting educational cooperation with China. In the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, the major Western powers, including the United States, forced huge indemnities on the Chinese government. Secretary of State John Hay convinced President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 to repurpose those debts to fund a program allowing Chinese students to study in the United States. Hay envisioned a dual foreign policy purpose, both improving the image of the United States in China and spreading Western ideals through the returning Chinese participants.³³

Still, throughout the early twentieth century, American cultural relations with Russia remained illusory in terms of large-scale or official exchanges. Though there were some cultural transmissions between the United States and Russia, such as exchanges of publications, music, and travelling entertainers, educational contact remained limited. Furthermore, very few American universities offered Russian studies, which limited the number of potential students available for exchange programs to Russia. In this period, only two American institutions offered instruction in Russian history and merely three universities allowed students to study Russian language and literature.³⁴ The Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 almost completely severed Russian-American cultural ties, and it would be decades before those connections could be reestablished and expanded upon.

The experience of the Great War finally provided the impetus for the United States government to create a large-scale cultural exchange and informational program,

x.] I will use the term throughout this work to describe the American government's efforts at psychological warfare and cultural transmission.

³³ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 22; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 5.

³⁴ J. D. Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence: American-Soviet Cultural Relations, 1917-1958* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1983), 8-9.

although American officials saw this mostly as a wartime expedient that would cease at the end of the conflict. Realizing the importance of influencing public opinion as a method to help win the war, within days of America's entrance into the First World War in the spring of 1917, President Woodrow Wilson issued an executive order to create a new government division charged with leading America's propaganda efforts. Wilson chose journalist George Creel to head the new organization, called the Committee for Public Information (CPI). The use of the word "information" represented a very conscious decision, as both Wilson and Creel knew that the term "propaganda" implied manipulation and deceit in most Americans' minds.³⁵ The CPI oversaw domestic methods to increase support for the war among American citizens; more significantly, it also worked to influence foreign perceptions of the United States through means of cultural transmission, an unprecedented role for the American government. For instance, the CPI disseminated American publications abroad, either by sending articles to foreign presses, using planes to drop leaflets on European cities, or establishing libraries abroad stocked with American books. In all, the CPI oversaw the distribution of a staggering 75 million American publications during the course of World War I. The CPI also sponsored speaking tours, patriotic films, English-language schools, exhibitions, and radio broadcasts all over Europe.³⁶ Despite its effective outreach and Creel's efforts to maintain the CPI as an "informational" program, government-sponsored cultural projection became mired in suspicion among both American politicians and the public. Therefore,

³⁵ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 27-28; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 6; Thomas C. Sorensen, *The Word War: The Story of American Propaganda* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968), 5-6.

³⁶ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 30; Sorensen, *The World War*, 6; John W. Henderson, *The United States Information Agency* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1969), 23-26.

by the summer of 1919, just a few months after fighting had ceased in Europe, Congress dissolved the Committee for Public Information. It was almost two decades before the American government would again consider venturing into the sphere of cultural interchange, and it was only when a second world war seemed imminent that American officials felt compelled to recreate and expand many of Creel's programs.³⁷

Throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, private organizations again took the initiative in promoting international cultural exchange. During this period, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover attempted to persuade Congress to sponsor scholarships for international students to study in the United States, but Congress rejected his proposal. This set the precedent for the next decade during which the American government played no substantial part in promoting or organizing cultural or educational exchanges.³⁸

Private organizations enthusiastically filled this vacuum, however, and these cultural internationalist groups expanded at an unprecedented rate. For instance, both the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Endowment broadened their previous efforts at cultural outreach. Also, the Teachers College at Columbia University created an international program in 1923 whereby its students could go abroad to Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa to lead educational reform efforts in those regions. These were just a few examples of this period's expanded efforts, though; surveys

³⁷ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 9; Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 28; Sorensen, *The Word War*, 6.

³⁸ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 22, 39-40; Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 5.

conducted by the American Council on Education outlined that by 1925, more than 120 American organizations were engaged in international educational activities³⁹

One of the most significant academic exchange associations to emerge from the inter-war period, which laid the groundwork for future cultural organizations, was the Institute of International Education. Following World War I, organizers of the Carnegie Endowment realized that their burgeoning academic exchange program was quickly becoming too cumbersome to operate solely within the confines of their foundation. They decided to establish a conjoined agency that would specifically oversee their educational activities. Thus, with a startup grant of \$30,000, Carnegie officials founded the Institute of International Education (IIE) in 1919. The IIE was particularly instrumental because, as historian Frank Ninkovich asserted, it was “the nation’s first body devoted exclusively to the systematization of cultural relations.”⁴⁰ Still, while the IIE became the largest organization for the promotion of academic exchange, many other foundations and agencies in the post-World War I era built upon its seminal efforts. By 1925, more than 120 American organizations actively promoted international educational activities.⁴¹ Underpinning this trend, universities in the United States began offering more courses on the study of other nations and regions during this period, laying the curricular foundation for the field of international relations and providing an impetus for study abroad programs.⁴²

³⁹ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 10; Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 51, 115-116; Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 51.

⁴⁰ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 41; Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 53; Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 18-19.

⁴¹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 51; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 10.

⁴² Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 40.

Despite the wide variety of these inter-war cultural organizations, they appeared to be united in their core beliefs and aspirations. After the horrific experience of the First World War, cultural internationalists stressed repeatedly the importance of cross-national understanding. As contemporary political scientist Mary Follett wrote, “The old-fashioned hero went out to conquer his enemy; the modern hero goes out to disarm his enemy through creating a mutual understanding.” These advocates concluded that international cultural cooperation, and academic exchange in particular, was the means to achieve peace. Not only would such efforts help avoid another global cataclysm, but they would serve to spread American democratic values and promote a positive impression of the United States all over the world.⁴³

Regardless of many Americans’ apprehensions about the 1917 communist revolution in Russia, this expansion of American cultural exchange programs even extended to the newly-formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and interaction between the United States and the Soviet Union extended across many segments of society in the 1920s and early 1930s. Indeed, American and Soviet citizens maintained so much contact with one another in the inter-war period that the level of cooperation they reached was not matched again until the 1960s. Both “informal” cultural exchange- such as relief programs, industrial and technological exchange, religious outreach, and tourism- and more explicit cultural relations in realms such as entertainment, art, and education served to bridge the boundary between East and West in this period.⁴⁴

⁴³ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 51; Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order*, 60, 72-73; Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas*, 19.

⁴⁴ By the term “informal” cultural exchange, I am referring to programs that led to direct and personal interactions between Americans and Soviets, but not with the specific goal of promoting culture or

In the inter-war period, American and Soviet citizens interacted directly through a number of different programs and methods, and even when these connections did not fit easily under the term “cultural exchange,” these personal interactions often promoted understanding and good feelings between the two nations. One of the first large-scale connections between the United States and Communist Russia was American relief efforts during and after the Russian Civil War. A horrific famine overtook the region in the early 1920s, and Herbert Hoover’s humanitarian organization, the American Relief Administration (ARA), oversaw food distribution. Organizers of this aid program recognized this undertaking as more than a mere benevolent mission, however. The ARA organizers also utilized their work in Communist Russia as a means of cultural projection, hoping that it would encourage goodwill towards the United States among the Russian people and thus conceivably prompt them to overthrow Bolshevik rule.⁴⁵ The communist victory in the civil war and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet Union did not bring an end to American-Soviet contacts, though. Evangelical missionaries, particularly Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Adventists- travelled to Soviet Russia in relatively large numbers during most of the 1920s. The Bolshevik regime tolerated religious incursions into their country in this early period, allowing these American missionaries personal and direct interaction with the Soviet people. This was due to the fact that Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin believed that an important component of Soviet success was learning from the American public education system. Therefore Soviet officials welcomed many American missionaries, such as Methodist minister Julius F.

international understanding. Though cross-cultural goodwill was often a secondary goal of these programs, achieving such was not the explicit or official purpose of these programs.

⁴⁵ Lisa Berman, “The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy” (PhD diss., Hampshire College, 1991), 4; Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 61.

Hecker, who promoted education in conjunction with their religious mission. Hecker created a series of correspondence courses and teacher training programs in the USSR in these first years after the communist revolution, helping to begin repairing an educational system that had been disrupted by the First World War and the subsequent Russian Civil War. However, by 1929 this openness began to be scaled back as the Bolshevik regime began to view the burgeoning Protestant movement as a dangerous rival in their effort to win over young Russians to the communist cause.⁴⁶

Throughout this same period, academic exchanges unaffiliated with religious institutions began to grow between the United States and the Soviet Union, though historians have struggled to arrive at a precise number of exchangees because of a lack of records on these activities. For instance, in 1921 the Rockefeller Foundation began to fund young Soviet scientists who wished to study in American universities. Additionally, the foundation granted \$15,000 to Soviet scientific institutions in the 1920s to provide them with adequate laboratory equipment and access to foreign medical publications. Another proponent of these efforts was Stephen P. Duggan, a Columbia University Professor and founder of the Institute for International Education. In 1925 Duggan travelled to Moscow on an invitation from the Soviet government to initiate an academic exchange program of both students and professors, and he finalized an agreement with Soviet officials that six Soviet students would study in American universities in the following months. Because historians have not found exact records of this interchange, determining the volume of exchangees in this period is difficult. Historian J. D. Parks uncovered records showing a visiting Soviet professor at Princeton in 1925, at least

⁴⁶ Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire,"* 60-61, 68-70.

twelve Soviet students attending American universities on Rockefeller Foundation grants in this period, and a group of sixty-four Soviet students enrolled in American engineering schools in 1931, but quantification beyond that has so far proved impossible. Still, these first contacts represented some of the first organized attempts to promote relatively large-scale academic exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Other American influences and contacts came from tourists. Many curious Americans sought out a first-hand experience of the Soviet Union in the inter-war period, and many recounted that they were well-received by both the government and the people. Although the flow of tourists was slow at first, with only 150 Americans visiting the USSR in 1927, this number swelled to almost 10,000 by 1932.⁴⁷ Another avenue of American-Soviet contact in the inter-war period was through industrial and commercial interaction. Beginning in the late 1920s, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin sought rapid industrialization through the First Five Year Plan, and his regime appealed to many American corporations for support. Industrial leaders from Ford, American Locomotive, General Electric, and International Harvester, among others, sold products and provided technological assistance to the Soviet Union, and they accrued large profits from these exports. Despite the US government's refusal to grant diplomatic recognition to the new communist government, American industrialists had no qualms about conducting commercial dealings with the USSR; as a result, trade revenue from Soviet contracts almost tripled from 1921 to 1930, reaching the unprecedented level of \$95 million annually. These were not merely long-distance commercial transactions, though, as these trade deals also prompted more personal interaction between the American and Soviet

⁴⁷ Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 24-28.

people. American companies commissioned their experts to go to the Soviet Union and provide instruction on how to use their machinery. In 1930 alone, a Soviet official remarked that there were about 700 American engineers in the USSR who were helping overhaul and industrialize the Soviet economy.⁴⁸ In addition to these exchanges that lacked explicit cultural overtures (even though they did tend to promote personal cross-national interaction), more organized and focused cultural exchange organizations emerged in the same period that sought to construct mutual understanding between East and West more overtly.

While the US government refused to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union throughout the 1920s, making governmental cultural exchange agreements impossible, new privately-organized American groups filled this void and helped facilitate cultural interaction in the inter-war period. The Soviets, meanwhile, appeared to show greater receptiveness to some forms of cultural exchange, establishing the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (VOKS) in 1925. Officially, its purpose was to “promote knowledge and mutual understanding,” but a major underlying impetus was to gain access to Western science and technology. A group of American academics and social activists reciprocated in 1926 by forming the American Society for Cultural Relations with Russia. The society elected William Smith, president of Smith College, as its first president and John Dewey, influential educational reformer, as vice president. Other leading reformers, such as Jane Addams, made up its more than one thousand members. According to the organization, it sought:

⁴⁸ Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 2; Berman, “The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy,” 4-7; Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 61; Raymond Dennett and Joseph E. Johnson, eds., *Negotiating with the Russians* (Boston: World Peace Foundation, 1951), 241-242.

to bring together those who are interested in Russian life and culture; to promote cultural intercourse between the two countries, and especially the interchange of students, doctors, scholars, artists, scientists, and teachers; [and] to collect and diffuse information in both countries on developments in science, education, philosophy, art, literature, and social and economic life.

Underlying this reasoning was the desire to introduce the Soviets to American values.

Through negotiations between these two entities, exchanges in exhibits, professional delegations, entertainers, students, and professors took place, although at a relatively modest rate.⁴⁹

However, by the 1930s these culture efforts would soon dissipate almost entirely. Though diplomatic relations between Washington and Moscow reopened in 1933, with President Franklin D. Roosevelt officially recognizing the Soviet Union, subsequent years actually witnessed a vast decrease in cultural interchange between the two countries. By the mid- to late-1930s, Stalin began tightening his government's control of all segments of Soviet life, including culture. As part of these efforts, the regime began portraying foreigners in the Soviet Union as spies and saboteurs, and one result was that by 1937 Soviet officials began turning away American tourists in large numbers. Compounding this trend was the fact that American leaders did little to combat this growing Soviet resistance to cultural interaction. By this point, cultural exchange with the Soviet Union was not resisted by the State Department, but neither did they actively promote it. Thus, due to Moscow's resistance and Washington's indifference, almost all person-to-person contacts between the two nations ceased and would not resume for

⁴⁹ Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy," 5-6; Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 21-23.

another thirty years.⁵⁰ Still, even though the prospects for US-Soviet exchange seemed to be quickly fading, the US government in the 1930s began dramatically altering its stance on cultural affairs, taking on an unusually prominent role in organizing cultural programs and using them to advance foreign policy objectives.

While US-Soviet exchanges stagnated in the late 1930s, the American government began exploring other avenues for cultural projection, notably in Latin America, and its efforts there would involve the government more directly than ever before in peacetime cultural affairs. Specifically, in 1938 Franklin Roosevelt's administration created the Division of Cultural Relations within the State Department, which directed official cultural and educational exchange programs. Global crises provided the most pressing motivating factor for Roosevelt's administration to embrace cultural diplomacy, specifically the rise of fascism and the effective use of education, art, and culture by the new totalitarian regimes. The decision was also influenced by the fact that Britain and France had recently begun to venture into utilizing cultural diplomacy and American officials wished to explore these avenues as well. Its establishment constituted a revolutionary step, illustrating for the first time that cultural diplomacy could be a major component of America's foreign policy.⁵¹

The earliest efforts by the newly-created Division of Cultural Relations centered on Latin America. As part of his Good Neighbor Policy, Roosevelt sought to use direct exchanges to improve the United States' relationship with Latin America and also

⁵⁰ Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy," 7-8; Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire,"* 61-62; Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence,* 2, 53.

⁵¹ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings,* 49; Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order,* 90, 112.

counter German and Italian influence in the region.⁵² To initiate these exchange agreements, leaders from the United States and many Latin American countries met at the Buenos Aires Conference in 1936. Secretary of State Cordell Hull headed the American delegation and one of his proposals was the “facilitation by government action of the exchange of students and teachers.” That recommendation for academic exchange was the only provision introduced by the American delegation that actually made it into the final treaty. It required each of the twenty-one signatory countries to finance the exchange of at least two graduate students per year, per country. This was a modest effort, and in the subsequent seven years only about 1,200 Latin American students, professors, and professionals came to the United States, and merely 225 American students studied in Latin America. Still, the American government had now initiated formal cultural exchange programs with the goal of improving foreign peoples’ perceptions of the United States. This humble beginning set the precedent for future programs and served as a State Department testing ground for subsequent efforts all around the world.⁵³

The onset of World War II provided the impetus to transform the nascent cultural exchange program in Latin America into one that attempted to attract hearts and minds globally, and by the end of the conflict, cultural diplomacy was firmly embedded into American foreign policy.⁵⁴ Even before United States military intervention in the Second World War, President Roosevelt began formulating a propaganda strategy by creating the

⁵² Gary E. Kraske, *Missionaries of the Book: The American Library Profession and the Origins of the United States Cultural Diplomacy* (London: Praeger, 1985), 6.

⁵³ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 6; Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 27; Justin Hart, *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of US Foreign Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 3, 15-17.

⁵⁴ Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 3.

Office of the Coordinator of Information by executive order in July 1941. Roosevelt appointed Colonel William J. Donovan, a New York attorney and Medal of Honor recipient for his service in World War I, as the head of the agency. While the administration conceived the agency as an intelligence gathering organization, Donovan received permission from Roosevelt to also devote a segment of the office to cultural and informational activities. This branch came to be called the Foreign Information Service (FIS), and one of its first efforts was immediately to begin a radio broadcast to Europe. By February 1942, Donovan and his office had created one of the most enduring and well-known informational programs to emerge from this period, the Voice of America (VOA) radio broadcast. It transmitted American news all over the world and would continue into (and even beyond) the Cold War era. The Voice of America conducted its first broadcast in German, and it repeatedly included the assurance that: “The news may be good or bad. We shall tell you the truth.”⁵⁵ This sentiment foreshadowed the propaganda technique that Cold War cultural tacticians would use in the years after the war.

After Pearl Harbor, the Roosevelt administration saw a need to better organize America’s various informational efforts and consolidate them under one umbrella agency. As a result, the president created the Office of War Information (OWI) in June 1942 through Executive Order 9182. Roosevelt chose journalist Elmer Davis to direct this new agency. Not only did the OWI oversee domestic propaganda measures to bolster American citizens’ enthusiasm for the war, but it also established a presence overseas in an attempt to create a favorable impression of the United States among foreign

⁵⁵ Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 13-14; Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 30-31.

populations. Directing these efforts was the previously established Foreign Information Service, which was renamed the US Information Service (USIS) and functioned as the overseas branch of the OWI. The OWI was significant in getting the American government involved in large-scale ideological operations again, and by the end of the war these American cultural efforts had reached over forty countries.⁵⁶

The Second World War also had a significant effect on US-Soviet cultural relations in particular, as both ordinary citizens and government leaders on each side acquired a heightened interest in one another during this period. This curiosity was a logical extension of the wartime alliance between the United States and the Soviet Union, as these strange bedfellows sought to understand one another better.⁵⁷ As an antecedent to cultural exchange, American universities began offering an increasing number of courses on Russian language and history as they quickly realized their own acute ignorance of their nation's new-found ally. Before the onset of the war, only about ten American universities taught the Russian language, but after the war that number had grown to over 140.⁵⁸ Soviet citizens, too, became more interested in the West, and the United States in particular, as a result of World War II. The experience of the war gave the Soviet people a more significant view of the outside world than they had been exposed to in decades. For example, as explored by political scientist Robert English, Lend-Lease aid from the United States, in the form of such goods as "airplanes, automobiles, foodstuffs, and other

⁵⁶ Amanda Wood Aucoin, "Deconstructing the American Way of Life: Soviet Responses to Cultural Exchange and American Information Activity During the Khrushchev Years," (PhD diss., University of Arkansas, 2001), 30; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 15; Wilson P. Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy: The Story of the US Information Agency* (Boulder: Lynne Ripener Publishers, 2004), 34; Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 80-83; Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 31-33.

⁵⁷ Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 63.

⁵⁸ Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy," 8-9; Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 20; Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 71.

goods...conveyed impressions [of the United States] as a land of plenty.” In addition, the Soviet government eased negative propaganda targeted at the United States during the course of the US-Soviet alliance, and even permitted some positive sentiments to be expressed toward the West. For instance, Stalin’s regime allowed the showing of some American films during the war years.⁵⁹

With a new-found appreciation for cultural diplomacy resulting from their forays into Latin America, the State Department and American leaders sought to create similar agreements with the Soviet Union during World War II in the hopes of opening Soviet society to Western influence. In 1943, American Ambassador to the Soviet Union William Harrison Standley proposed many ways to expand US-Soviet cultural contacts in this period, and Soviet Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs S. A. Lozovsky and Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov proved receptive to most of his suggestions. These proposals included an agreement that allowed twenty-one Soviet college students to study at Columbia University for eight months. Another accord allowed for the English translation of Russian social science and humanities works. Perhaps the most far-reaching of the wartime cultural programs, though, was the publication of *America Illustrated* in the Soviet Union. An operation overseen by the Office of War Information, *America Illustrated* was a monthly magazine about life in the United States. After arduous negotiations, Soviet officials agreed to its distribution, and although it had a circulation of

⁵⁹ Robert D. English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 44.

only about 32,000 copies each month, evidence suggests that the periodical was very popular and individual copies often passed hand-to-hand among many readers.⁶⁰

Several additional American diplomats and politicians stressed that this wartime situation presented a unique opportunity to use cultural relations, such as exchanges and publications, to force an opening of Soviet society. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman asserted in 1944 that, “Many of the problems of our relations with Russia center around the relative isolation of the Russian public from the general currents of the world thought and world feeling,” and so he argued that the United States should push for collaboration between the American and Soviet people. Similarly, Secretary of the American Embassy in Moscow, John Melby, contended that the United States could use informational and cultural programs to exploit the sympathy for America that already existed among the Soviet people. Then after a few years, these programs would “create a strong enough feeling of internationalism among opinion-influencing groups in the Soviet Union to... [cause] the small top policy group to take a more tolerant attitude toward foreign groups.”⁶¹ It seems likely that Soviet officials were not oblivious to these intentions though, and as the war was coming to an end, they repeatedly resisted American efforts to expand cultural relations any further.⁶² American leaders continued to utilize cultural programs as an instrument of foreign policy in other regions, but the Soviet Union remained impermeable to such outreach for more than a decade after the war. Regardless, these attempts show a continuity between the goals of cultural exchange

⁶⁰ Berman, “The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange,” 9; Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 102-3; Parks, *Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence*, 4.

⁶¹ Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 100-101.

⁶² Aucoin, “Deconstructing the American Way of Life,” 43-44; Dizard, *Inventing Public Diplomacy*, 29.

during the war years and the aims of Cold War programs, both of which aspired to open Soviet society to Western ideas and influences.

Though new president Harry S. Truman disbanded the Office of War Information at the conclusion of World War II, this did not mean that the United States government abandoned the use of soft power techniques after the war. The experience of the war and the harnessing of mass communications in global propaganda efforts had expanded most American diplomats' conceptions of what constituted diplomacy. Now many within the American leadership began viewing cultural efforts as a form of foreign policy. In 1944, even before the war had come to a close, the State Department created the position of Assistant Secretary of State for Public and Cultural Affairs and named Archibald MacLeish, a Librarian of Congress and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, to fill it. This new office would continue to help direct American cultural efforts after the war. In addition, following Truman's executive order disbanding the OWI, all functions of the agency were absorbed into the State Department, illustrating the perceived importance of post-war overseas cultural projection. Suddenly, the small exchange programs with Latin American before World War II had mushroomed into a more comprehensive and global operation that now had a permanent place in America's foreign policy establishment.⁶³ In the following decades, cultural exchange programs would certainly struggle with such problems as underfunding and critics' doubts about their effectiveness; still, by 1945, cultural diplomacy was thoroughly established as a legitimate method to advance America's national interests, even in peacetime. In the Cold War ideological struggle that exploded in the post-World War II era, these methods became more expansive than ever.

⁶³ Hart, *Empire of Ideas*, 3, 71-73, 106.

As the post-war world became enveloped by growing tensions between the capitalist and communist powers, American leaders sought to broaden their means of cultural diplomacy as a way to combat the perceived Soviet threat. Though there were many vocal critics of such methods and though early Cold War cultural programs struggled with disorganization, the efforts by the Truman administration in the late 1940s and early 1950s laid the groundwork for future cultural efforts that were more extensive and better coordinated. Much of the timidity that characterized initial post-war inquests into the expansion of cultural programs was in reaction to critics, in both the public and private sphere, who viewed propaganda as merely a wartime measure that was contrary to American values in a time of peace. Therefore, proponents of these programs continued to refer to them carefully as “informational” projects instead of “propaganda” in an attempt to ward off discrediting attacks by opponents.⁶⁴

Initial post-war cultural projects had two main objectives: to obstruct communist influence by waging psychological warfare with the Soviet Union and to spread capitalism and democracy by creating a positive perception of the United States abroad. As Cold War historians have recently discovered, the goal of “liberation” in Eastern Europe was not merely a hollow aspiration; instead, officials in the Truman administration sincerely believed that waging psychological warfare constituted an effective way to corrode communist influence. The leading architect of containment, diplomat George F. Kennan, articulated this very idea, arguing that the United States had to “compel” the Soviet regime to denounce its expansionist aims. This would be accomplished, not through military force, but by winning over the Soviet people through

⁶⁴ Robert E. Summers, *America's Weapons of Psychological Warfare* (New York: Wilson, 1951), 12-13, 24.

cultural programs and launching a psychological assault on the Soviet government.⁶⁵ Furthermore, Truman and many in his administration realized that this could be accomplished through methods such as academic exchange. As the president contended in a speech in April 1950, in order to combat “false” and “crude” communist propaganda, the United States had to “encourage many more people from other countries to visit us here...We should find more opportunities for foreign students to study in our schools and universities.”⁶⁶ As a parallel goal to countering communist propaganda and scaling back its influence, American policymakers further desired to instill a positive image of the United States in foreign minds. Again, Kennan contended that the United States government should strive to counter the “negative impressions about this country that mark so much of world opinion.”⁶⁷ Similarly, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs William Benton stressed the salience of using cultural programs to present a “full and fair picture” of the American way of life to peoples abroad.⁶⁸ These sentiments would help inspire Truman’s 1950 “Campaign of Truth,” a program aimed at countering Soviet propaganda not solely with harsh anti-communist rhetoric but instead by focusing on the many benefits of American capitalism and democracy.⁶⁹ In the coming years, American officials would rely particularly on ordinary Americans as exemplars of the

⁶⁵ Foglesong, *The American Mission and the “Evil Empire,”* 109; Gregory Mitrovich, *Undermining the Kremlin: America’s Strategy to Subvert the Soviet Bloc, 1947-1956* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 2, 6-8. Also see: Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997) and Scott Lucas, *Freedom’s War: The American Crusade Against the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ Bevis and Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 131.

⁶⁷ Liping Bu and Frank Ninkovich, eds., *The Cultural Turn: Essays in the History of US Foreign Relations* (Chicago: Imprint Publishers, 2001), 9.

⁶⁸ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 155.

⁶⁹ Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 14.

quality and superiority of American life by sending them on missions and exchanges abroad.

Despite the Truman administration's public support for cultural diplomacy, the official agencies designed to oversee these efforts barely limped along during the president's two terms and were beset by constant reorganizations and major staff changes. The newly-appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, William Benton, immediately faced cutbacks to his office after the war. The State Department reduced the staff from its war-time high of 13,000 personnel to merely 3,100 and slashed the budget by 80% in just a few months.⁷⁰ Exacerbating this stark situation, America's cultural and informational division went through four periods of major reorganization in just seven years, each time changing the name, focus, and director of the organization.⁷¹ In the midst of these perpetual fluctuations, Truman created yet another cultural agency in 1951, the Psychological Strategy Board, through which he intended to bring propaganda, information, and psychological warfare under a single umbrella. Similar to the State Department's Office of Public Affairs, the Psychological Strategy Board was both inadequate and underfunded and further plagued by bureaucratic infighting.⁷²

Arguably more effective than Truman's personal efforts to organize cultural exchange, Congress passed new legislation in this period, the Fulbright Act and the Smith-Mundt Act, which provided the framework for educational exchange for the remainder of the twentieth century. Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright had for years

⁷⁰ Lucas, *Freedom's War*, 12.

⁷¹ The name of each organization was The Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (1945-1947), The Office of International Information and Educational Exchange (1947-1949), The United States International Information and Educational Exchange Program (1950-1951), and the US International Information Administration (1952). More information on these agencies in Nicholas J. Cull's *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*.

⁷² Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 16-19.

desired to establish an official student exchange program. As a former Rhodes Scholar who had studied abroad at Oxford University through the British exchange program, Fulbright held a deep appreciation for cultural exchange.⁷³ However, it was the goal of avoiding another world war that firmly pushed him to draft the new legislation in 1945. As Fulbright recalled years later in 1965, he believed that educational exchange was “primarily concerned with increasing man’s understanding of himself and of the national world societies in which he lives.”⁷⁴ He asserted that post-war foreign policy could no longer be solely based on military or diplomatic maneuvering, but instead would be “influenced far more by how well we communicate the values of our society to others...through people-to-people contacts outside formal diplomatic channels.”⁷⁵

The senator fashioned the Fulbright Act of 1945 to be utterly inconspicuous and uncontroversial, and as such, Fulbright was able to move it through Congress skillfully and quickly. The bill required that the capital accrued through the sale of surplus war property in Europe be used to fund a new international exchange program that would allow American students to study overseas.⁷⁶ Arguing that it would “cost nothing,” Fulbright watched his bill win easy approval by Congress and be signed into law by President Truman on August 1, 1946. This was a monumental moment in the expansion of American educational exchange, and throughout the rest of the twentieth century,

⁷³ Bevis, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 10.

⁷⁴ Francis J. Colligan and Walter Johnson, *The Fulbright Program: A History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), vii, 13-14.

⁷⁵ Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy*, iv.

⁷⁶ Bevis and Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 104; Colligan, *The Fulbright Program*, 13.

Fulbright's program provided funding for hundreds of thousands of scholars from the United States and sixty other countries to study abroad.⁷⁷

The passage of the Smith-Mundt Act two years later in 1948 created the means to maintain the Fulbright exchange program and further expand its capabilities. Influenced by a 1948 tour of Europe, New Jersey Senator H. Alexander Smith and North Dakota Representative Karl Mundt, both Republicans, felt that the Soviet Union was in the midst of a propaganda campaign of "vilification and misrepresentation" aimed primarily at the United States. Therefore, they argued, the United States had to counter these Soviet efforts by explaining American "ideals, motives, and objectives to a demoralized and groping Europe." They believed that maintaining educational exchange could be a successful way to accomplish that goal and thus worked to expand on Senator Fulbright's work. The original Fulbright legislation only supplied funding for Americans to go abroad, but the Smith-Mundt Act established the program's reciprocity and allotted scholarships for foreign students to study in the United States. Furthermore, the new law provided a stable budget to sustain the program once the proceeds from sales of military surplus goods had been depleted. As with the Fulbright Act, the motivation for this bill was not only to promote academic achievement but "to promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations."⁷⁸ These two new pieces of legislation signified that in the post-war world, the United States government would take the lead in the formerly private

⁷⁷ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 179; Bevis and Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 104-105; Colligan and Johnson, *The Fulbright Program*, 20-21.

⁷⁸ Arndt, *The First Resort of Kings*, 179; Bevis and Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 105; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 10-11.

sphere of educational exchange and these efforts would be harnessed to advance America's foreign policy interests.⁷⁹

The Fulbright Act and the Smith-Mundt Act had a profound effect on the rate and scope of American academic exchange in the years immediately after the Second World War, though its ambit would not yet extend to the Soviet Bloc. The number of foreign students traveling to the United States in this period ballooned from 7,000 in 1945 to 30,000 in 1950.⁸⁰ American exchange organizers reached the first Fulbright agreements with China and Burma in late 1947. Through the early 1950s, the program expanded quickly, encompassing many nations in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and South America.⁸¹ Throughout this time, program organizers continued to espouse the purpose of the exchanges as primarily a means of developing international goodwill. Senator Fulbright himself wrote that while the encouragement of academic achievement and cooperation was important, "the purpose of the program is not the advancement of science nor the promotion of scholarship" but instead "these are only by-products of a program whose primary aim is international understanding." This was tangibly illustrated by the participant selection process, which took into account much more than an individual's academic qualifications. For instance, the selection committee considered such factors as an applicant's emotional stability and political leanings in order to ensure that the individual would be an effective and positive representative of the United

⁷⁹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 7.

⁸⁰ Liping Bu, "Educational Exchange and Cultural Diplomacy in the Cold War," *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 33 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 405.

⁸¹ Richard T. Arndt and David Lee Rubin, *The Fulbright Difference, 1948-1992* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1993), 13, 53; Bevis and Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities*, 105-107.

States.⁸² Selection committee members and proponents of the exchanges believed that properly-chosen exchangees would present a favorable impression of the United States abroad by directly demonstrating American wealth, technology, and its democratic political system.⁸³

Still, American exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe remained outside the scope of the Fulbright program in this period. Instead, academic relations between the United States and the USSR occurred only on a limited and ad hoc basis. For example, individual institutions, such as Cornell University and Princeton University, invited specific Soviet professors and graduate students to study on their campuses, and the Rockefeller Foundation sponsored a small number of Soviet academics to visit American universities.⁸⁴ Due to the intensifying Cold War and the complications with forming official exchanges between the two rival superpowers, though, large-scale exchanges could not be established for almost another decade.

In addition to the lack of Fulbright educational exchange agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union, other types of government-sanctioned cultural interactions also remained elusive in the early years after World War II, owing both to Soviet and, later, American reluctance to engage one another in large-scale cultural exchange. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin repeatedly resisted American overtures for opening cultural relations. Historians such as Lisa Berman have argued that was due to many factors, such as Stalin's frustration with the lack of economic relations between the United States and the Soviet Union, the cancellation of the Lend-Lease Program by the

⁸² Colligan and Johnson, *The Fulbright Program*, 39-42.

⁸³ Bu and Ninkovich, *The Cultural Turn*, 9.

⁸⁴ Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy," 9-10.

United States in 1945, and the announcement of the 1947 Truman Doctrine to contain communist influence in Greece, Turkey, and elsewhere. As early as the fall of 1945, the State Department suggested to the Kremlin the possibility of conducting exchanges in music, dance, theater, art, science, and education, but the Soviet government ignored these proposals and similar subsequent offers. Private groups, such as the American Council of Learned Societies, also petitioned Soviet leaders to allow for an exchange of scholars in the immediate years after World War II, but Soviet officials merely replied that their universities were already over-crowded and their teachers in high demand, thus rendering such agreements logistically impossible.⁸⁵ As Cold War anxieties began to take hold within the United States in the late 1940s, some American policy-makers similarly began to resist cultural accords with the Soviet Union for a brief period after the war. Though some officials, such as US Ambassador to Czechoslovakia Lawrence Steinhardt, saw great merit in American cultural incursions into the Communist Bloc, officials within the State Department asserted that the expansion of cultural agreements, like the Fulbright program, into those areas would merely project America as weak and attempting to appease the Soviet Union. This sentiment became even more pronounced after American entrance into the Korean War. Therefore State Department officials directly opposed efforts by Fulbright program organizers to negotiate agreements with the Soviet Union, though they pledged not to obstruct any private educational exchange agreements with the communist regime.⁸⁶ Thus, by the early 1950s, the United States and

⁸⁵ Aucoin, "Deconstructing the American Way of Life," 44, 56; Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy," 12-13; Dennett, *Negotiating with the Russians*, 247-252.

⁸⁶ Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 9.

the Soviet Union had still not established significant cultural exchanges between their nations.

The legacy of the Truman Administration and cultural exchange was somewhat mixed. While its programs were plagued by problems, they also helped to lay the groundwork for future endeavors. As one historian aptly described it, when Truman left office in 1952, “the information program remained beset with bureaucratic infighting, Congressional skepticism, and lack of coherence.” Not yet fully understanding the importance of public perceptions and popular opinion, leaders in the administration failed time and time again to effectively counter anti-American Soviet propaganda, and many Soviet assertions of American imperialism and warmongering were left unanswered. The programs that did exist to counter such messages were repeatedly hampered by constant administrative reorganization. However, Truman’s actions were significant in maintaining American propaganda efforts during peacetime and thus cementing cultural diplomacy as a vital facet of US foreign policy. Furthermore, the next administration, headed by Dwight D. Eisenhower, would effectively use Truman’s efforts as a solid foundation on which to build up America’s information programs to an unprecedented level and finally create a successful large-scale cultural interchange directly between the United States and the Soviet Union.⁸⁷

President Dwight D. Eisenhower came into office in 1953 as a great believer in the effectiveness of psychological warfare and sought to create an organized and effective international information program. Eisenhower’s experience as a general in the Second

⁸⁷ Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 48-49; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 23, 80.

World War convinced him of the importance of psychological warfare as a significant component of total war. He carried this dedication to winning hearts and minds into his presidential campaign, repeatedly espousing his ambition to take such an endeavor seriously. In a number of campaign speeches, Eisenhower asserted that the Cold War was, at its heart, a struggle over ideas, and therefore the United States had to have a comprehensive plan for psychological warfare, which he promised to establish if elected.⁸⁸ Eisenhower even singled out educational exchange, stating that academic exchange programs were “an important step toward world peace” and thus should be continued and expanded.⁸⁹

As president, Eisenhower continued to espouse the power of cultural exchange and informational programs, and early in his first term developed a plan for establishing it as an important facet of his foreign policy. In both his inaugural and State of the Union addresses, Eisenhower insisted on the necessity of creating more effective international information programs to combat communism.⁹⁰ More than merely trumpeting these ideas, the president also took tangible steps to reorganize the haphazard Truman-era approach. Becoming the first and only executive to appoint a propaganda adviser to his presidential cabinet, Eisenhower chose Charles Douglas “C. D.” Jackson as his special assistant for psychological warfare. As the former deputy director of psychological operations in the Mediterranean during the Second World War, Jackson had learned firsthand the merits of such methods and constantly pushed the president to overhaul the failing Truman

⁸⁸ Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 48; Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 46-48, 53.

⁸⁹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 227.

⁹⁰ Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 48; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 24.

propaganda infrastructure. At Jackson's urging, Eisenhower formed the Committee on International Information Activities, headed by New York investment banker William H. Jackson, which soon became known as the Jackson Committee. After conducting a thorough study of the American propaganda apparatus, the Jackson Committee made several logistical recommendations, including an emphasis on choosing high quality and reliable personnel to work overseas, providing strong support to these individuals and their installations, and allowing fieldworkers to determine their own methods instead of requiring them to follow strict instructions from Washington. Furthermore, the Jackson Committee urged a change in tone and message for America's propaganda operations. Instead of a focus on demonizing communism, the Jackson Committee suggested that American tactics should strive to convince peoples around the world that the United States supported them and their interests and would work to advance "freedom, progress, and peace." The Eisenhower Administration heeded these recommendations and began to adopt a more positive message, recognizing that instruments such as American jazz music and cultural exhibitions appealed to foreign peoples more than anti-communist diatribes. Eisenhower reiterated this sentiment in a November 1953 speech, stating that the American system would ultimately triumph over the Soviet Union simply because of its "greater appeal to the human soul, the human heart, [and] the human mind."⁹¹ Soon, Eisenhower put those ideas into action by launching the most comprehensive propaganda agency in American history.

On June 1, 1953, President Eisenhower presented a proposal to Congress to reorganize all American propaganda efforts (exempting academic exchange, which would

⁹¹ Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 51; Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 48; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, xiv, 24; Sorensen, *The Word War*, 41-42.

remain in the State Department) under a new organization called the United States Information Agency (USIA). Reflecting the suggestions of the Jackson Committee, the USIA focused on relaying a positive image of the United States abroad. Instead of focusing on the evils of communism, the USIA programs trumpeted the ways American society promoted prosperity, peace, freedom, and happiness.⁹² Outlined in a 1954 USIA policy statement, agency organizers stated that “the hard-hitting anti-communist approach just doesn't pay off,” but instead a “more subtle” approach works more effectively. That approach mainly consisted of portraying the characteristics of everyday American life to foreign audiences, allowing them to infer for themselves the superiority of capitalist democracy over communism. The most effective way to relay this message, according to the USIA, was through personal contacts between Americans and foreigners. Supposing that foreign individuals were more likely to believe ordinary Americans over impersonal informational campaigns and printed material, USIA valued sending Americans to the field to communicate their country’s virtues firsthand.⁹³

Educational exchange through the Fulbright program continued and expanded through the Eisenhower years, though Fulbright and his supporters were steadfast in ensuring a separation between academic exchange and the USIA’s propaganda efforts. It was Fulbright’s political maneuvering that allowed his program to remain within the State Department while all other cultural endeavors came under the domain of the US Information Agency. The senator claimed that by keeping his program from the grasp of the USIA, this would avoid politicizing the exchanges or having them “tainted” by

⁹² Aucoin, “Deconstructing the American Way of Life,” 32-33; Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 58, 65; Henderson, *The United States Information Agency*, 52-53.

⁹³ Leo Bogart, *Cool Words, Cold War: A New Look at USIA’s Premises for Propaganda* (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), 20-23, 73, 185-186.

official government propaganda operations.⁹⁴ However, Senator Fulbright's own avowed purpose of the program to promote "international understanding" was itself a form of propaganda and, whether the senator admitted as much or not, aligned exactly with the methods of the USIA. Regardless of the separation between the two on paper, USIA employees in the field were almost always the same personnel who actually guided and administered the educational exchanges.⁹⁵ Furthermore, by the mid-1950s, the State Department began requiring American scholars to attend official orientation programs before traveling on their Fulbright scholarship. Exchangees received these training sessions directly from USIA officials, including instruction on how best to portray American values to foreign individuals. Therefore, the Fulbright program continued to provide a means to spread American values globally into the 1950s.

Soon after Eisenhower took office, dramatic events in the Soviet Union would, for the first time, make possible large-scale cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, merely weeks after Eisenhower became president, immediately softened US-Soviet relations, with the new Soviet coalition government calling for peace with the West and helping to bring an end to the Korean War.⁹⁶ By 1955, Western and Soviet leaders agreed to meet at a summit in Geneva, the first such gathering since World War II, illustrating a further easing of tensions. At the conference, the United States, Britain, and France put forth a seventeen-point cultural exchange plan to the Soviets, urging them to open up interchanges in areas such as culture, education, tourism, and information. Though the delegates failed to reach

⁹⁴ Arndt and Rubin, *The Fulbright Difference*, 54; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 218-219; Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating with the World: US Public Diplomacy Overseas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 20.

⁹⁵ Tuch, *Communicating with the World*, 20.

⁹⁶ Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 56, 307.

a formal agreement on this comprehensive treaty, the Soviets did relay their openness to future bilateral agreements on cultural exchange. Soon after the Geneva Summit, the Soviet government began allowing more tours by American musicians and theater groups and an exchange of magazines, showing that an opening was gradually materializing.⁹⁷ The 1956 “Secret Speech” by Nikita Khrushchev, the emerging leader of the Soviet Union, further heartened supporters of US-Soviet cultural exchange. Rejecting Stalinism and promoting “peaceful coexistence” with the West, Khrushchev’s speech helped open the way for more Soviet interaction with the capitalist powers. Within a year, Soviet officials had established cultural agreements with many Western European nations, including Belgium, Norway, and France.⁹⁸ Much of the Soviet impetus for these openings resulted from a combination of a desire to make a tangible effort towards “peaceful coexistence” and a continued wish to acquire access to Western science and technology through cultural interactions. It seemed only a matter of time before such negotiations would take place between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Though American and Soviet officials were on the verge of creating a comprehensive official cultural exchange agreement, a trickle of academic exchanges between the US and the Soviet Union had already begun in the second half of the 1950s. A group of universities interested in promoting US-Soviet exchanges created the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG) in 1956. Funded by the Ford Foundation, universities, and the State Department, the Committee dealt directly with the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education to arrange short-term educational exchanges. As no

⁹⁷ Aucoin, “Deconstructing the American Way of Life,” 60-62; Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency*, 161.

⁹⁸ English, *Russia and the Idea of the West*, 48-50; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 47-48; Yale Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins?* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 4.

official government agreement yet existed, these students and scholars participated through thirty-day tourist visas. Roughly 200 academics went to the Soviet Union in the late 1950s with the help of the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants.⁹⁹ In 1958, American and Soviet officials would finally reached an official agreement on cultural exchange, and this greatly accelerated academic interchanges across the Iron Curtain and allowed the most personal interaction between American and Soviet citizens since the 1920s.

While the 1950s was a momentous decade in terms of increasing prospects for US-Soviet cultural connections, it was, conversely, a period in which American public opinion toward the Soviet Union was hardening. The consensus of Western superiority that emerged from this period profoundly shaped perceptions and interactions between American and Soviet people in the decades to come. Therefore, before exploring exactly how large-scale US-Soviet cultural exchange became a reality and how more Americans than ever were able to travel to the Soviet Union through academic exchanges, it is first necessary to understand the assumptions and preconceptions instilled in these Americans. In other words, it is imperative to explore the notions about America and the Soviet Union that many of them would eventually take with them to Eastern Europe. Therefore the concluding pages of this chapter will examine how the Cold War consensus emerged, analyze the ideas it encompassed, and describe how it influenced the worldview of many Americans.

⁹⁹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us*, 229; Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 8; Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 23.

As many historians have contended, the strong anti-communist and anti-Soviet consensus that manifested itself at the start of the Cold War was an extremely powerful cultural force in post-war America. While dissenters certainly existed, the majority of Americans did “inhabit a recognizable mental world” that conformed to the Cold War consensus.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, those voices that opposed this worldview were easily marginalized and ostracized.¹⁰¹ However, while anti-communism was an extremely formidable force throughout the Cold War, historians have also shown that it was not a “natural” reaction to events of the time but instead was a constructed ideology that served a variety of purposes. As anthropologist Clifford Geertz has explained in his work on culture, symbolic activities such as ideology constitute humanity’s attempt to “make sense out of experience” and be better able to understand the world.¹⁰² Cold War America was not exempt from this common process, and elements such as language and rhetoric were repeatedly used to create a seemingly unified national ideology. American leaders promulgated such terminology as “the free world,” “totalitarianism,” and “the Soviet threat,” and this type of language shaped the public discourse and set the perimeters within which acceptable debate could be conducted.¹⁰³ This process not only served to help Americans handle the changing world they lived in, but it was also an attempt to produce a stable American identity. Repeating a practice that had been ongoing since the

¹⁰⁰ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55.

¹⁰¹ John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 13.

¹⁰² Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretations of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 140-141.

¹⁰³ Christian Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 3; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 1-2; Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, ix.

American Revolution, post-war ideology was not the result of “an externally induced crisis,” but instead it was an attempt by American leaders to unite the population under a unified set of principles by setting them against a common enemy.¹⁰⁴ Still, its constructed nature did not make the Cold War consensus any less powerful, as this framework of anti-communism was present in the minds of almost every American and shaped their perception of the Soviet Union and its people.

A series of events and a framework of ideas propagated by American leaders, especially in the first five years after World War II, further entrenched in American culture a fear of communism and the Soviet Union that endured for decades thereafter. Historian John Fousek contends that this process of creating a unified post-war national ideology began as early as 1945 with three core themes that dominated public discourse. Specifically, American leaders championed notions of America’s national greatness, its global responsibility, and its role in the ultimate triumph of freedom, constraining acceptable public discourse within the perimeters of these ideals. The Soviet Union emerged as the exact antithesis to this American eminence and its contrasting image helped further solidify these ideals.¹⁰⁵

The task of constructing the Soviet Union as the ultimate evil in world affairs began just months after the cessation of World War II. In early 1946, George F. Kennan, the State Department’s prominent expert on Russia, sent his “Long Telegram” from Moscow espousing the dangers of the Soviet threat. Later published in revised form in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, Kennan’s article argued that the Soviet Union’s imperialistic

¹⁰⁴ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 132; Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1.

¹⁰⁵ Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, 41, 46.

behavior was not due to traditional geopolitical concerns; instead, the Soviets had a uniquely aggressive national character that drove them to expand their ideology and way of life at all costs.¹⁰⁶ This interpretation caused policy-makers, and thus much of the American public, to understand the Soviets as an unreasonable and unrelenting force that could not be halted without force or subversion, and despite the waxing and waning of the Cold War over the next decades, this line of thinking would remain in most Americans' minds throughout the conflict.

President Truman's actions in these pivotal years only further cemented the Cold War consensus in America's ideological framework, particularly his establishment of the Truman Doctrine and the Federal Employee Loyalty Program. In March 1947, Truman asked Congress for economic aid to Greece and Turkey in order to support anti-communist forces in Greece and bolster Turkey against Soviet pressure. Truman asserted that the United States had the duty and responsibility to stop communism and Soviet influence wherever it attempted to spread. By doing so, historians such as Walter Hixson have contended, Truman helped create the discourse that divided the globe into "a binary world of good and evil." This framework helped Americans better understand their place and responsibility in the post-war world and served as a simple justification for American intervention abroad.¹⁰⁷ The administration's formation of loyalty review programs that same month brought this binary understanding of the world directly into American society. Through Executive Order 9835, Truman created the Loyalty Review Board to ensure that communists or communist-sympathizers were eliminated from employment in

¹⁰⁶ Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the "Soviet Threat": Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus* (Washington, DC: The Institute for Policy Studies, 1979), 12.

¹⁰⁷ Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, 126-127; Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 174.

the federal government. This set a precedent that would be followed all over the country, and soon local public and private officials were implementing similar political loyalty tests in areas ranging from insurance policies to fishing licenses. Though the threat of communists infiltrating the government, or any other segment of American society, was most likely overstated by the administration and merely used for political gain, historian Ellen Schrecker contends that it did succeed in “establishing anti-communism as the nation’s official ideology.”¹⁰⁸ Furthering this ideological direction was the contentious presidential election of 1948. Truman had to contend with former Vice President Henry Wallace, who ran on the newly-created Progressive Party ticket and attacked the president from the left. Wallace welcomed support from communists and socialists and believed that the United States should attempt to work with the Soviet Union instead of antagonizing it. In order to repudiate his own critics’ accusations of being soft on communism, Truman heatedly attacked Wallace’s liberal politics and accused him of favoring Soviet communism. Truman’s “red-baiting” crippled liberalism in the United States and effectively eliminated, or at least thoroughly marginalized, any critics of the Cold War and American foreign policy. Just three years after being an ally of the USSR against Nazi Germany, the United States and most of its people now firmly viewed the Soviet Union as the preeminent threat to world stability and peace and as a purveyor of an ideology that was the single greatest domestic danger to American society.

Truman’s second term as president witnessed an even harder solidification of this staunchly anti-communist belief system, and this had tangible effects on American foreign policy. For instance, the United States began pouring increasing amounts of

¹⁰⁸ Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 4-5.

funding into defense and national security initiatives.¹⁰⁹ The impetus for this shift was set out in the administration's National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68) in 1950. Building on Kennan's "Long Telegram," NSC-68 argued that Soviet character and ideology would constantly push the communists to expand, and therefore the United States had to aggressively confront the Soviets when they attempted to spread their influence. This policy statement provided the justification for tripling the national defense budget at the onset of the ensuing Korean War and further marginalized any policy-makers who held alternative ideas of Soviet intentions. This, in turn, shaped public discourse and perceptions of the growing "Soviet threat."¹¹⁰ Thus, when the communist North Korean forces launched an invasion into American-backed South Korea in June 1950, most American officials and citizens perceived US intervention as utterly necessary. American entrance into the Korean War became the ultimate show of strength that displayed national willingness to combat "evil" communist influence wherever it manifested itself.¹¹¹

The Cold War consensus, while it emerged out of this specific set of social and political circumstances after World War II, contained ideological underpinnings that were not new to American culture, namely the conception of the "other." In his 1978 book *Orientalism*, literary critic Edward Said conceived of the "other" as a concept used to describe the European perception of the Orient. Viewing the East as a place of exoticism, Europeans set themselves up as the antithesis of such a barbarous place. Through this

¹⁰⁹ Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4, 13.

¹¹⁰ Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the "Soviet Threat,"* 12-13.

¹¹¹ Fousek, *To Lead the Free World*, 162; Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 313-314; Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism, and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 253.

contrasting image, “the Orient...helped to define Europe” by forging a consensus on what Europe was not rather than what it was.¹¹² Similarly, during the Cold War, American policy-makers constructed the Soviet “other” and this image filtered down to the populace, helping to create a more unified American identity. American rhetoric repeatedly colored the Soviets as “evil,” “brutal,” “immoral,” and “aggressive,” and though these characteristics were simplified caricatures generated by American leaders and not always a reality, the consequences of these perceptions were definitely real.¹¹³ Providing justification for an aggressive American foreign policy, the Cold War consensus allowed policy-makers to convince American citizens to support a vigorous and global national security program to combat the Soviet menace. Those Americans who disagreed with this course were merely associated with the Soviet other and thus thoroughly demonized.¹¹⁴ Therefore, just as the Orient did for Europe, this emerging Soviet other provided reassurance to the American people of what they were not, helping them to then achieve a (nearly) unified sense of American identity during an uncertain time. This firmly embedded worldview would influence, at least to some degree, every American who travelled to the Soviet Union and interacted with the Soviet people. The following chapters will explore those interactions and use them to illuminate in detail the mindset and sense of national identity possessed by Americans who did have the opportunity to traverse the Iron Curtain.

¹¹² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 1-2.

¹¹³ Farrel Corcoran, “The Bear in the Back Yard: Myth, Ideology, and Victimhood Ritual in Soviet Funerals,” *Communication Monographs*, vol. 50 (December 1983), 306-308; Hixon, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 166, 174-176; Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 45; Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, eds., *Across the Blocs: Cold War Cultural and Social History* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 7.

¹¹⁴ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 3; Corcoran, “The Bear in the Back Yard,” 317; Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 17-18; Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the “Soviet Threat,”* 10.

CHAPTER III

“AN ABNORMAL PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE,” 1958-1968

The first decade of official US-Soviet academic exchanges, beginning with the signing of the 1958 Cultural Agreement, constituted the fruition of the American government's new role in international cultural exchange. American policy-makers sought to use a positive national message, especially focused on the Western ideals of democracy, freedom, and consumer culture, to appeal to the citizens of communist nations. Throughout this period, many of these strategists viewed cultural exchange programs, such as educational exchange, as an effective way to relay these values by putting Americans directly in contact with peoples abroad.¹¹⁵ Still, despite the rhetorical support the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations gave to cultural exchange, the programs were plagued by constant budgetary concerns and relegation to a minor role in American Cold War strategy. While it was true that this new level of US government intervention in cultural affairs was unprecedented, these administrations never afforded cultural diplomacy the same significance as more traditional military and diplomatic tactics.¹¹⁶

The significance of these programs, though, lies not in their place in America's Cold War strategy but instead in their ability to illuminate in detail the ideology and

¹¹⁵ Walter L. Hixson, *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture, and the Cold War, 1945-1961* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 154; David S. Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire": The Crusade for a "Free Russia" Since 1881* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 129-130.

¹¹⁶ Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, xiii.

values held by those who participated in the exchanges. Specifically, the recollections of academic exchange participants to the Soviet Union provide unique insights into how ordinary Americans perceived the USSR, the Cold War, and their own national identity. Since the Cold War was largely an ideological struggle, with both superpower rivals contending to spread not only their geopolitical power but also their ideas, it is significant to determine to what extent the American people shared these same values and objectives. As their post-exchange reports show, the participants in this first decade of the exchange, from 1958 to 1968, largely shared their leaders' objectives and ideals. While exchangees to the Soviet Union claimed that the value of their experience rested in a higher level of cultural understanding and academic enrichment, their internalization of the Cold War consensus manifested itself oftentimes in more subtle terms throughout their reports and recollections. Almost none of the exchange participants in this period claimed that their time in the USSR confirmed their convictions in Western superiority or American exceptionalism. However, almost all of them asserted their American values and identity through negation, by noting characteristics of the Soviet Union that they found unusual or disturbing.

Furthermore, these Americans overwhelmingly showed their commitment to serving as positive representatives of the United States during their time abroad. Through their conversations with Soviet citizens and their dissemination of American products and publications, exchangees often took it upon themselves to be personal exemplars of the American way to the Soviet people. The most notable aspects of this first set of reports, however, are the exchangees' recollections of how most Soviet people responded to their overtures. Far from describing Soviets as fiercely dogmatic and incapable of reform, the

vast majority of participants characterized most of them as incredibly friendly, very willing to associate with Westerners, and constantly curious about life in the United States. Remembering the Soviet people in this way reaffirmed the most important aspect of American identity, its universality. It reassured these Americans that their system was not only correct but that it also had inherent appeal to the world's people. This implied that the United States would eventually prevail in the global ideological struggle. The following chapter will recount American policy-makers' conceptualization and implementation of the exchange program and then compare their aims to the exchange participant experience in this era.

Although the momentum for establishing official cultural exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union had been gradually building throughout the decade, it was not until the end of the 1950s that cultural diplomacy became possible. The public prodding by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev constituted one factor that convinced the Eisenhower administration to act. In May 1957, Khrushchev appeared on CBS's *Face the Nation*. When asked to discern the most pressing issue in Soviet-American relations, he asserted that, "There must be more contacts between our peoples," and such contacts could be established only if the United States stopped resisting cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union. Just four days later, the Soviet government proposed a number of possible exchanges with the United States in culture, science, and technology. Surprised by this overture, President Eisenhower and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles initially refused to engage with Khrushchev's offer. However, Congressional Democrats such as

Texas Senator and Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson and Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright urged the administration to consider opening more contacts with the Soviets.¹¹⁷

This growing impetus for cultural exchange finally led the Eisenhower administration to form the East-West Contacts Staff within the Department of State. This body held the responsibility of developing and coordinating interchange between the US and the Soviet bloc, and by the fall of 1957 the group began working on cultivating student exchange. That year, the East-West Contacts Staff approached an organization called the Council on Student Travel (CST) to help arrange US-USSR exchanges. The CST was a private organization established in 1947. Though the CST had worked in cooperation with the State Department since its inception, its thirty members mostly consisted of universities and nonprofit educational and cultural agencies interested in promoting international educational exchange. It began as an organization almost solely concerned with providing low-cost transportation for students to travel overseas, but by 1957 it was acting in a more advisory capacity by providing prospective exchangees with travel information and cultural preparation for their time abroad. By the summer of 1958, the Council on Student Travel had aided in the State Department in creating the first official reciprocal educational exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union. After negotiating with the Soviet Youth Committee for three months, CST organizers were able to send forty-four Americans to the Soviet Union and bring twenty Soviets to the United States, each for roughly one-month periods. The group of Americans consisted of both undergraduate and graduate students from twenty-six different colleges and twenty states. This represented a remarkable achievement. No significant group of

¹¹⁷ Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 78-79.

American students had visited the Soviet Union since 1935 and this was the first government-sponsored educational exchange between the two nations.¹¹⁸

Still, regular exchanges necessitated a formal cultural exchange agreement, and deliberations toward such an end began in the last weeks of 1957. Leading the negotiations were William S. B. Lacy, head of the East-West Contacts Staff, and Georgy Zarubin, Soviet Ambassador to the United States. The resulting agreement, formally titled “Agreement Between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on Exchanges in Cultural, Technical, and Educational Fields,” had fourteen sections, one of which involved education. It provided for exchanges of radio and television broadcasts, artists, actors, dancers, athletes, agricultural specialists, industry leaders, and traveling exhibitions. In regards to academic exchange, the American representatives originally proposed an exchange of one hundred students each year, while the Soviets countered with a suggestion to exchange just ten. The final agreement settled on an exchange of twenty students each way for the 1958-1959 academic year and thirty students in the 1959-1960 year. Following three months of talks, Soviet and American representatives signed the final Lacy-Zarubin Agreement on January 27, 1958, with the stipulation that the accord would be subject to possible revision and renewal every two years. The State Department designated the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), the university-led organization that had overseen many of the unofficial short-term exchanges between the United States and

¹¹⁸ Frederick Charles Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Roles of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 7; Teresa Brawner Bevis and Christopher J. Lucas, *International Students in American Colleges and Universities: A History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 148-149; Liudmila K. Mikhailova, “The History of CIEE: Council of International Educational Exchange and its Role in International Education Development: 1947-2002” (PhD diss., The University of Minnesota, 2003), 72, 80, 88-90.

the Soviet Union since 1956, to administer the exchange of students and professors under the new agreement.¹¹⁹

American policy-makers attached significant national goals and strategies to the new exchanges that they believed trumped any possible Soviet advantages. The sudden Soviet acquiescence to cultural exchange with the United States reflected, in part, the rising confidence of the Khrushchev regime in the wake of *Sputnik*. The prospect of surpassing the capitalist West seemed more attainable than ever to the Soviet leadership, and cultural exchange offered the opportunity to publicize Soviet achievements directly to the American people. In essence, Soviet government officials now believed that they had much less to lose in open exchanges with the West.¹²⁰ By agreeing to such an exchange, the Soviet regime sought to portray itself as a world leader in progress, enlightenment, and culture, and as a peaceful power that sought to work with the United States to ease Cold War hostilities. Perhaps most importantly, regarding their more tangible goal, the Soviet Union wanted easier access to American scientific, industrial, and technological advancements through academic exchange.¹²¹

Still, despite these Soviet advantages, American strategists in the Eisenhower administration believed they had much more to gain from this interchange than their

¹¹⁹ Yale Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins?* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 2; Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 42; Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, October 1958, "Academic Exchanges with the Soviet Union," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; US Department of State, "Background Paper: Graduate Student Exchange," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 23.

¹²⁰ Amanda Wood Aucoin, "Deconstructing the American Way of Life: Soviet Responses to Cultural Exchange and American Information Activity During the Khrushchev Years" (PhD diss., The University of Arkansas, 2001), 4, 82.

¹²¹ Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 18; Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 153; Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 18.

communist rival. In a 1956 policy document, the National Security Council articulated the principles guiding the implementation of US-Soviet exchanges, both in the late 1950s and beyond. They argued that the objective of cultural diplomacy was to bring Western ideas and influence to the Soviet Union, such as freedom of thought and a desire for increased access to consumer goods.¹²² Reflecting a shift in policy away from the aggressive psychological warfare practiced in the first years of the Cold War, by the late 1950s American leaders desired a more subtle and gradual strategy based on using Western ideas and consumer culture to appeal to the people in the communist bloc, with the hope that this would eventually force a liberalization of the Soviet regime.¹²³ Though it was clear that the Soviets would obtain many short-term benefits through this reciprocal exchange, the assumption that American ideals and values would eventually triumph made this cost acceptable.¹²⁴

With this new agreement in place, the first official US-Soviet educational exchanges began in 1958. Administered by the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), this reciprocal interchange took three different forms. The central program, which allowed its participants the longest stay in the USSR, was the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange. These early-career scholars spent one to two semesters in the Soviet Union and were often treated similarly to their Soviet counterparts, living in university dorms and working with a Soviet advisor and his or her respective department. The Summer Exchange of Language Teachers provided a means for American teachers of Russian to immerse themselves in the language, through coursework and social

¹²² Aucoin, "Deconstructing the American Way of Life," 67; Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 6.

¹²³ Hixson, *Parting the Curtain*, 154; Foglesong, *The American Mission and the "Evil Empire,"* 129-130.

¹²⁴ Hans N. Tuch, *Communicating with the World: US Public Diplomacy Overseas* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 126.

interactions, for about two months. Finally, the Senior Research Scholar exchange catered to a relatively small number of advanced-career academics who were allowed two to five months of research in the Soviet Union.¹²⁵ The funding for these programs drew from three different sources, all administered on the American side by the IUCTG. Private philanthropic foundations and the Department of State contributed to some of the costs, especially for travel, while participating universities agreed to assume financial responsibility for the foreign students accepted by their institution, covering such costs as tuition, lodging, and stipends.¹²⁶

Although the Department of State and the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants maintained that their primary goal for the exchanges was the advancement of knowledge and international understanding, the implicit goal of using cultural exchange to subvert the communist regime was apparent even in the participant selection process.¹²⁷ For instance, a 1958 internal Department of State document outlined the merits of focusing on an exchange of graduate students, instead of undergraduates. A graduate student, it argued:

is likely to be more mature. His judgment and perspective on both the USSR and the United States are likely to be better. He is likely to learn more from a sojourn in the Soviet Union because he already has a substantial foundation of knowledge on which to build. He is more likely to make a good impression on those he meets in the Soviet Union, especially among the intelligentsia. He is in general more

¹²⁵ Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 23

¹²⁶ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, October 1958, "Academic Exchanges with the Soviet Union," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

¹²⁷ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, January 21, 1963, "Purposes and Organization," International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, October 1958, "Academic Exchanges with the Soviet Union," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

likely to bring balance and perspective to his experiences and his interpretation of those experiences.¹²⁸

Furthermore, according to the policy statement, exchangees to the Soviet Union should have a “good knowledge of the United States, especially American history and current events,” so he would be prepared to answer any questions Soviets may ask him. In essence, State Department officials argued that an exchange participant had to be chosen carefully because he would “play the role of ambassador as well as of scholar and tourist.”¹²⁹ This illustrates clearly that the purpose of the exchange, in the mind of State Department organizers, was not purely academic. Instead, a significant component of the exchange program was to improve US-Soviet relations through positive relationships formed between American exchangees and Soviet citizens. With these objectives in mind, in the fall of 1958 the IUCTG sent to the Soviet Union the first set of twenty-two American graduate students, specializing in a variety of fields including Slavic languages, literature, history, political science, law, government, and geography.¹³⁰ Thus began a new era in Soviet-American academic exchange that would expand in the coming decades.

Despite the State Department’s concerns with choosing suitable participants who would best serve America’s national interests, IUCTG officials simultaneously sought to eliminate any direct or visible link between their program and government influence, especially in regards to involvement by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) or the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The IUCTG officials were aware of several CIA

¹²⁸ Committee on Educational Interchange Policy, October 1958, “Academic Exchanges with the Soviet Union,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ US Department of State, December 1958, “Report on the East-West Exchange Program,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

front organizations, established in the late 1950s and early 1960s, that posed as educational foundations and gave grants to “students” to travel to the Soviet Union as short-term tourists.¹³¹ To firmly separate themselves from these fraudulent organizations and protect the academic integrity of their program, IUCTG officials, including Director Robert Byrnes, went to great lengths to ensure that the US government could not obtain any services or information from officials or participants within the exchange.¹³² IUCTG policy stipulated that the executive director was the only staff member allowed to hold discussions with the FBI or the CIA.¹³³ Additionally, upon acceptance, each exchangee was required to sign a statement agreeing that they would not “perform any service in any capacity whatsoever for any private or governmental persons, organization or agency of any kind while in the Soviet Union as a participant in this exchange.”¹³⁴ Implicit in these policies was the idea that not only would intelligence activity within the exchange program discredit its academic virtues, but that if such obviously subversive activities became public the Soviets would view these Americans as mere propaganda machines instead of sincere representatives of American culture and life.

While the Eisenhower administration had established an important precedent by making cultural exchange a significant, though certainly not central, part of American foreign policy, many problems plagued the newly-founded academic exchange program going forward into the 1960s. The incoming John F. Kennedy administration publicly

¹³¹ Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, 146; William B. Edgerton, June 28, 1963, Memo to Herman B. Wells, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹³² Robert F. Byrnes, Draft of Letter to Theofanis G. Stavrou, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹³³ Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, 140.

¹³⁴ Robert F. Byrnes, Draft of Letter to Theofanis G. Stavrou, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

lauded the use of cultural exchange as an important and useful aspect of American foreign policy. In a 1961 press release, President Kennedy stated, “there is no better way to strengthen our bonds of understanding and friendship with other nations than through educational and cultural interchange.”¹³⁵ Secretary of State Dean Rusk concurred when discussing East-West exchanges, asserting, “both the communist nations and ourselves have found programs for exchange of persons and information to be of mutual advantage.”¹³⁶ Still, despite their rhetorical support, the Kennedy administration, like the Eisenhower team before it, accorded much more prestige to traditional military means of national defense than to informational and cultural programs, as exemplified by their minuscule budget. In 1960, only one percent of the total \$50 billion national security budget went to international cultural projects.¹³⁷

Other problems, in addition to budget concerns, that would plague the program throughout the coming decades became apparent in these early years, namely the imbalance between humanities and science applicants on both sides of the exchange. As IUCTG and State Department officials noted early on, since the Soviets’ main goal was to obtain access to American technological and scientific research, the majority of Soviet exchangees were specialists in these fields. Specifically, in the period between 1958 and 1963, 64% of Soviet participants were in scientific fields, while only 30% were in the social sciences and humanities. In stark contrast to the academic make-up of Soviet participants, American exchangees were overwhelmingly in the fields of social sciences

¹³⁵ Philip H. Coombs, *The Fourth Dimension of Foreign Policy: Educational and Cultural Affairs* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 2.

¹³⁶ US Department of State, April 15, 1962, “Review of Exchange: Report on the United States Exchanges Program with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

¹³⁷ Belmonte, *Selling the American Way*, 178-179.

and humanities, making up 89% of American participants, while only 11% of Americans who went to the USSR were scientists.¹³⁸ This trend of the Soviets sending mostly scientists and the Americans sending mostly liberal arts students continued throughout the life of the exchange program, and the perceived disadvantage this placed on the United States would be a constant source of criticism for opponents of the exchange. For instance, the American Security Council, a non-profit foreign policy think tank, published a statement by Ohio Democratic Congressman Michael A. Feighan in March 1964. Feighan argued that the Soviets were using educational exchange to gain access to American science and technology. “Russian exchangees coming to the United States,” he contended, “are all in the age brackets characteristic of advanced scientific researchers. The subject matters they pursue have a direct and practical relationship to the scientific needs of the Soviet Union.” Furthermore, he noted that while the most advanced Soviet research facilities remained closed to Americans, Soviet exchangees were meanwhile permitted to benefit from placement in prestigious institutions such as the California Institute of Technology, Yale, and Columbia.¹³⁹ Other publications echoed these sentiments, such as a 1966 article written by a journalist for *The Reporter*, George Bailey. In a scathing review of the exchange program, Bailey remarked that the main objectives of the exchanges for the Soviet Union were to “gain as much scientific and technical

¹³⁸ US Department of State, April 15, 1962, “Review of Exchange: Report on the United States Exchanges Program with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, November 11, 1963, “Preliminary Statistical Summary of the Graduate Student and Young Faculty Exchange,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹³⁹ Michael A. Feighan, March 9, 1964, “Short Change in Cultural Exchange,” Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

knowledge as possible [and] to propagandize the American government and nongovernmental institutions.”¹⁴⁰

In addition to these criticisms and others, it also became apparent in this early period that, as a result of Cold War tensions, the exchanges to the Soviet bloc presented their own unique challenges that would persist throughout the following decades. Most notably were the difficulties with KGB surveillance of American participants, perceived provocations, and periodic accusations of espionage. For instance, one exchangee in the early 1960s had befriended a Russian ballet dancer in Leningrad, whom he often visited in his home. After one such occasion, during which the American claimed he was so intoxicated that he could not recall exactly what happened, he was arrested by Soviet police and charged with homosexuality. Soviet officials threatened him with an eight-year prison sentence if he refused to confess, though they eventually did release him.¹⁴¹ In 1963, another incident arose with a participant on the language exchange. Margaret Drucker, after drinking heavily with Russian friends, was accused by Soviet police of attempting to strike one of their officers. Drucker claimed that she was possibly drugged, and that Soviet officials used this episode as leverage in order to recruit her as an informant.¹⁴² Another tense encounter between exchange participants and the KGB involved Frank Silbajoris, an American participant who was originally native to Lithuania. KGB officials accused Silbajoris of being a “traitor to the fatherland” by serving in the German army during World War II. The officers did not believe his

¹⁴⁰ George Bailey, April 1966, “Cultural Exchange As the Soviets Use It,” Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁴¹ Stephen Viederman, Indian University Interdepartmental Communication to WBE on Subject: Hodges, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁴² Stephen Viederman, August 21, 1963, Memorandum of Conversation with Thomas Larson, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

assertion that while he had indeed joined a Lithuanian military unit, he was never a part of the German army. They then threatened Silbajoris with a ten-year prison sentence unless he formed a “mutually advantageous relationship” with them and informed KGB officials about US Embassy personnel and exchange participants. Upon alerting the American Embassy of this offer, exchange officials quickly returned Silbajoris to the United States.¹⁴³ Other Americans stood accused of being spies, such as law student Edwin B. Morrell, whom Soviet authorities eventually expelled from the country, and even a member of IUCTG’s Executive Committee, Frederick Barghoorn, who was briefly arrested for alleged espionage.¹⁴⁴ In regards to each of these cases, IUCTG officials expressed their belief that these were blatant Soviet provocations in an attempt to falsely incriminate Americans or recruit them as informants.¹⁴⁵ While the complete veracity of these claims and recollections cannot be proven, the unequivocal acceptance of these accounts by Committee officials shows an automatic distrust of Soviet authorities; this was emblematic of the pervasive suspicion that surrounded the administration of the exchange program.

¹⁴³ Frank Silbajoris, April 1964, Frank Silbajoris correspondence with Robert F. Byrnes. International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁴⁴ “Byrnes Defends Student Russia Calls Spy,” 1960. *The Indiana Daily Student*. International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Robert F. Byrnes, November 18, 1963, Letter to Kulikov, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁴⁵ Stephen Viederman, Indian University Interdepartmental Communication to WBE on Subject: Hodges, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Stephen Viederman, August 21, 1963, Memorandum of Conversation with Thomas Larson, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Frank Silbajoris, April 1964, Frank Silbajoris correspondence with Robert F. Byrnes, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, May 24, 1962, “Exchange of Graduate Students and Young Instructors, 1960-61,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Despite the challenges of organizing and administering the exchanges during the course of the Kennedy era, both the Department of State and the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants maintained that the benefits to education and American national interests made the exchange more than worthwhile. The Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff, the successor to the State Department's East-West Contacts Staff, asserted in its policy papers the important scholarly and educational benefits of the program, especially in revitalizing Russian and Soviet Studies in the United States, which had long been forced to operate without direct archival access or fieldwork. However, they concentrated more frequently on ways the exchange could help advance America's cause in the Cold War, especially by promoting a positive image of American life to the Soviet people. Over the long term, State Department officials believed, this free flow of information could force the Soviet regime to reform, become more open, and be more receptive to a peaceful relationship with the United States. This could only be accomplished, however, by selecting mature and impressive exchangees who could best represent the United States.¹⁴⁶ In addition to allowing the Soviet people more knowledge of the West, State Department strategists also saw the exchange as beneficial because it allowed Americans to obtain an in-depth and firsthand knowledge of the Soviet Union. One 1962 State Department report asserted that: "if we are to cope with the Soviet system

¹⁴⁶ US Department of State, "Background Paper: Graduate Student Exchange," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff, Department of State, July 15, 1961, "Review of Exchanges," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; US Department of State, April 15, 1962, "Review of Exchange: Report on the United States Exchanges Program with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

we must know as much about it as possible. Exchanges have proved to be a valuable source of information.”¹⁴⁷

The Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, while repeatedly asserting its independence from government influence and its virtue as an educational foundation, was in ideological agreement with the Department of State’s vision for the exchange. While Director Robert Byrnes asserted that the organization’s goals “must not be confused with or subsumed under a political rubric,” he readily admitted that it was the seemingly non-politicized nature of the academic exchange that allowed it to have such a large impact on the Soviet people. Allowing American students and professors to develop personal relationships with Soviet citizens, Byrnes asserted, would have “enormous political consequences.” According to Brynes, “free intellectual exchange is [America’s] strength, not theirs” and thus Americans simply living and working among Russians would automatically spread a desire for freedom. Again, according to the Committee leadership, this could only be accomplished if the exchangees were chosen carefully and with a mind to their maturity and ability to represent the United States favorably.¹⁴⁸

After Lyndon B. Johnson’s ascension to the presidency in 1963, US-Soviet academic exchanges continued, with many of the same goals and challenges of the previous years, though compounded with the growing international crises of the mid- to

¹⁴⁷ Soviet and Eastern European Exchanges Staff, Department of State, July 15, 1961, “Review of Exchanges,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; US Department of State, April 15, 1962, “Review of Exchange: Report on the United States Exchanges Program with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

¹⁴⁸ Robert F. Byrnes, August 10, 1961, “Educational and Cultural Relations with Communist States in the 1960’s,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, October 12, 1961, “Study and Research in the Soviet Union” flyer, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

late-1960s. IUCTG officials noted that the trend of Soviet participants mainly coming from science and technology fields while American participants remained overwhelmingly in humanities and social sciences specializations continued to grow in this period. For instance, in the 1964-1965 academic year, only one of the twenty-four American exchangeees was in a scientific field, while seventeen of the twenty-four Soviets came to the United States to do research in the physical sciences or technology. Another problem that had yet to be alleviated by this time was the Soviet officials' extreme reluctance to place any Americans outside of Moscow and Leningrad. With the exception of a single graduate student who spent a semester in Kiev, the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education repeatedly refused IUCTG's request to allow Americans to study in smaller Soviet cities. Conversely, Soviet students coming to the United States had a much wider range of universities and cities available to them. The American exchange officials also faced the problem of perceived arbitrary rejections of applicants by Soviet administrators. The Soviet side, they argued, had the tendency to reject anyone who was researching a topic "which may prove ideologically embarrassing or may suggest a weakness in the Soviet administrative or economic systems." This policy was particularly problematic for those applicants who desired to study recent Soviet history or contemporary Soviet economic policy.¹⁴⁹ Finally, IUCTG officials such as Deputy Chairman Stephen Viederman complained of the slowness and inefficiency of the Soviet exchange administrators. The cause of the constant delays in communication and acceptance of American participants, he argued, could have been the result of "traditional Russian bureaucratic inefficiency or may be based upon ill-will and deceit," but regardless

¹⁴⁹ "Some Observations on the US-USSR Educational and Scientific Exchanges," 1964, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

IUCTG officials named this as a constant problem in administering each year's exchanges.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the routine obstacles and problems exchange officials faced, the course of the 1960s brought international crises and increasing Cold War tensions that had an effect on the program. America's increasing involvement in Vietnam, along with other sources of discontent between East and West, made the biannual negotiations for the renewal of the Cultural Exchange Agreement increasingly tense and arduous. For instance, whereas previous deliberations on the exchanges had taken less than two weeks, the 1964 meeting of Soviet and American representatives lasted almost two months before a final cultural agreement was reached, the terms of which substantially reduced the number of academic exchanges. The following two meetings, in 1966 and 1968, only served to continue this decline.¹⁵¹ It was the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, though, that convinced American exchange officials to temporarily scale down cultural contacts with the Soviet Union. The State Department immediately suspended all "high visibility" exchanges with the USSR, such as performing artists and exhibitions, in order to "punish" the Soviet Union, while scholarly exchanges conducted by IUCTG remained the only segment of the cultural agreement allowed to persist.¹⁵² In a confidential correspondence on the recent incident, Executive Director of the exchange Allen H. Kassof frankly expressed his relief that most of the exchange participants were already nominated, accepted, and placed in Eastern Europe before the events in Czechoslovakia

¹⁵⁰ Stephen Viederman, March 1, 1965, "The Committee and the Exchange Program," Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁵¹ Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, 47-48.

¹⁵² Yale Richmond, *Practicing Public Diplomacy: A Cold War Odyssey* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 106-109.

unfolded, sparing his agency “the awkward question of evaluating our relations with the USSR.” Reiterating the sentiment American exchange organizers had expressed since the program’s inception, Kassof conveyed his intention to insulate the exchange program from political considerations as much as possible and maintain an independent course from State Department desires and actions. However, not wanting to appear completely tolerant of Soviet actions, Kassof did suggest terminating contacts with Soviet education officials until a “proper period of mourning” had passed and resuming the exchanges per usual only if the situation did not deteriorate substantially. Kassof stated that he was well aware that this action was likely to have no affect on Soviet policy and actions toward Czechoslovakia. Still, he wanted to avoid the possibility that Soviet officials could use their inaction “to persuade the academic and intellectual communities...that we acquiesce in regarding the current situation as normal and acceptable.”¹⁵³ As much as American exchange organizers desired to remain above and independent of the international frictions of the 1960s, the program did not occur in a vacuum and the foreign policy crises affected both the organizers at IUCTG and the exchangees on the ground in the Soviet Union.

While it is important to understand the views and goals of American strategists and exchange program organizers, the more significant aspect of the program was arguably its implementation by participants on the ground in the Soviet Union. The remainder of this chapter will explore American exchangees’ ideology, beliefs, experiences, impressions, and the objectives they sought through their encounters with

¹⁵³ Allen H. Kassof, September 20, 1968, Memorandum to IREX Board and Program Committee, Ford Foundation, Department of State, and National Academy of Sciences, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

the Soviet people. In addition, this will serve as a specific example of the contrast between the more aggressive and blatant anti-communism of the late 1940s and early 1950s with the subtler brand that emerged by the end of the decade. As articulated in the previous chapter, the Cold War consensus that arose in the post-war United States engulfed the majority of Americans in an ideological battle between the “free world” and Soviet totalitarianism.¹⁵⁴ This “good versus evil” dichotomy produced a stable and unifying American identity that was very effective at marginalizing those who questioned it.¹⁵⁵ In essence, the Saidian “othering” of the Soviet Union, with American leaders characterizing their communist rival as “brutal,” “aggressive,” and “immoral,” convinced the majority of Americans that the Soviet threat must be forcefully confronted.¹⁵⁶

This sentiment was not isolated to American popular culture but also became deeply ingrained in American academia in the years after World War II. According to historian Michael Hogan, the Cold War consensus of the late 1940s and early 1950s united academics and intellectuals at both ends of the political spectrum. Liberal and conservative academicians alike shared a strong belief that the expansionist aims inherent in communist regimes had to be resisted by the United States, by military force if

¹⁵⁴ Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996), 55; Christina Appy, ed., *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 3; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 1-2; John Fousek, *To Lead the Free World: American Nationalism and the Cultural Roots of the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), ix.

¹⁵⁵ Campbell, *Writing Security*, 132; Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University, 2008), 1.

¹⁵⁶ Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 166, 174-176; Sam Keen, *Faces of the Enemy: Reflections of the Hostile Imagination* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 45; Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 17-18; Alan Wolfe, *The Rise and Fall of the “Soviet Threat”: Domestic Sources of the Cold War Consensus* (Washington, DC: The Institute for Policy Studies, 1979), 10.

necessary.¹⁵⁷ Many leading academics were outspoken about their commitment to American exceptionalism. In 1949, the president of the American Historical Association, Conyers Read, declared that the United States must “assume a militant attitude if we are to survive.” To do so, he proclaimed, all Americans must do their part by holding strongly to their belief in democracy and social responsibility, and “the historian is no freer from this obligation than the physicist.”¹⁵⁸ In another instance, the American Association of Universities declared in a 1953 statement, endorsed by thirty-seven American universities, that the primary threat to academic freedom was world communism. Composed by a committee chaired by the president of Yale University, “The Rights and Responsibilities of Universities and Their Faculties” declared that American universities were unified in their dedication to the United States, its form of government, and “free enterprise.”¹⁵⁹ These sentiments affected university faculty as well. As McCarthyism and an obsession with the danger of communist saboteurs overtook much of the nation in the early 1950s, this created great pressure on universities to eliminate any professors who could be considered disloyal or politically undesirable. The majority of American states required teachers to take loyalty oaths and most academics did not challenge the legality or appropriateness of the Congressional loyalty investigations into their universities.¹⁶⁰

The Eisenhower administration eased these loyalty investigations in the mid-1950s, corresponding with the decline of McCarthyism and a shift in the strategies used

¹⁵⁷ Hogan, *A Cross of Iron*, 420-422.

¹⁵⁸ Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 58.

¹⁵⁹ Noam Chomsky, ed. *The Cold War and the University: Toward an Intellectual History of the Postwar Years* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), xxii.

¹⁶⁰ Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 93, 116, 218.

by American policy-makers to confront the communist threat.¹⁶¹ By this period, the American government began to reject the old aggressive approach of focusing on the evils of communism and instead opted for a subtler tactic that promoted the positive characteristics of American society.¹⁶² The perceptions and recollections of American academic exchangees illuminate how this shift in rhetoric directly affected ordinary American citizens. Far from forcefully spouting the dangers of communism to the Soviet people they encountered, American exchange participants emulated this tactical change of their government by developing their own more indirect methods to assert American superiority.

In the first decade following its inception in 1958, the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange, administered by the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, sent 321 early career academics to conduct research in the Soviet Union.¹⁶³ A comparable number travelled to the USSR under a combination of IUCTG's two other programs, the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers and the Senior Research Scholars Exchange. The following analysis is based on roughly 220 individual reports, written by those who took part in the exchanges of this period. Most reports come from participants in the Graduate Student/Young Faculty program who, compared to other types of exchanges, usually spent the longest period in Eastern Europe.

Experiences of these participants varied, sometimes in dramatic ways, with many leaving the Soviet Union holding starkly divergent views on its educational system, its

¹⁶¹ Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism, and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 285; Thomas F. Richards, *The Cold War Within American Higher Education: Rutgers University as a Case Study* (Raleigh: Pentland Press, 1999), 156.

¹⁶² Leo Bogart, *Cool Words, Cold War: A New Look at USIA's Premises for Propaganda* (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), 73.

¹⁶³ Department of State, 1968, "Exchanges with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

people, and its society. However, certain commonalities in these reports indicate the extent to which these individuals were imbued with American Cold War ideology. American policy-makers and exchange organizers assumed exchangees would use their time in the USSR to spread a desire for democracy and capitalism among the Soviet people, and these reports provide insight into the extent to which that assumption held true.

Illustrating a break from the 1950s, with its fierce anti-communism and widespread acceptance of American exceptionalism, very few exchangees between 1958 and 1968 explicitly stated that their time in the Soviet Union convinced them of the superiority of the West or the United States. Of the roughly twelve instances of such direct sentiment, none of them were expressed by exchangees after 1961. For instance, Frederick Barghoorn, a professor and IUCTG official visiting the Soviet Union in 1958, spoke to many of the exchangees in Moscow and Leningrad. While he noted that many remained exasperated by the “restrictive atmosphere” to which they were subjected, he argued that at least spending time in the Soviet Union reminded them of the value of freedom and the virtues of American society.¹⁶⁴ One 1961 participant bluntly remarked that his sojourn in the USSR had made him “more critical of the Soviet Union than I had ever been before.”¹⁶⁵ Stanford Couch, another 1961 exchangee in philology, concurred, asserting that after becoming familiar with the workings of Soviet society, he more firmly believed that the American system was “closer to answering the needs of the individual

¹⁶⁴ Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 330.

¹⁶⁵ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, July 1961, “Study and Research in the Soviet Union, 1960-1961: Report of American Participants in the Exchange of Graduate Students, Young Faculty Members, and Post-Doctoral Researchers,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

than this one is.”¹⁶⁶ Others remarked on the “cleavage between the communist and free worlds” and the “spiritual distance” between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁷ Finally, exchangees such as Frederick Kaplan and Leonard Kirsch believed that the experience heightened their appreciation of being an American and reminded them of the “true meaning and worth of freedom.”¹⁶⁸

Although later Americans certainly critiqued specific aspects of the Soviet system and way of life, only participants from those very first years stated so forthrightly their belief in Western superiority. The absence of such remarks throughout most of the 1960s, in one way, reflects the change in the American government’s propaganda strategy, which began to focus on appealing to the Soviet people by promoting a positive image of American democracy and capitalism, instead of merely relying on anti-communist diatribes. In another way, it illustrates the growing challenges to militant anti-communism and bold American exceptionalism in American higher education.¹⁶⁹ For instance, some cotemporary academics, such as historian William Appleman Williams in 1959, condemned American foreign policy and its insistence that other nations could not solve their problems unless they adopted American values.¹⁷⁰ Still, more academics, such as most of those who went to the Soviet Union on academic exchange, upheld American

¹⁶⁶ Sanford C. Couch, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁶⁷ Richard L. Yatzeck, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Donald R. Lesh, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁶⁸ Frederick I. Kaplan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Leonard Kirsch, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁶⁹ Richards, *The Cold War Within American Higher Education*, 159.

¹⁷⁰ William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1962), 9.

exceptionalism, just not in such direct terms as had characterized the immediate post-war years.

Not only did most of the participants of the 1960s not directly tout Western superiority, but they also repeatedly expressed the great value in gaining cultural enrichment and understanding through experiencing Soviet life firsthand, conversing directly with Soviet citizens, and being a part of Soviet academia. Over seventy-five of the decade's participants stated in forthright terms the personal benefit they obtained by merely living in Soviet society and attending Soviet universities. Woodford D. McClellan, a historian on the 1961 graduate student exchange, summarized the sentiment of many of the participants, arguing that even if he had accomplished no academic objectives, just the process of "getting the feel" of the Soviet Union enhanced his value as an academic in Soviet studies.¹⁷¹ Others, such as literature student Marguerite Barerat, believed that her time in Eastern Europe not only enhanced her dissertation and research, but also gave her more confidence as an instructor when discussing the Soviet Union with her students.¹⁷² Teacher of Russian language and 1967 exchangee Masha Nikolai Vorobiov shared this view, noting her anticipation to impart her impressions of the country to her students, including descriptions of the university, the architecture, the food, the crowds, the streets, the culture, and a myriad of other small details that she could not have obtained without spending a lengthy amount of time in the Soviet

¹⁷¹ Woodford D. McClellan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁷² Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, July 1961, "Study and Research in the Soviet Union, 1960-1961: Report of American Participants in the Exchange of Graduate Students, Young Faculty Members, and Post-Doctoral Researchers," Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Union.¹⁷³ Beyond educational and pedagogical benefits, many exchangees underscored that their experience made the Soviet Union “real” to them. Historian Gilbert McArthur remarked in 1965 that the most fundamental change that resulted from his time abroad was that a previously “vaguely unreal, grayish world...has now become a living entity... [with] an infinitely greater complexity and diversity than I had appreciated before living there.”¹⁷⁴ Others concurred with this sentiment, such as Senior Research Scholar Robert Belknap, who in 1966 noted that one of his top objectives for his exchange was simply “to get the feel of living in Russia.” He believed this goal was made more possible by the presence of his wife and children, because of whom he had dealings with more elements of ordinary Soviet life, such as schools and grocery shopping for a family.¹⁷⁵

This first-hand knowledge not only enriched them culturally, according to many exchangees, but it also gave them a clearer insight into their nation’s Cold War rival. Joseph Fuhrmann, a graduate student participant in 1966, remarked that “spending an academic year in the Soviet Union has provided a better understanding on my part of one of the world’s greatest and important nations. For this, and more, I am grateful.”¹⁷⁶ Joe Malik, a participant on the 1965 Summer Exchange of Language Teachers, agreed with this view, and lamented that more Americans could not have the same enlightening opportunity.¹⁷⁷ The key to obtaining these insights rested in the level of immersion these

¹⁷³ Masha Nikolai Vorobiov, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁴ Gilbert H. McArthur, 1965, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Belknap, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁶ Joseph Fuhrmann, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁷ Joe Malik, 1965, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

academics received and the perceived “non-tourist” nature of their visit. Nicholas Vontosos, a linguist, visited the Soviet Union twice before 1968 as a tourist, but he believed that, unlike his most recent visit on the exchange, those previous trips did not allow for an authentic immersion into Soviet life.¹⁷⁸ Douglas Jackson, a geographer whom Soviet officials housed in a hotel, as was customary with those on the Senior Scholar Exchange, happily dealt with his hotel’s inconvenient location and substandard dining room because it was not a Western tourist hotel. He could have requested a new set of accommodations but refused because the hotel offered “the opportunity to see daily more of Moscow life” than would be possible in the city center.¹⁷⁹ In fact, multiple participants in almost every year of the exchange in this period remarked that though there were frustrations, obstacles, and hardships involved with living in the USSR, the educational, cultural, and personal value heavily outweighed the disadvantages and made the endeavor more than worthwhile.

In addition to learning what it was like to live in Soviet society, over thirty exchangees in this period specifically underscored the importance of conversing directly with the Soviet people in order to reach a deeper appreciation of life in the USSR. Many participants urged future exchangees to resist surrounding themselves with only Americans. They asserted that Soviet citizens would welcome an American acquaintance and such a relationship would help the exchangee gain a new and valuable perspective. Leonard Kirsch, a 1961 exchangee in economics, argued that it would be a “tragedy” for

¹⁷⁸ Nicholas Vontosos, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁷⁹ Steven Allister, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

participants to spend their entire social life in the USSR in the company of Americans.¹⁸⁰

Russian literature student, Bryon Lindsey, urged IUCTG officials to discourage Americans from being “clannish” and not befriending Russians. He reported that some exchangees in 1968 did not even attempt to adjust to Soviet society and therefore they remained “too withdrawn from the Russian environment.”¹⁸¹ Despite some reclusive participants, many noted throughout this decade how readily Soviets would befriend Americans. A. V. Riasanovsky, a 1959 exchangee and a native Russian who had since obtained American citizenship, wrote that “the majority of the Soviet citizens whom I met seemed genuinely pleased to encounter a Russian-American” since he had obviously maintained his interest in Russian culture and language.¹⁸² In 1966, Jo Ann Hopkins claimed that meeting ordinary Russians was the most “delightful” and “easiest” part of her stay, as she effortlessly struck up conversations with people she met in public spaces.¹⁸³ These conversations and friendships, many Americans agreed, contributed to a deeper understanding and more accurate perspective on the Soviet Union. One graduate student participant in 1962 noted his “wonderful personal experience” and how talking with his Soviet friends created “new awareness, greater understanding, [and] greater sympathy for the poor devils who have suffered so much and continue to suffer.”¹⁸⁴

Political scientist Paul Cocks asserted in 1967 that conversations with ordinary citizens

¹⁸⁰ Leonard Kirsch, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁸¹ Bryon Lindsey, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁸² A. V. Riasanovsky, Exchange report, Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁸³ Jo Ann Hopkins, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁸⁴ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1962, “End-of-Year Exchange Reports,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

“sharpened and tempered” his understanding and perspective of the Soviet people.¹⁸⁵

Other academics repeatedly urged future participants to meet Soviets outside of the university setting. A 1959 graduate student implied that academics did not represent the “real” or “average” Soviet citizen, and therefore Americans should seek out encounters with workers by frequenting public cafeterias, the transportation system, sporting events, and stores.¹⁸⁶ Historian Robert Jones agreed, stating that during his 1967 stay in the USSR, his friends outside of the dormitory broadened his experience “beyond the narrow limits of student life.”¹⁸⁷

Although they were the minority, some exchangees in the first decade of the program did not have such valuable experiences in their encounters with Soviet citizens. For instance, a small number of mostly early exchange participants noted that they never felt entirely welcomed or comfortable among the Soviet people. Willis Konick, a 1959 language program student, warned that while it was possible to form a small group of close friends, Muscovites on the whole were wary of foreigners. He contended that making acquaintances at Moscow State University was not easy due to the “natural timidity and inherent fears of your fellow Soviet students.”¹⁸⁸ Seymour Slive, participating in a 1960 exchange of professors program to Leningrad State University, happened to arrive the day that Nikita Khrushchev announced the capture of the American U-2 spy plane pilot. At this point of high international tensions, he

¹⁸⁵ Paul Cocks, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁸⁶ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁸⁷ Robert Jones, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁸⁸ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

remembered, “It was crystal clear that the university wanted nothing to do with me [and] officials would have been happier had I not shown up.” He subsequently urged future participants to come to the Soviet Union if necessary for research but to be prepared “to be pushed around a bit.”¹⁸⁹ One of only a few participants who expressed this sense of feeling unwelcome after 1961, political scientist Donald Barry noted in 1968 that he felt a definite decline in friendliness and cooperation as compared to his previous visit in 1961. His assigned department at Moscow State University, he recalled, cared very little about his views, ideas, or work.¹⁹⁰ Historian Robert Jones had even more sinister warnings for future participants in 1967, cautioning them to choose their friends wisely. He believed that fellow Soviet historians actively involved in the Communist Party merely sought out American friendships so as to report on their activities to the Soviet government. “One American participant was disappointed this year,” he recalled, “to find out that his year-long friend had been feeling him out and setting him up for an offer to become a spy in the pay of the Soviet government.”¹⁹¹ These accounts illustrate that not all exchange participants had such satisfactory or valuable experiences with the Soviet people they encountered. Still, these sentiments represented only a minority of exchangees, with most in agreement that meeting Soviet citizens was an enlightening and positive opportunity.

Continuing to express how their time in the Soviet Union led to personal and professional enrichment, not an explicit solidification of Western superiority, many participants recounted their academic experience in favorable terms. Though most

¹⁸⁹ Seymour Slive, 1960, Exchange report, Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁹⁰ Donald Barry, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁹¹ Robert Jones, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

certainly faced obstacles in their attempts to do research in the Soviet Union, and though academic experiences varied greatly from the highly productive to the intensely negative, the positive remarks tended to outweigh the critical. For instance, despite several exchangees bemoaning the dogmatism and ideology present in Soviet academia, many more complimented Soviet researchers and applauded the quality of work they had accomplished, in spite of the hardships they were forced to overcome. Raymond T. McNally, a graduate student in philology in 1961, outlined this sentiment most directly, stating:

[Prospective American exchangees] should be made to understand that the Soviet scholars can be just as good as American scholars, and sometimes better, in certain fields. Unfortunately many American students have the false idea that, because the Soviet system is totalitarian, therefore, Soviet scholars are a pack of stupid ideologues. If you are in a field such as mine, or in old Russian literature, you will find that Sovietology does not prevent solid scholarship here.¹⁹²

Multiple other participants recalled the broadmindedness of Soviet academics and their helpful professional critiques, which “never sunk to political agitation.”¹⁹³ In almost forty instances, exchangees specifically commended their Soviet advisor for his or her cordiality and insight. Linguist Charles Gribble, in 1961, recommended his advisor as a “real scholar who is also a fine person,” and another 1962 graduate student praised the advice his advisor provided, noting that it helped him “expose any false impressions” he

¹⁹² Raymond T. McNally, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁹³ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, July 1961, “Study and Research in the Soviet Union, 1960-1961: Report of American Participants in the Exchange of Graduate Students, Young Faculty Members, and Post-Doctoral Researchers,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Raymond T. McNally, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Marguerite Barberat, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

held.¹⁹⁴ Karl F. von Loewe, a history graduate student in 1966, even asserted that his Soviet advisor was so helpful that he was just as important to the final formulation of his dissertation as his American advisor back in the United States.¹⁹⁵ Many others went further and recalled the valuable help received from other faculty members and graduate student peers, such as George P. Majeska and Joan Afferica, who in 1965 both recounted that the members of the History Department at Leningrad State University treated them as colleagues, going out of their way to aid in their research.¹⁹⁶

While some American exchange reports dwelled on the negative aspects of academic work in the Soviet Union, the majority of participants claimed to have had a generally positive academic experience. For instance, a relatively small number of exchange participants asserted that Soviet academics were below American standards, the classes were subpar, or that they had many problems conducting their research. Roland J. Fuchs, a 1961 graduate student in geography, recorded that while he gained many personal benefits from living in Soviet society, it did not lead to much professional development because “Russian methodology in urban geography is several decades behind that in the United States.”¹⁹⁷ A few others echoed this sentiment, such as linguist Robert Lefkowitz in 1968. He believed Soviet theoretical linguists to be “of depressingly low quality.” This was not totally a result of communist repression, he asserted, but more

¹⁹⁴ David Braslau, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1962, “End-of-Year Exchange Reports,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

¹⁹⁵ Karl F. Von Loewe, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁹⁶ George P. Majeska, 1965, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Joan Afferica, 1965, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁹⁷ Roland J. Fuchs, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indian University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

due to an “authoritarian educational and social pattern” that discouraged creativity and originality.¹⁹⁸ A small number of the early participants recalled their disappointment with Soviet university classes. For example, Marguerite Barerat recalled that the literature classes she attended in 1961 were generally “rather bad” and simply repeated the unimaginative and propagandistic material found in Soviet textbooks.¹⁹⁹ The most common criticism of Soviet academia, however, had nothing to do with classes or inferior faculty and colleagues. The most frequent problem was due to the restrictive or counterproductive nature of Soviet libraries, archives, and research institutions. Graduate student Donald R. Lesh reported in 1961 that he and his colleagues were “banging their heads against a stone wall of Soviet bureaucracy in an attempt to get into archives.”²⁰⁰ Historian Robert Jones relayed his advice for future exchange participants after his 1967 visit. He claimed that in order to be productive in Moscow archives, exchangees must “haggle and bicker” until they get the records they require. “If the material brought is irrelevant, send it back,” he urged. “Be impatient and demanding when necessary.”²⁰¹ Despite the frequency of similar negative reports, a majority of Americans still reported an overall positive experience in Soviet libraries and archives. Far from simply asserting that their time in Eastern Europe merely confirmed their sense of American superiority, as many academics had done in the immediate post-war years, these individuals more

¹⁹⁸ Robert Lefkowitz, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

¹⁹⁹ Marguerite Barberat, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁰⁰ Donald R. Lesh, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁰¹ Robert Jones, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

often than not commended Soviet academia for the educational enrichment it provided for both themselves personally and their research.

While the blunt acclamation of American exceptionalism largely dwindled during the 1960s, many accounts show that the Cold War consensus certainly resonated with these academics during their time in the Soviet Union and simply manifested itself in more subtle ways. Namely, these exchangees asserted their American values and identity through negation by noting the aspects of the Soviet Union that they found unusual or disturbing. Although these participants often made no direct comparison between Soviet and American conditions, and sometimes even provided excuses for the negative attributes of the USSR, the mere process of noting those perceived aberrations confirmed their own American identity and values. Just as Edward Said argued in his work *Orientalism* that Europeans of the nineteenth century used the contrasting image of the Far East to define themselves, so these Americans in the twentieth century used their negative assessments of Soviet life to confirm their own confidence in Western democracy and capitalism.²⁰² So while they expounded on the virtues of experiencing Soviet life and academia and the increased cultural enrichment it provided, most criticized the Soviet system as a whole, especially dwelling on the inefficient bureaucracy, the presence of state surveillance, the difficulty of buying consumer goods, and the drudgery of Soviet life.

Consistently throughout this decade, in almost fifty instances, American participants discussed their frustrations in encounters with Soviet bureaucracy. They frequently focused their disdain on Inotdel, the foreign office in all Soviet universities

²⁰² Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 7.

that handled exchange students. For instance, Willis Konick, a 1959 participant on the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers, called Inotdel officials “sly, conniving liars” who represented the worst of Soviet bureaucracy. He advised future participants that the only way to accomplish anything through Inotdel was by presenting demands as a group, and though this was “difficult for a group of American individualists...it must be done.”²⁰³ Leslie Brady, who in 1959 worked with many exchangees in Moscow through his position on the American Embassy’s Council for Cultural Affairs, recorded in an article his impression that the Soviet system fostered “buck-passing” and no sense of responsibility among Soviet officials to accomplish anything significant.²⁰⁴ Philologist Sanford C. Couch even told his university’s Intodel officials that he hoped they could visit the United States in the future so they could see “how foreign guests should be treated.”²⁰⁵ David Braslau echoed Couch’s sentiment in 1961, noting that Soviet bureaucracy had prohibited him from taking a research trip to Tblisi. He recalled that this was all the more frustrating considering that “Soviet students practically pick any school in the United States” where they want to study.²⁰⁶ Still, some exchangees noted that clashes with bureaucracy were merely a normal part of the Soviet experience. Literature researcher Robert Belknap commented in 1966 that one of his major objectives for his time in the Soviet Union was getting the feel of living in Russia, and thus “the red tape

²⁰³ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁰⁴ Leslie S. Brady, “The Role of Cultural and Educational Exchanges in Soviet-American Relations,” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Autumn, 1962), 202.

²⁰⁵ Sanford C. Couch, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁰⁶ David Braslau, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

produced awareness I'd have missed otherwise.”²⁰⁷ Through criticizing the bureaucratic hurdles imbedded in the Soviet system, and especially by some comparing these conditions to those in the United States, these exchangees implicitly asserted their confidence in the American system for its efficiency and its fostering of diligence and a powerful work ethic.

In addition to bureaucratic difficulties, the second most discussed problem of life in the Soviet Union was the prospect of state surveillance, and over forty participants argued that this constituted a real and present threat to themselves or their Soviet friends. While a few exchangees believed that state surveillance was not a problem for them or that their colleagues exaggerated this issue, the majority of participants who discussed surveillance characterized it as a very real part of Soviet life. Many of these Americans assumed that Soviet officials screened all of their incoming and out-going mail, even if physical evidence of such tampering was absent. Thus some urged future participants to take “normal precaution” in written correspondence.²⁰⁸ Many, such as 1967 Senior Research Scholar Robert Maguire, believed Soviet officials used hidden microphones to gather intelligence on American exchangees. Maguire claimed that he “took for granted that the walls and telephone in [his] room were bugged.”²⁰⁹ One graduate student in 1960 even removed a hollow tile in his bathroom that he suspected of concealing a

²⁰⁷ Robert Belknap, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁰⁸ Robert F. Byrnes, ed. 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Jack Tech, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁰⁹ Robert Maguire, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

microphone. He found no such device and had to reinstall the tile, recalling that he “probably [had] the only bathroom in Russia that has been reset with Borden’s glue.”²¹⁰ Other exchangeees asserted their suspicion that they were followed by KGB agents while in the Soviet Union. Political scientist William Taubman remembered his 1965 encounter with such surveillance in his memoir. He contended that upon his early weeks in the Soviet Union, he did not worry about the prospect of surveillance unless an occasional “James Bond mood” was upon him. However, one day when leaving his dorm, he noted two well-dressed men began to follow him, and these men, whom he soon called his “shadows,” continued this tailing for weeks. In sometimes comical ways, he sought to test their commitment to pursuing him. In one instance, he remembered:

I was standing under the shelter of an awning, and one of them was standing right next to me, when it occurred to me that I had an umbrella and he didn’t. I waited for a particularly drenching downpour and marched out into it. He dutifully followed and took the soaking consequences

Still, Taubman noted that despite the sometimes ludicrous aspects of these encounters, it was also unnerving and he hesitated to be too friendly with Soviet acquaintances because of this surveillance.²¹¹ Many others, like Taubman, were concerned not for themselves, but for the safety of their Soviet friends. One 1960 graduate student advised future participants that despite the fact that life sometimes seemed “normal” in the Soviet Union, one should not forget that “there are certain rules of conduct, the breaking of which can mean real trouble for you and for your Russian friends.”²¹² Economist Leonard

²¹⁰ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹¹ William Taubman, *The View from Lenin Hills: Soviet Youth in Ferment* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1967), 96-101.

²¹² Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Kirsch recalled in 1961 that after spending several weekends with a Soviet Jewish friend, his acquaintance was called in for an “interview” with the KGB. Although their relationship and actions were wholly innocent, Kirsch recommended that exchangees always remember that they could be under surveillance at any time and “for the sake of your Soviet friends, be careful.”²¹³ Other incidents such as this did not resolve themselves so easily. John W. Beckley befriended a Soviet dissident named Slava, and during their visit to Slava’s family dacha, the police arrested and questioned both of them. The officials subsequently let them go, but soon Beckley could no longer contact or find Slava. Fearing his presence endangered his friend, Beckley decided to leave the Soviet Union early.²¹⁴ The records on the academic exchange program provide no way to definitively determine the truthfulness of these suspicions and recollections on Soviet surveillance. Regardless of the extent of their validity, however, the fact that state surveillance constituted one of the most frequently discussed aspects of Soviet life by the exchange participants reveal it to be a major part of their perception of Soviet society.

One of the other most frequently discussed topics about Soviet society in exchangee reports concerned the low quality or unavailability of foods and consumer goods and the substandard nature of Soviet housing. Some exchange participants directly compared these deplorable conditions to more favorable circumstances in the United States, but even if they made no such explicit comparison, these academics clearly articulated their confidence in American capitalism to provide for its citizens better than Soviet communism. Multiple exchangees recounted the “tremendous effort” they spent

²¹³ Leonard Kirsch, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹⁴ John W. Beckley, August 8, 1967, “Confidential Report to the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants,” Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

merely to obtain their daily meals because many food items were scarce and the Soviet Union was “still so far behind the United States in the average standard of living and consumption.”²¹⁵ They often described the food as “invariably the same” and “inferior.” Multiple exchangeees even urged future participants to bring vitamins to supplement the “appalling” Soviet diet.²¹⁶ Exchangeees also suggested that future visitors to the Soviet Union should bring American-made goods such as deodorant, toothbrushes (in order to avoid “the monstrous things sold locally”), thread, and masking tape because such basic items were either unavailable in Soviet stores or too poorly made.²¹⁷ Many further recommended bringing all necessary clothing, since Soviet garments were expensive, of poor quality, and “stodgy” or “drab” by Western standards.²¹⁸

Most of the exchangeees lived in a university dormitory during their time in the USSR, with some of the Senior Scholars assigned to hotels, but regardless of their placement, many harshly criticized Soviet housing in their reports. One 1959 graduate student in Leningrad described living conditions as “considerably below American

²¹⁵ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Donald R. Lesh, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹⁶ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Woodford D. McClellan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Robert F. Byrnes, ed. 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹⁷ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Loren Graham, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²¹⁸ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Taubman, *The View From Lenin Hills*, 111; William R. Pritchard, ed., *Report of Delegation of US Veterinarians to the Soviet Union under the US-USSR Scientific and Cultural Exchange Program* (Office of International Health, 1967), 44.

standards,” with no elevator, sparse hot water, and unsanitary bathrooms.²¹⁹ Moscow students had complaints as well, such as historian Robert Clawson who had to use masking tape, “wisely brought into the country by one of the other participants,” to seal his windows and block the frigid draft.²²⁰ Historian Robert Jones, in 1967, called the housing in Leningrad “primitive” by American standards, and language student H. W. Dewey even suggested that the spartan conditions inflicted upon them by Soviet officials was a “deliberate insult to American professors and teachers.”²²¹ Even those participants who were not so offended by their accommodations still remarked upon the contrast between American and Soviet living conditions. For instance, language student Willis Konick asserted that his dorm was merely comfortable to him, but “by Soviet standards, [it was] absolutely luxurious.”²²² Interestingly, these Americans almost never stated directly that communism was to blame for these numerous problems in Soviet society. Without resorting to strong anti-communist diatribes, which was increasingly unfashionable in the academic community and wider American society into the 1960s, these exchangees still suggested the success of American capitalism compared to the inadequacies of Soviet communism.

In addition, descriptions of the drudgery of Soviet life and the taxing nature of merely living in Soviet society appeared regularly throughout the first decade of

²¹⁹ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²²⁰ James Collins, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²¹ Robert Jones, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; H. W. Dewey, 1966, “Report on the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²²² Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

exchange reports. Participants often contrasted the depressing nature of life in the USSR to the vibrancy of the West. They frequently described the Soviet Union as “depressing and cold,” “dull,” and “drab.”²²³ Multiple academics throughout this decade urged future exchangees to take a trip outside of Moscow or Leningrad during their stay. One 1959 graduate student suggested vacationing in smaller Soviet cities, such as Vladimir and Suzdal, to have a brief relief from crowded city life.²²⁴ Others recommended even leaving the Soviet Union altogether, arguing that their short vacation in places such as Austria, Finland, or West Germany provided a “wonderful morale lifter” and “a period of recuperation...for both body and soul.”²²⁵ The importance exchangees place on being able to obtain a brief respite from Soviet society through travel became especially apparent in the late 1960s when the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants withdrew funding for accompanying wives to participate in the end-of-the-year trip with their husbands. Political scientist Donald Barry argued in 1968 that the trip “was a very welcome and much-needed change from a hard, depressing winter.” However, because of IUCTG’s withdrawal of funding for wives, only two of the twelve couples had the financial means to make the trip. “It seems strange,” he argued, “to transport the wives half-way around the world (with good purpose) and then deny the approximately \$300

²²³ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Frederick I. Kaplan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Henry Chauncey, “Interviews with Soviet Educators on Recent Developments and the Current Status of Education in the USSR,” (United States Office of Education, 1965), 13.

²²⁴ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²²⁵ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Norman E. Saul, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; James McClelland, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

more that it would cost...for two weeks of rest and travel out of ten hard months of work.”²²⁶ Literature researcher Nancy McAuliffe agreed with Barry’s argument, contending that most couples could not afford the trip without the monetary assistance and this really harmed morale and created depression because these couples remained stuck in Moscow throughout the entire winter.²²⁷ While these exchangees were not directly touting the superiority of Western society, the clearly articulated contrast between the drudgery of Soviet life versus the comfort and serenity of Western society show their confirmation of American Cold War values.

While exchangees’ negative descriptions of the Soviet Union served as one way to illustrate their values and ideology, especially in regards to Western superiority and American exceptionalism, their overwhelming commitment to serving as cultural ambassadors and positive representatives of the United States further elucidates their dedication to spreading American democracy and capitalism. In more than twenty instances, exchangees explicitly stated their belief that they served as representatives of the United States during their time on exchange. But even more often, exchangees recorded these beliefs in slightly more subtle ways. For example, in thirty instances past participants urged that IUCTG should choose future grantees wisely, considering not only their academic achievements but also their emotional maturity and ability to represent the United States in a favorable way. Just as many reports suggested that American products and publications made great gifts for Soviet friends. These sentiments were not isolated, but remained consistent throughout the first decade of the exchange program. So while

²²⁶ Donald Barry, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²²⁷ Nancy McAuliffe, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

almost no exchange participants argued for Western superiority in direct terms, their recollections show that most still held the missionary zeal to convert the Soviet people to the American way. Far from using the exchange experience as merely a way to achieve cultural understanding, most participants not only reaffirmed their own convictions in democracy and capitalism but also indicated their willingness to take part in spreading those values to those who needed it most.

Many exchangees articulated their belief that they had a personal responsibility to be a positive representative of the United States. Some noted the value of the personal interaction with Soviets and how it allowed them to be a “representative of the American people.”²²⁸ Historian Frederick Kaplan concurred in 1961, urging future exchangees to understand that “in terms of cultural exchange, [an academic exchange participant] is more effective than the occasional performer or musicians in acquainting educated Russians with the attitudes, ideas, and behavior of Americans.”²²⁹ While some advised prospective exchangees to “be ready to give facts and figures” in response to Soviet questions regarding American society, most merely suggested being personable and honest. Multiple graduate students asserted that an American’s “best weapon” was a nice and objective demeanor because “abusive or insulting language” merely insulted Soviet acquaintances and caused them to ignore the ideas presented by exchangees.²³⁰ In his memoir, political scientist William Taubman further contended that, especially in contacts with Soviet youth, the best way to relay American values was not to attack the

²²⁸ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²²⁹ Frederick I. Kaplan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²³⁰ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

shortcomings of Soviet society but to merely “be ourselves.” Exchangees should strive to be honest when talking about the United States with the Soviets, Taubman argued, even if that meant being critical, because “what really impresses the Russians...is our right to criticize our government and social system openly.”²³¹ Even the wives of exchangees could contribute to this effort, and multiple participants urged the IUCTG to appreciate the important ways that American wives could serve as favorable representatives of the United States.²³² Overall, all these Americans felt it their duty to help the Soviet people broaden their worldview in spite of their closed and restricted society. Linguist Robert Lefkowitz summarized this view succinctly in 1968:

As for my impact on them, I admit with regret that I have not taught even the few Russians I knew to love truth or to be good boys in international politics. But isn't it an awful lot to have exposed even a few to just a little more of a world that, in spite of its faults, lies far beyond their poor imagination?²³³

Despite the perception among many of these individuals that their mission to spread American values was a personal conviction, devoid of government instruction or influence, their attempts to use soft power to convince the Soviet people of the merits of democracy and capitalism directly paralleled the US government's methods in this era. Regardless of their denial of the influence of American ideology or government propaganda efforts on themselves, these participants were clearly transporting the Cold War consensus with them behind the Iron Curtain.

²³¹ Taubman, *The View from Lenin Hills*, 162, 248-249.

²³² Norman E. Saull, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Bryon Lindsey, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²³³ Robert Lefkowitz, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Furthermore, over thirty exchangees even pleaded with the IUCTG in their reports to select future participants carefully, taking into consideration their knowledge of both America and the Soviet Union, and their ability to serve effectively as cultural ambassadors. As the first year of the exchange program concluded, one graduate student argued that the continued success of the program depended entirely on the correct selection of students. He suggested the Committee do a thorough background check of prospective grantees, even delving into the applicant's family, medical, and psychological background because, as the Soviet Union was an "abnormal place in which to live," selected academics needed to be equipped with "mental stability and moral responsibility."²³⁴ Multiple exchanges warned that future participants should have a good knowledge of current events, as well as a general grasp of both American and Soviet history so, as Charles Gribble contended, they could "present our side intelligently."²³⁵ Many believed that the "daily ideological combat" involved in discussions with Soviets required participants to have proper "ammunition" at their command. Woodford McClellan, one of these individuals, asserted that "this does not necessarily mean that [an exchangee] must be an expert on communism; a good sound knowledge of why one is proud to be an American will suffice admirably."²³⁶ Others, such as Donald Lesh in 1961, even argued that if the selection committee had a choice between two applicants of roughly equal academic merit, the individual who showed a better knowledge of Russian

²³⁴ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, "Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union," International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²³⁵ David Braslau, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²³⁶ Tatjana Cizevska, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Woodford D. McClellan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

and American history should be chosen.²³⁷ Robert Richardson, who went on the exchange in 1968 to study Russian language and literature, agreed, contending that the IUCTG selection committee placed too much emphasis on scholarly qualifications and not enough consideration on “more personal factors,” such as maturity and knowledge of current conditions in the Soviet Union.²³⁸ Others had a more direct agenda, such as the two 1959 participants who urged the Committee to include an African American on the exchange in order to confront Soviet propaganda on American racism.²³⁹ These statements and others like them illustrate that to government policy-makers and exchange participants alike, the program was not just a tool for academic enrichment but, more importantly, a method to spread American values directly to the Soviet people.

Beyond just using conversation to spread American values, about thirty grantees discussed in their reports the merit of bringing American goods and publications to the Soviet Union to distribute as gifts. Marguerite Barerat, a 1961 graduate student in literature asserted that “anything related to American culture” would be well appreciated by Soviet acquaintances.²⁴⁰ Besides books, the most suggested type of gift was music records, and especially those of the jazz genre. Language student Willis Konick urged future participants to “leave Beethoven, Brahms, and Bach at home” because “the Russian students have an insatiable thirst for American popular music,” meaning jazz

²³⁷ Donald R. Lesh, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²³⁸ Robert Richardson, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²³⁹ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, “Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1959, “Summer Language Program Composite Student Report,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁴⁰ Marguerite Barberat, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

music.²⁴¹ Illustrating yet another parallel between American exchangees' actions and US government propaganda tactics, this was the same decade when the State Department began using jazz as a weapon in the Cold War ideological struggle. Worldwide tours of performers such as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, organized by the State Department, were intended to counter the criticism of American racism and project the image of a racially inclusive American society.²⁴² While numerous exchangees gladly distributed American music, the most frequent items Americans gifted to Soviet friends were American publications. Many gave out periodicals such as *Time*, *Life*, *The New York Times*, and *Vogue*, which they most often obtained from the US Embassy in Moscow. Many of these academics mentioned the possibility of Soviet officials' disapproval of this practice, and while some recommended distributing copies discreetly and only to friends, others handed out the literature freely and made no effort to hide its dissemination.²⁴³ There were also differing opinions of the types of books appropriate to give Soviet friends. Language student Willis Konick suggested exchangees bring popular twentieth-century novels and leave *1984*, *Animal Farm*, and *Doctor Zhivago* at home.²⁴⁴ Others argued that participants should bring whatever they wanted and merely use discretion when allowing Soviet friends to borrow sensitive books.²⁴⁵ Regardless of their

²⁴¹ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁴² See: Penny M. Von Eschen. *Satchmo Blows Up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Lisa E. Davenport/ *Jazz Diplomacy: Promoting America in the Cold War Era* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009).

²⁴³ Richard L. Yatzeck, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Roland J. Fuchs, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Taubman, *The View From Lenin Hills*, 158.

²⁴⁴ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁴⁵ Robert F. Byrnes, ed., 1959, "Inter-University Conference on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union," International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

specific views, most of these individuals agreed that the Soviets had a “large thirst for foreign literature,” and distributing American publications was greatly appreciated by the Soviets.²⁴⁶ As with the use of jazz music as a Cold War weapon, exchangees’ enthusiasm for disseminating American literature also aligned with broader governmental objectives. By this time, the United States Information Agency was already attempting to use publications to spread American values, through reading rooms and libraries abroad and campaigns such as “Books from America,” which encouraged American citizens to donate unwanted books to the USIA to distribute overseas.²⁴⁷ The fact that so many exchange participants took it upon themselves to give out American literature illustrates their belief that the Soviet people not only desired but needed this exposure to American ideas. Implicit in this view was the idea that if Soviet citizens were merely exposed to American values, the universal appeal inherent in these values would foster a desire among the Soviet people to emulate American society. Reflecting the American government’s shift to the utilization of soft power to puncture the Iron Curtain and promote dissent in Eastern Europe, American academic exchange participants did not rely on aggressive anti-communist rhetoric to appeal to the Soviet people, but instead sought to use themselves as positive representatives of American freedom and consumer culture.

American exchangees’ efforts to represent the United States during their time in the Soviet Union would have been futile, however, if they had not perceived the Soviet people as receptive to these overtures. Thus their characterizations of the Soviet people

²⁴⁶ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1962, “End-of-Year Exchange Reports,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁴⁷ See: Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

did not describe them as hardline communists who resisted all contact with the West. Instead, in over one hundred instances, American exchangeees described the Soviets they met as very friendly, desirous of associations with Westerners, or curious about the outside world. In other words, the Soviet people were receptive to converting to democracy and capitalism. This distinction is vital to illustrating the beliefs held by exchange participants and proving these individuals' strong confidence in American exceptionalism and Western superiority, despite their reluctance to assert these ideas explicitly. In his 2007 monograph *The Global Cold War*, Odd Arne Westad argued that the key to understanding the Cold War was to comprehend Soviet and American incursions into the Third World, because these forays clearly illustrated the national ideologies of the two superpowers. Central to both American and Soviet ideologies, Westad asserted, was the idea that their system was universally applicable and could be successfully transplanted and adopted by any nation in the world. Therefore, the reason for intervention in developing countries was that "Washington and Moscow needed to change the world in order to prove the universal applicability of their ideologies."²⁴⁸ This same argument and model can be applied to American academic exchangeees. If they perceived the Soviet people as being incapable of reform and absolutely resistant to Western ideas and values, this proved that the American system was not, in fact, universal. If Soviet citizens remained largely unswayed by American products, literature, and ideas, the exchangeees' entire American identity would be shaken. Just as American policy-makers sought to show that their system of government and way of life could be applied all over the world, so these American citizens believed that they had to show that

²⁴⁸ Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 3-5.

the Soviet people were indeed capable of supporting democracy and capitalism. Since the way to win the Cold War was the ultimate triumph of American ideology, this assurance that American values had a strong appeal to Soviet citizens reaffirmed that the United States would eventually prevail in this struggle. So despite the 1960s being a time when many Americans, especially academics, began to question their own government and ideas of American exceptionalism, these reports show that most of the basic assumptions of American ideology remained intact.

The most frequent assertion made by the academic exchange participants when discussing the Soviet people was their friendliness towards Americans and that they readily formed relationships with Westerners. While a few exchangees did report that Soviet citizens tended to treat foreigners with hostility, these comments occurred in less than twenty instances and almost all of them were recorded in the first three years of the exchange. Conversely, throughout the entire decade and in over seventy instances, Americans in the Soviet Union noted the people's cordiality, helpfulness, and generosity. Multiple exchangees recalled, sometimes with surprise, the ease with which they formed friendships with Soviet people and how "naturally" these relationships developed.²⁴⁹ For instance, historian Edward Keenan argued that Soviet-American relationships developed like any other: "if one is honest, open, considerate, and intelligent...he can expect to have [Soviet] friends with the same qualities."²⁵⁰ Many remembered that the Soviets,

²⁴⁹ Willis Konick, 1964, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, "Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union," International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1962, "End-of-Year Exchange Reports," International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁵⁰ Edward L. Keenan, 1961, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

especially their fellow students, showed “no hesitation” in visiting the dorms of their American colleagues and if an exchangee desired these relationships, he or she would never be lacking Russian friends.²⁵¹ Bryon Lindsey, a graduate student in literature, recorded an especially poignant illustration of Soviet kindness. After the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy in 1968, Lindsey and other Americans received permission to place a memorial stand of pictures, inscriptions, and flowers at the entrance of Moscow State University. Lindsey recalled receiving nothing but “help, sympathy, and appreciation” from Soviet students after the erection of the memorial. He recalled that:

It was undoubtedly the first time an American statesman has been publicly honored in the Soviet Union, and the privilege of placing the stand and the very human response it received from the Russians were an outlet for the anguish and sorrow we felt.²⁵²

These recollections and others portrayed the Soviet people not as anti-Western or brutal ideologues but as ordinary people who were capable of sympathy, openness, and congenial relations with Americans. This sentiment was key to underscoring the universality of American ideals and values, which could be more easily accepted by an amenable Soviet population.

In addition to discussing the personal temperament of the Soviet people, many exchangees specifically underscored their intellectual curiosity and openness. These exchange reports noted the capability of many Soviet people to be free-thinking, which participants often equated with their willingness to question the regime and communism.

²⁵¹ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1960, “Report on Graduate Study in the Soviet Union,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Jo Ann Hopkins, 1966, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁵² Bryon Lindsey, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Academic Frederick Barghoorn recalled in 1958 that one of the most “delightful surprises” he encountered during his time in the Soviet Union was when Soviet citizens expressed “personal unorthodox opinions” in conversations with him.²⁵³ Numerous others repeated this sentiment, such as one 1959 Summer Exchange of Language Teachers participant, who was also surprised at the “frankness and openness” expressed by Soviet friends, even in their conversations on difficult topics such as Stalinism and anti-semitism in the Soviet Union.²⁵⁴ Many exchangees were especially impressed with young Soviets, whom they characterized as being part of a “flexible and sophisticated new breed” with “broad cultural interests.”²⁵⁵ In his memoir, graduate student William Taubman recounted the many occasions he attended Communist Party meetings at Moscow State University. At these lectures, he witnessed Soviet students speak freely and ask party representatives many controversial questions. For instance, one student asked why high Party officials received special privileges not given to ordinary citizens. At another meeting, a Soviet student contended to a Communist Party official, “Perhaps there should be more than one political party in the Soviet Union, not just the Communist Party...It’s been said all these years that the Soviet state was a dictatorship of the proletariat. But didn’t it really amount to a dictatorship of the Communist Party?” Recording his thoughts on these shocking observations, Taubman summarized concisely the sentiment of many of his colleagues.

²⁵³ Barghoorn, *The Soviet Cultural Offensive*, 126

²⁵⁴ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1959, “Summer Language Program Composite Student Report,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁵⁵ Robert Maguire, 1967, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; James Muller, 1968, Exchange report, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

“We delude ourselves,” he argued, “when we persist in the notion that this is a nation of sheep.”²⁵⁶

While Americans often equated the Soviet ability to be free-thinking with their readiness to question their system of government, numerous others were surprised and hopeful at the amount of curiosity about the United States exhibited by the Soviet people. Many exchangees remembered how eagerly their Soviet acquaintances wanted to learn about the United States. These Americans were constantly confronted with questions about life in the United States, concerning everything from professors’ salaries to jazz music to prices of basic goods.²⁵⁷ Leslie Brady, who served as the Embassy’s Counselor for Cultural Affairs in Moscow and worked closely with many exchange students, characterized this Soviet curiosity as “encouraging, and at times very touching.”²⁵⁸

These descriptions by American academics illustrated their faith that the Soviet people were capable of eventually throwing off their communist system and supporting American-style democracy and capitalism. Illustrated by their efforts to associate with Westerners, their ability to think freely, and their curiosity about America, the Soviet people, in the mind of many American exchangees, were poised and ready to emulate American values. In summary, these reports and recollections by American academics on exchange to the Soviet Union between 1958 and 1968 show a persistence of the Cold

²⁵⁶ Taubman, *The View From Lenin Hills*, 5-10, 168, 248.

²⁵⁷ Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, July 1961, “Study and Research in the Soviet Union, 1960-1961: Report of American Participants in the Exchange of Graduate Students, Young Faculty Members, and Post-Doctoral Researchers,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1959, “Summer Language Program Composite Student Report,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Taubman, *The View From Lenin Hills*, 156; Bernice Madison-Schapiro, March 5, 1965, “Brief Report of Trip by Bernice Madison-Schapiro to the Soviet Union,” Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁵⁸ Brady, “The Role of Cultural and Educational Exchanges in Soviet-American Relations,” 203.

War consensus and continued belief in American exceptionalism. While these Americans sought to gain a more thorough understanding of the Soviet Union, they simultaneously worked to reform its people and convert them to the American way.

CHAPTER IV

“REPRESENTATIVES OF AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP,” 1969-1979

As the US-Soviet exchange program entered into its second decade, it experienced significant changes in terms of the scope of the program and its purported aims, according to both exchange officials and the participants. First, although it would be undermined by the end of the decade, the era of detente brought about an unprecedented expansion of the exchange, allowing more Americans than ever the opportunity to live and study in Eastern Europe. Secondly, the tumultuous nature of the period, especially the growing domestic and international opposition movement to the Vietnam War, affected attitudes toward the exchange and placed the goals of the program in stark contrast to those of the previous decade. Most exchange organizers and participants alike no longer characterized the program as a way to spread American values. As the Vietnam War convinced many Americans that their country’s role as the global protector of freedom and democracy was no longer feasible or desirable, exchange leaders and participants began treating the US-Soviet program as a “normal” exchange and focused more on its scholarly benefits than its propaganda value.

Though it is often assumed that the dramatic events of the late 1960s and 1970s had an impact on American citizens and their perception of America’s role in the world, an examination of American exchangees’ reports in this period provides a specific case study that shows the direct effects of this era on a particular group of Americans. The

exchange program entered its second decade at a pivotal point in a shifting American public opinion. Whereas just a few years earlier an overwhelming majority of Americans supported American intervention in Vietnam as a legitimate effort to contain communism and promote freedom globally, from 1968 onward a growing majority believed that the war had been a mistake. College campuses proved to be the heart of the anti-war movement, affecting even those students who never signed petitions or marched in demonstrations.²⁵⁹ While the media tended to draw attention to the more radical protestors, the attitude shifts among American exchangees to the Soviet Union show the dramatic implications of this period on more “ordinary” students and academics.

The post-exchange reports of this period demonstrate that the missionary zeal of the previous decade had almost entirely disappeared. Although exchangees still largely believed in the superiority of the United States, as shown by their frequent criticisms of the Soviet economy, its frustrating bureaucracy, and the presence of state surveillance, most no longer asserted that the exchange be used to spread American values to the Soviet people. Corresponding with such an important shift in public perception of the war in Vietnam, this points to a significant shift in their notions of American identity.

Historians such as Michael Hunt and Walter Hixson have described American national ideology as including the notion that “national greatness depended on making the world safe for liberty” and the idea that America “possess a special right to exert power in the world.”²⁶⁰ The dramatic shift in the reports by exchange participants to the Soviet Union

²⁵⁹ Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2002), 85, 90-93.

²⁶⁰ Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 171; Walter L. Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy: National Identity and US Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 1.

show that by the 1970s, these Americans were contesting that long-held facet of American ideology.

Other themes and commonalities among this decade's exchange reports reinforce the idea that while these Americans still believed in the virtues of their nation, they had begun to doubt the universal applicability of their national values. Unlike during the previous decade, exchangees of this period no longer characterized the Soviet people as intensely curious about the West, and they were much more apt to criticize American institutions and organizations than they had been before. Furthermore, exchangees of the 1970s tended to focus much more on the academic aspects of their sojourn instead of using the bulk of their reports to describe the Soviet people and their way of life, essentially treating the program as more of an "ordinary" exchange. Still, the ongoing Cold War necessitated some level of "othering" the Soviet Union, and therefore exchangees chose to concentrate more on the inefficiencies of Soviet society and bureaucracy and its weak economy. This reinforced their belief that the American way remained superior, even if they spent less time trying to impress that idea upon the Soviet people.

The second decade of the official US-Soviet academic exchange program witnessed substantial shifts in both the approach of exchange organizers and the scope of the program. Yale Richmond, an American diplomat to Eastern Europe with decades of involvement in directing cultural exchange, characterized the early years of the program as a period of "exchange tourism," during which both the United States and the Soviet Union had first to become acquainted with one another and determine the procedures for exchange, all while harboring intense suspicion and mistrust. However, he argued, by the

late 1960s and through the 1970s, the program matured and the exchange grew into a more regularized and cooperative endeavor. The range and size of the exchanges expanded dramatically, coming to include bilateral cooperative agreements in various fields of research, direct university-to-university agreements, new exchanges between the American National Academy of Sciences and the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and the expansion of the Fulbright Program to include exchanges to Eastern Europe.²⁶¹

The start of this period, the year 1968, also brought some significant organizational changes to the exchange program. The Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants (IUCTG), which had administered American academic exchanges with the region since the late 1950s, was replaced by a new agency headquartered in New York City called the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). Connected with several nonprofit educational organizations, including the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, and the National Academy of Sciences, IREX also drew sponsorship from philanthropic organizations, such as the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation, and from government sources, namely the Department of State through the National Endowment for the Humanities. Though chartered by the United States Congress and partially funded by the State Department, IREX remained a legally independent organization.²⁶² At its inception, Allan Kassof, a sociologist who specialized in the Soviet Union and a former exchange student to the

²⁶¹ Yale Richmond, *Hosting Soviet Visitors: A Handbook* (Washington, DC: Delphi Press, 1988), 2-3; Harriet Culley, ed., "US-USSR Cultural and Educational Exchanges," *GIST* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Public Affairs, 1989), 1.

²⁶² International Research and Exchanges Board, IREX memorandum, July 1968, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Yale Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins?* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 32; International Research and Exchanges Board, "1976/77 Annual Report," January 1978, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; Lisa Berman, "The Changing Nature of Soviet Cultural Exchange Policy" (PhD diss., Hampshire College, 1991), 45.

USSR, became the organization's executive director, a position that he retained until 1992.²⁶³ IREX continued and worked to expand the IUCTG's flagship programs, including the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange, the Senior Research Scholars Exchange, and the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers. The organization also sustained a newer program that the IUCTG developed in its last years in tandem with the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). The ACLS exchange focused on sending senior scholars in the social sciences and humanities to work in Soviet research institutes for periods between three and ten months.²⁶⁴

The IREX annual reports from the late 1960s and 1970s chronicle the expansion of the US-Soviet exchange in this decade. The year 1968, characterized by heightened tensions over the Vietnam War and America's denunciation of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia, saw an unprecedented reduction in the size of the program. However, this trajectory changed almost as soon as Richard Nixon entered the presidential office in 1969. Calling for a new "era of negotiation" with the Soviet Union in his inaugural address, the incoming administration participated in the first round of Strategic Arms Limitations Talks with the Soviets just a few months later in the fall of 1969. Although it would take almost two years for those negotiations to produce a final agreement, culminating at the Moscow summit in May 1972 between Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, these early overtures toward a more conciliatory US-Soviet relationship seemed to have an immediate effect on the exchange program. The biannual

²⁶³ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 21-22.

²⁶⁴ Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 32; International Research and Exchanges Board, IREX memorandum, July 1968, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

US-USSR cultural agreement signed in early 1970 took only a week to negotiate. Most significantly, considering that the exchange had been diminishing in size since 1964, the 1970 agreement finally reversed this downward trend.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, besides increasing the number of exchange participants, IREX officials noted that Soviet exchange administrators became more flexible as well, as they were willing to accept American academics researching more sensitive or contemporary topics that had been regarded as taboo in previous years. They even noted that American participants in the Soviet Union were beginning to gain better access to necessary archives and were experiencing less provocations and harassment by Soviet police, describing the exchange as occurring in a “more business-like atmosphere.”²⁶⁶ Finally, another factor that contributed to the expansion of the program was the inclusion in the subsequent 1972 exchange agreement of a provision to allow Americans on the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange to bring their children with them to the Soviet Union, which IREX organizers hoped would enlarge the applicant pool.²⁶⁷ Even before the momentous meeting between Nixon and Brezhnev in 1972 cemented the policy of detente, the new more conciliatory attitude of the Nixon administration and its promise to scale back American involvement in Vietnam had almost immediate positive consequences for the exchange program.²⁶⁸

President Nixon’s 1972 visit to Moscow and the ensuing atmosphere of detente served to further expand on this progress. Discussing the importance of collaborative

²⁶⁵ Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976), 48-49.

²⁶⁶ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1970-1971,” 1971, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; Daniel C. Matuszewski, IREX memorandum, February 9, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁶⁷ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1971-1972,” 1972, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁶⁸ Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, 48-49.

research projects between America and the Soviet Union in particular, President Nixon stated in an address to Congress in June 1972 that such programs would form “habits of cooperation” in “areas of peaceful enterprise,” and in addition they would “create on both sides a steadily growing vested interest in the maintenance of good relations between our two countries.”²⁶⁹ With this sentiment in mind, the State Department conducted the next set of negotiations for the 1974 US-Soviet cultural agreement in the spring of 1973. These talks would normally have been held later in the year, but the administration wished for them to be concluded in time to be signed during Brezhnev’s visit to the United States in June.²⁷⁰ The renewed cultural exchange agreement included an exchange of professors, allowing American and Soviet scholars to design classes and teach at each other's universities for the first time.²⁷¹ Another momentous addition to the exchange program that year was an agreement to involve American and Soviet scholars in those collaborative research projects that Nixon had encouraged. Instead of just focusing on basic exchanges, American and Soviet scholars could now participate in cooperative endeavors, including joint research in the fields of science, technology, environmental protection, medicine, and space exploration.²⁷² The IREX officials sensed some tangible improvements to their existing programs also, which they attributed to the improving international climate. The 1973 academic year, for instance, was the first time in the entire existence of the exchange that Soviet officials accepted all forty American nominees for the Graduate Student/Young Faculty exchange. This was even more

²⁶⁹ Sarah C. Carey, *US-Soviet Exchanges* (Washington, DC: Institute for Soviet-American Relations, 1983), 7-8.

²⁷⁰ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1972-1973,” 1973, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁷¹ Byrnes, *Soviet-American Academic Exchanges*, 68.

²⁷² Carey, *US-Soviet Exchanges*, 5.

stunning to exchange organizers, considering that fifteen of these Americans were working on contemporary Soviet topics.²⁷³ The admissions process also became easier in this era, as the long delays experienced in years past when waiting on Soviet officials to accept American applicants began to diminish. The IREX officials further noted that exchangees were also seeing positive results, such as the 1973 Summer Language Exchange participants who reported that they received so many personal invitations and requests for interviews from Soviet colleagues that they could not keep up with them all.²⁷⁴

Even as Gerald Ford took office amidst a presidential scandal in the fall of 1974, the US-Soviet exchange program continued to expand in size and scope. Just as Ford assumed the presidency, in an attempt to expand the program further, State Department negotiators convinced Soviet officials to allow American lecturers in US and Russian history into Soviet universities under the auspices of the Fulbright Program for the first time.²⁷⁵ In their annual reports, the IREX officials continued to express the significant effects of detente on the exchange and articulated their optimism for the future of the program. They noted in 1975 that unlike in the first years of the exchange, the interchange of scholars had now come to be “accepted as legitimate and necessary by the governments of the socialist countries.” This was not only true because of the educational benefits it provided, but they believed Soviet officials also knew that the exchange

²⁷³ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1973-1974,” 1974, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁷⁴ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1972-1973,” 1973, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁷⁵ Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War*, 24.

showed the world that their government was “a participant in ‘normal’ international communications.”²⁷⁶

Beginning in 1975, however, IREX exchanges began to suffer both from a decline in American-Soviet relations and budgetary difficulties. Exchange officials noted that despite the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Accords, which sought to improve relations between the West and the Soviet bloc, the “honeymoon atmosphere” of detente was dwindling as a result of new Soviet incursions into the Middle East and Africa and renewed American skepticism about the feasibility of cooperating with the Soviet Union.²⁷⁷ By 1978, the optimism IREX officials had exhibited in the early 1970s had diminished because of emerging problems with the exchange. Officials noted in their annual report their belief that “America and Russia [were] separated by social and cultural differences so far-reaching as to be all but unbridgeable.” Holding a much more pessimistic outlook than the exchange organizers of the 1960s, the experience of IREX officials up to the late 1970s convinced them that international understanding could not be obtained simply on the basis of Americans and Soviets getting to know each other. The best that could be hoped for the program, besides educational benefits, was not to “dispel what [were] probably irreducible differences, but to learn how to handle [those differences] in minimally destructive ways.”²⁷⁸ The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 brought a conclusive end to the era of detente, and though IREX exchanges were one of the few programs not scaled back in its aftermath, the sharp decline in US-Soviet

²⁷⁶ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1974/1975,” 1975, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁷⁷ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1975/1976,” 1976, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁷⁸ International Research and Exchanges Board, “1977/78 Annual Report,” February 1979, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

relations did have several negative effects on the program. Negotiations for renewal of the US-Soviet cultural exchange agreement were set to occur in late 1979, but the events in Afghanistan eliminated the possibility of holding these talks, so the IREX exchanges continued into the 1980s without a formal agreement in place. Additionally, many American universities in the wake of the invasion of Afghanistan refused to accept Soviet applicants. Many of these universities did not specify the reasoning for these rejections, but indications by a few led IREX officials to believe that a concern over deteriorating international relations played a major role.²⁷⁹

Despite these difficulties, the IREX officials cited budgetary concerns as the most pressing problem facing their program, and they urged the federal government to take a larger role in assisting in their efforts. In their 1979 report, they noted that when the exchange began in 1958, the program was so small that it could function with support from private foundations and “limited assistance from Washington.” However, after the dramatic expansion of the program beginning in 1970, support from philanthropic organizations was no longer enough to sustain the exchange considering that the budget now totaled \$3.9 million. The IREX organizers noted that the United States spent the least out of all the major nations on public diplomacy and cultural exchange, and they called on President Jimmy Carter’s administration to increase their funding. To underscore why this additional funding was important, the IREX officials contended that the exchanges were “instruments essential to the maintenance of our inventory of expert knowledge of the USSR and Eastern Europe” and they “never qualify as pleasure trips.” They argued that as the administration had recently spent \$35 billion on improving just

²⁷⁹ International Research and Exchanges Board, “1980/81 Annual Report,” January 1981, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

one component of the nation's missile defense system, "prudence suggests that we ought to be willing to spend one one-hundredth of one percent of that sum annually to fund the exchanges that enable us to keep an eye on, and keep talking with, the people whose missiles so worry us."²⁸⁰

The organizers of post-1968 US-Soviet exchanges also had much different objectives for their program than their earlier counterparts. The IREX officials did not express a desire to use the exchange to spread a positive image of the United States or to make American-style democracy more appealing to the Soviet people. In their internal documents, whenever they referred to the exchange as creating "understanding," IREX officials almost always connected it with maintaining scholarly communication and cooperation, not with the improvement of international relations.²⁸¹ Also, in the aforementioned petition to the Carter administration for more government funding, exchange organizers framed the program as essential not because it provided a way to spread democratic ideals to the Soviet people but because it allowed American experts to gain more knowledge and insight into the Soviet Union.²⁸² Furthermore, unlike the previous IUCTG selection committees, which placed a lot of importance on an applicant's emotional maturity and ability to represent the United States favorably, IREX selection procedures did not even mention considering an applicant's demeanor or

²⁸⁰ International Research and Exchanges Board, "1978/79 Annual Report," December 1979, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

²⁸¹ International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1969-1970," 1970, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1972-1973," 1973, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "1979/80 Annual Report," January 1981, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "IREX Exchange Report, 1969-1975," 1975, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

²⁸² International Research and Exchanges Board, "1978/79 Annual Report," December 1979, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

personality. Instead, they insisted “professional qualifications [were] the paramount considerations in the selection of candidates” and that IREX officials sought to “avoid involvement in judgments concerning nonprofessional criteria.”²⁸³

Still, IREX did seek to respond to the criticism that had plagued the exchange since its inception, namely the imbalance between participants in the sciences versus those in the humanities. IREX officials noted in their reports that they often heard from politicians or the public that this was an enormous cause for concern. In the 1970s, roughly 70% of American participants in IREX exchanges were specialists in the humanities while only 5% were in fields of science or technology. Conversely, 90% of Soviet grantees in the same exchange were scientists. However, exchange officials argued, this imbalance was “not nearly so sinister as it appears,” as it did not result from Soviet reluctance to allow American scientists to study in their universities. The problem, IREX organizers insisted, was that many American scientists were simply not interested in working in Soviet institutions. Furthermore, those scientists who did want to work with their Soviet counterparts were much more likely to apply for more short-term visits through the National Academy of Sciences, allowing them to work in Soviet research institutes which tended to be much better equipped than Soviet university laboratories.²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, IREX officials did attempt to offset this imbalance with a new Preparatory Fellowship Program, initiated in 1972. This year-long language intensive program sought to “attract Ph.D. candidates from underrepresented disciplines” to the exchange. With the

²⁸³ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Minutes- Joint Meeting of the Board and Program Committee,” June 18, 1969, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

²⁸⁴ International Research and Exchanges Board, “IREX Exchange Report, 1969-1975,” 1975, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1975/1976,” 1976, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

majority of fellowship participants able to meet the program's language requirement after participating, IREX officials considered the program a success and established it as a permanent segment of the program.

While the 1970s brought changes to the size, scope, and objectives of the official US-Soviet exchange program, an examination of participants' remarks shows an even more dramatic ideological shift that reflects the tumultuous nature of this period in American history. From 1969 to 1980, almost one thousand Americans traveled to the Soviet Union through IREX programs, including the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange, the Senior Research Scholars Exchange, the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers, and the American Council of Learned Societies Exchange. The roughly 220 exchangee reports I was able to obtain and examine here serve as a case study for the broader shifts in American society in this period. Specifically, they plainly show the effects of growing doubts in the universal applicability of American values, coinciding with increasing doubts about and opposition to the Vietnam War.

The starkest difference between the pre-1968 reports and the accounts of this era was the almost complete absence of an intent to serve as cultural ambassadors for the United States while in the Soviet Union. While some participants between 1968 and 1979 did assert that exchangees should serve as positive representatives of America, that their presence could help create international understanding, or that participants should actively distribute American goods and publications to the Soviet people, the occurrence of these sentiments declined dramatically in the second decade of the program. Among the few concerned with Soviet perceptions of American exchangees, only two directly mentioned the notion that participants should act as cultural representatives. Chemist

Donald Malament, in 1970, remarked on the constant excitement he felt being “a representative of the United States.” Edwina Blumberg, a 1977 graduate student in literature, asserted that not only did her exchange experience achieve an important academic purpose, but it was also significant because she was able to serve as an “Ambassador of Good Will.”²⁸⁵ Only a few more noted that the exchange could serve as a “window on the world” for Soviets who came into contact with American participants or as a way to get information about the United States and its people into the USSR.²⁸⁶ A small number of other participants asserted that the program could help create international understanding and only one contended that direct American-Soviet interactions could help advance the larger policy of detente.²⁸⁷ In a significant departure from the previous decade, only about ten exchangees suggested future participants bring American goods and publications to distribute to Soviet acquaintances, and even fewer urged IREX officials to carefully select future grantees based on their emotional maturity, knowledge of American and Soviet society, or their ability to represent the United States favorably.

This enormous decrease in American exchangees’ willingness to serve as missionaries of the American way and the decline in participants’ perception of the

²⁸⁵ Donald Malament, Exchange report, July 10, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Edwina Blumberg, Exchange report, March 29, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁸⁶ Robert V. Daniels, Exchange report, January 18, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Rodger Swearingen, Exchange report, September 25, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁸⁷ James Long, Exchange report, December 29, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Stanley Grossman, Exchange report, November 7, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Edwina Blumberg, Exchange report, March 29, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

exchange program as a tool for spreading freedom and democracy illuminate their realization of the difficulty, and sometimes impossibility, of exporting American values abroad. From 1958 to 1968, more than half of reports by exchangees mentioned, either directly or indirectly, their belief that academic exchange with the Soviet Union was an important method for exposing the Soviet people to American values and culture. However, in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, only about one-sixth of the 220 reports examined here even tangentially relayed such sentiment. Concurrent with the height of the anti-Vietnam War movement, more and more Americans, if only for a brief period, began questioning one of the main tenets of their national identity- making the world safe for democracy. While this shift has been well established by historians, this dramatic change in attitude by American academics on exchange to the Soviet Union serves as a precise example of this phenomenon and as a case study for the specific effects these events had on the American people.²⁸⁸

The disappearing of exchangees' missionary zeal, a sentiment that was so pervasive in the 1960s, coincided directly with the growing opposition to the Vietnam War, indicating that these Americans had likely begun to question if American-style democracy was truly universal. Throughout this entire decade, with few exceptions, American exchange participants no longer cited spreading American values abroad as an objective for their time behind the Iron Curtain. This silence indicates that such a purpose was either no longer important to them or that they no longer felt that serving as champions of the American way was desirable or feasible. A few from the late 1970s even noted in their reports their disdain for being considered cultural ambassadors or

²⁸⁸ Hixson, *The Myth of American Diplomacy*, 248.

representatives of the United States. Two 1976 graduate students resented the fact that, as Americans in the USSR, they were “forced to live in a goldfish bowl” and were “constantly...under scrutiny,” and they found this attention to be “annoying.”²⁸⁹ Unlike some exchangees in previous years who encouraged future participants to wear fashionable clothing to illustrate the West’s high living standards, a graduate student in linguistics, Christopher Daly, warned that “unless such a person enjoys being stared at and pointed to, such clothes should be kept to a minimum.”²⁹⁰ Thomas Remington, a 1977 exchangee in political science, spoke to this sentiment more directly, stating that the exchange should be justified by its benefits to *both* the United States and the Soviet Union “rather than on the diffuse hope for the spread of some ‘word’ about American life among Soviet citizens.”²⁹¹

Further illustrating this new reluctance to use the exchange as a way to spread American values, there was also a precipitous drop in reports that characterized the Soviet people as intensely curious about the West and the United States. Unlike in the first decade of the exchange, when a significant number of participants recalled the Soviets’ desire to learn about American society, only four exchangees mentioned Soviet curiosity about the United States in this later period. Furthermore, even these four remarks differed from the sentiment expressed in the previous decade. From 1958 to 1968, many exchangees reported that Soviets asked numerous questions about ordinary

²⁸⁹ Laurel Fay, Exchange report, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Serge Gregory, Exchange report, August 13, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁰ Christopher Daly, Exchange report, July 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹¹ Thomas Remington, Exchange report, October 1, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

American life, such as income, the price of basic goods, and American music.²⁹² Exchangees in the 1970s, though, mostly framed Soviet curiosity in terms of academic interest. Literature graduate student Lauren Leighton noted in 1970 that “there was intense interest in anything I had to say, even when it was clear I knew less than persons asking the questions.” She concluded that this was because “there was unanimous interest in anything an American member of the humanities had to offer.”²⁹³ Two others, anthropologist Marjorie Balzer and mathematician Stanely Grossman, recalled that Soviet scholars were “hungry” for Western literature and viewed American exchangees as a “gateway” to obtain Western information and academic publications.²⁹⁴ Only one, a Senior Research Scholar in physics named James Anderson, remembered the Soviets as being very interested in American culture generally. When he and his wife invited Soviet friends to their apartment, they often showed American movies, such as films on the lunar space program and travel documentaries about the United States, which he asserted were “very well received.”²⁹⁵ In the scope of these records, it is impossible to discern definitively if the Soviets just stopped asking questions about American life or if the exchangees simply ceased to note such instances, especially since the reports were open-

²⁹² Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, July 1961, “Study and Research in the Soviet Union, 1960-1961: Report of American Participants in the Exchange of Graduate Students, Young Faculty Members, and Post-Doctoral Researchers,” Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, 1959, “Summer Language Program Composite Student Report,” International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; Bernice Madison-Schapiro, March 5, 1965, “Brief Report of Trip by Bernice Madison-Schapiro to the Soviet Union,” Robert Byrnes Collection, Indiana University Library, Bloomington, Indiana; William Taubman, *The View from Lenin Hills: Soviet Youth in Ferment* (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1967), 156.

²⁹³ Lauren Leighton, Exchange report, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁴ Marjorie Balzer, Exchange report, December 4, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Stanley Grossman, Exchange report, November 7, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁵ James Anderson, Exchange report, July 9, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.1

ended letters, allowing the participants to include simply what they perceived as significant aspects of their time abroad. Regardless, the almost complete absence of this sentiment further shows that touting the benefits of American life was no longer important to the exchangees in this era.

Illustrating another shift from the previous decade of the exchange, there was a seven-fold increase in exchangees who criticized American institutions, such as IREX, the American Embassy, the US Consulate, or the government in general. While many exchangees from the previous decade were concerned with articulating to the Soviet people the superiority of American institutions, participants from 1970 to 1979 not only resisted describing themselves as America's cultural ambassadors but were also much more likely to complain about actions by American officials and organizations. Though over half of exchange participants criticized Soviet bureaucracy for making their stay in the USSR very difficult, a significant number placed the final blame on IREX for not putting enough pressure on the Soviets to reform their policies. Though exchangees of the previous decade faced these same bureaucratic hurdles, almost none of them held American exchange organizers responsible for these problems. Slavic linguist Charles Gribble, reporting in 1972 after his time in Moscow, asserted that IREX and its director Allen Kassof should not gauge the program's success by simply getting more Americans accepted by the Soviets annually. Instead, he contended, "IREX should put more emphasis on making sure that our visits are as fruitful as possible once we're there" by forcing the Soviets to guarantee such things as essential archival access and adequate

lodging.²⁹⁶ Historian David Macey echoed this sentiment in 1973, stating that “IREX is not sufficiently interested in the academic side of our problems and...not enough pressure is brought to bear on the Soviets.”²⁹⁷ As these bureaucratic obstacles persisted throughout the 1970s, some exchangees even began to urge IREX officials to implement sanctions against the Soviets in order to improve their experience. Historian Jonathan Zorn remembered in 1976 that he and many of his fellow exchangees resented the restrictions placed on their travel by Soviet authorities. Some even wished that IREX would “physically nail to the floor the feet of all Soviet exchangees until the Soviets loosened up on travel arrangements.”²⁹⁸ Some, such as 1977 participants Bill Fierman and Malvin Helgesen, even suggested that in return for the Soviets violating the “spirit of the exchange” by hampering American students and researchers, IREX should threaten to suspend the program if conditions did not improve.²⁹⁹

Conversely, while many reports criticized IREX for being too lax with the Soviets, others condemned the organization for being too critical of Soviet society, another sentiment not present in earlier accounts. Historian Patricia Polansky, placed in Leningrad in 1977, believed that the IREX orientation manual distributed to participants ahead of departure was a bit of an “overkill” because many items it suggested Americans

²⁹⁶ Charles Gribble, Exchange report, September 26, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁷ David Macey, Exchange report, October 11, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁸ Richard Vidmer, Exchange report, January 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁹⁹ Bill Fierman, Exchange report, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Malvin Helgesen, Exchange report, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

bring were readily and adequately available in the Soviet Union.³⁰⁰ Jo Ann Bailey, a graduate student in literature, articulated this sentiment even more plainly, asserting that in IREX's orientation material there was:

a vague anti-Russian bias. 'The Russians are dirty people and their dorms are dirty and their toilets are dirty, etc.' It wasn't stated this plainly, but you felt it. Well, in my experience it wasn't the Russians who were the problem at all; the problem was the other foreign students...

Bailey went further, accusing IREX officials of sexism. In the orientation literature, she pointed out, "spouses are always 'she,' [and] my project is always 'his' project. Very offensive."³⁰¹

Another element, almost totally absent from earlier reports, were the numerous denunciations of the American Embassy in Moscow. Much of the exchangees' criticisms stemmed from new restrictions placed on exchangees' use of Embassy facilities such the commissary, the snack bar, Xerox machines, and mailing privileges. A graduate student in literature, Edythe Haber, urged in 1978 that these cuts should not continue. "Shopping for soap flakes, toilet paper, etc. in Soviet stores is a time consuming and often futile exercise and, especially for those without spouses to share the dirty work, would sharply curtail research time."³⁰² Still, the significant aspects of these remarks reside in the language exchangees used to describe the Embassy officials and their attitude toward exchange participants. These Americans did not perceive these restrictions as resulting from budgetary or logistical shortfalls. Instead, many believed it originated from a

³⁰⁰ Patricia Polansky, Exchange report, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰¹ Jo Ann Bailey, Exchange report, August 1975, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰² Edythe Haber, Exchange report, April 26, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

distrust and lack of respect for academics by the Embassy and, by extension, the US government. Linguist Janet Hoffman in 1973 reported that relations with the Embassy were a “matter of concern” because officials there felt exchangees were abusing Embassy privileges. “‘Students’ were often used as a scapegoat for a number of inconveniences experienced by Embassy personnel and [their] families,” she contended. “Much of this, however, was based on false information and general prejudice.”³⁰³ That same year, historian David Macey agreed, noting that Embassy personnel regarded exchangees as “frivolous, non-scholarly, radicals, communist party members, or fellow travelers,” which he blamed on the officials’ “anti-intellectualism.”³⁰⁴ Others, such as Edward Brown, remarked in 1979 that the Embassy treated him and his colleagues as an “embarrassment,” a “nuisance,” and “second-class citizens.”³⁰⁵ Even more starkly, historian James Hart remembered in 1978 that at the Cellar Club, a bar in the basement of the Embassy, personnel often asked the IREX exchangees if they were “really Americans,” and the staff at the Marine Bar routinely reminded exchangees that it was “American only” night. “The Indonesians and Africans were there without having to take a loyalty oath,” he remembered resentfully. “We were given the distinct impression that Americans serving in the Embassy and their families considered the exchange scholars un-American.” He assumed they believed that “we were in Russia to learn how the Russians lived and then we would bring the revolution to America!”³⁰⁶ Historian Howard

³⁰³ Janet Hoffman, Exchange report, August 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰⁴ David Macey, Exchange report, October 11, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰⁵ Edward Brown, Exchange report, January 23, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰⁶ James Hart, Exchange report, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Spendelow lamented this situation as well in 1975. He argued that given the particularly difficult circumstances researchers faced in the Soviet Union, and given the fact that the Embassy “stands as a surrogate for the government which signed the official exchange agreement...one would hope that the Embassy would be much more active on the exchangees’ behalf.”³⁰⁷

Despite the exchange participants’ frustrations with the actions of the American Embassy personnel, they reflected the attitude of the Nixon administration itself and the political climate it fostered. Known for his paranoia and preoccupation with rooting out all possible political enemies, President Nixon had a particular distrust of “liberal academics.” For instance, Henry Kissinger, the president’s National Security Advisor, remembered that Nixon sought to “exclude the CIA from the formulation of policy [because] it was staffed by Ivy League liberals.”³⁰⁸ With exchangees feeling more victimized by US government officials than ever before or since, perhaps this points to a dissemination of Nixon’s suspicions of academics in this period.

While many participants only indirectly criticized the American government by pointing out problems with the Embassy or IREX, one exchangee had a particularly unfortunate experience for which he blamed the US government directly. During the 1969-1970 academic year, Princeton University graduate student James West participated in the Graduate Student/Young Faculty exchange to Moscow to do historical research for his dissertation. When he prepared to depart Moscow, he packed all his research notes from the previous year into two wooden crates and shipped them back to the United

³⁰⁷ Howard Spendelow, Exchange report, August 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁰⁸ Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 79-80.

States via diplomatic pouch, a mailing service offered through the US Embassy that prohibited search and seizure by Soviet officials. While one box arrived in the United States within ten days, the second and more valuable box never materialized. In the following months and years, West desperately attempted to trace his lost research materials, but after two years he reluctantly halted his search and finished a “crippled dissertation.” In that period, West believed this incident to be merely an unfortunate accident. However, in 1975 he addressed a letter about this matter to Senator Frank Church, chair of the Senate Select Committee on Domestic Intelligence, which was investigating past illegal intelligence gathering methods used by US government agencies such as the FBI and the CIA. In the correspondence, West expressed his belief that the CIA had seized his crate of research materials, acting under the auspices of President Nixon’s Huston Plan. This intelligence-gathering program called for intensified surveillance of alleged radicals in the United States, and as West contended, “possibly including Americans with Soviet connections.” West had traced the shipment of the one box that was delivered and discovered that it had passed through the Brooklyn Army Terminal and had been stamped by an unauthorized person who was unknown by the New York Customs Service. Having already written to the CIA to request information through the Freedom of Information Act, West wrote Senator Church to ask for advice on getting his materials back.³⁰⁹ Though this was a single incident, West’s experience, coupled with the many other exchangees who criticized American officials and organizations in this period, illustrate an important shift. In contrast to the first decade of the exchange, when large numbers of participants felt confident enough in their national

³⁰⁹ James West, Exchange report, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

values to attempt to spread them to Eastern Europe, these later groups clearly felt that their nation's institutions were no longer totally above reproach.

Reports from this period not only illuminate a change in exchangees' perception of the United States, but recollections of participants from the 1970s also show a shift in how they understood the Soviet Union. This was the era of detente, arms limitation treaties, the end of the Vietnam War, and the signing of the Helsinki Accords, and these reports indicate that those high policy developments did have a personal impact on Americans and how they viewed the Cold War. As US-Soviet relations became more "normalized" than ever before, even if for a brief period, these Americans began to see the Soviet Union as less of an enigma and more as an "ordinary" nation state. Whereas exchangees in the 1960s devoted just as much of their reports to discussing the Soviet people and society as they did their actual academic experience, this changed considerably in the 1970s. After categorizing statements made by these participants, it is evident that participants' remarks about their academic experience doubled compared to the previous decade and the amount of comments describing the Soviet people dropped by half. This seems to indicate that participants were beginning to view the US-Soviet exchange as more of a "normal" experience and less as a trip to an exotic land where they felt compelled to document the lifestyle of these strange peoples.

Exchangees of the 1970s devoted far more of their reports to recording their academic experience than their predecessors, and this trend along with their overwhelmingly positive remarks show a significant shift in the perception of the Soviet Union by these Americans. Whereas participants in the first decade of the exchange included a more equal ratio of positive to negative opinions of Soviet academia in their

reports, post-1968 exchangees reported overwhelmingly favorable impressions of their academic experience. The vast majority of exchangees used their accounts to extol the intelligence, helpfulness, and generosity of their advisor, colleagues, or academic department. For instance, linguist Charles Gribble recalled in 1972 that being attached to his assigned advisor was “the best thing that happened to [him] during the entire trip” because of his insightful advice and the fact that he was a “decent human being.”³¹⁰ Even when their academic advisors knew little about the exchangee’s research, as was the case with historian Thomas Pearson and linguist Robert F. Allen, participants recalled their mentors’ “eagerness” to help in arranging research permissions and their “unfailingly cheerful and helpful” nature.³¹¹ Furthermore, many of these Americans even described advisors who were devout communists in positive terms. Soil scientist Gary Halvorson remarked in 1978 that though his advisor was a “stalwart member of the establishment,” he was an intelligent scholar and “one of the finest persons I have ever met.”³¹² Another graduate student in history, Stuart Grover, asserted that despite the fact that his advisor clearly did not agree with his historical interpretations, he remained professional and “confided his comments to matters of fact, and clearly was not interested in whether or not my ideas were acceptable to orthodox Marxism.” In fact, Grover believed that his advisor enjoyed their disagreements because they resulted in stimulating and enlightening debates. Grover further encouraged other graduate students to approach Soviet scholars in a similarly honest fashion because, he contended, “we are in the Soviet Union as

³¹⁰ Charles Gribble, Exchange report, September 26, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹¹ Thomas Pearson, Exchange report, August 1, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Robert F. Allen, Exchange report, March 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹² Gary Halvorson, Exchange report, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

representatives of American *scholarship* [emphasis added].”³¹³ This characterization is particularly noteworthy considering that past exchangeees framed themselves as purveyors of the American way of life. By this time, as the dramatic events of the late 1960s and early 1970s had cast doubt on feasibility of spreading American values, exchangeees now more frequently presented themselves as simply academic ambassadors.

Further illustrating these individuals’ increased focus on the scholarly aspects of the exchange, more than half of the participants examined here praised their respective departments and Soviet peers for their insight and generosity. When describing relationships with Soviet colleagues, American exchangeees in this period used language such as “stimulating,” “cooperative,” “welcoming,” “high quality,” “rewarding,” and “invaluable.”³¹⁴ Several even sought to challenge the negative stereotypes associated with Soviet scholars. Historian Herman Edgar Melton argued in 1977 that although many Soviet academics in his field tended to produce “dry” publications, in reality Soviet historians had a “lively and imaginative approach” to the field, which they articulated in private conversations.³¹⁵ Though these encouraging sentiments regarding Soviet scholarship certainly existed in the previous decade, instances of it grew tremendously throughout the 1970s. Unlike their predecessors, these exchangeees no longer equated

³¹³ Stuart Grover, Exchange report, August 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹⁴ Samuel Baron, Exchange report, June 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Richard Wortman, Exchange report, March 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Timothy Brock, Exchange report, November 21, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; James Anderson, Exchange report, July 9, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Donald Ostrowski, Exchange report, 1975, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Marjorie Balzer, Exchange report, December 4, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹⁵ Janet Hoffman, Exchange report, August 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Soviet intelligence with curiosity about the West or an ability to criticize communism, but instead focused more on their scholarly abilities.

Additionally, the overwhelming majority of American exchangeees noted that, despite some difficulties, they had a good and productive academic experience. For example, Carl Ray Proffer, a specialist in Slavic languages, reported in 1969 that “there is no question that the five months I spent in Moscow was the most important five months of my entire education and career as a Slavist.”³¹⁶ Similarly, Russian literature student Alma Law said that despite the occasional frustrations and inconveniences involved with living in the Soviet Union, the exchange was “one of the most fascinating and rewarding experiences I have ever had.”³¹⁷ Many noted that their time in the USSR was “productive” and that completing their research projects would have been impossible without the wealth of knowledge they gained from Soviet archives and scholars.³¹⁸ Even exchangeees in underrepresented fields, such as contemporary economics and anthropology, reported that they were able to gain access to needed records and that they benefited from contacts with Soviets scholars in their field.³¹⁹ These and similar remarks illustrate that in this period exchange participants perceived the Soviet Union in a much more positive way. The exchange was no longer just a means to “get a feel” for Russia but instead provided tangible and high quality academic benefits for American scholars.

³¹⁶ Carl Ray Proffer, Exchange report, 1969, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹⁷ Alma Law, Exchange report, March 25, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Constantin Galskoy, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹⁸ James Flynn, Exchange report, June 24, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Dean Worth, Exchange report, November 1, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³¹⁹ James Gillula, Exchange report, February 16, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Marjorie Balzer, Exchange report, December 4, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Unlike the previous American exchangeees, when these individuals did note the value of getting to see Soviet life firsthand, they almost always connected it with the academic and pedagogical enrichment it would provide. Multiple exchangeees, such as historian David Brower, noted that getting to observe Soviet society directly enhanced their ability as teachers because it allowed them to relay the nature of the Soviet Union to their students better.³²⁰ Many others contended that living in Soviet society greatly strengthened their abilities as Russian specialists. Historian Daniel Morrison asserted in 1975 that “to the aspiring Russian expert, the total immersion in Russian society and culture which the exchange experience provides is of incalculable value,” while fellow historian Kent Hill agreed that living in the Soviet Union had enhanced his ability to understand some of the “enigmas” of Russian history.³²¹ James Wertsch, a graduate student in psychology, noted that “many of the problems in understanding how Soviet psychology, linguistics, and psycholinguistics work became much clearer after one has gained some insight into the nature of Soviet life in general.”³²² In essence, many of the exchangeees agreed with the sentiment of exchangeee R. D. Rucker who claimed that it was impossible to truly comprehend the Soviet Union without living and studying there.³²³ This represented a clear break from the first decade of the exchange, when many participants simply wanted to observe the Soviet Union because of its alien nature. By the

³²⁰ Daniel Brower, Exchange report, May 22, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Henry Glade, Exchange report, June 7, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²¹ Daniel Morrison, Exchange report, November 24, 1975, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Kent Hill, Exchange report, September 5, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²² Stephen Sternheimer, Exchange report, January 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²³ R.D. Rucker, Exchange report, November 6, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

1970s, exchangees were treating the US-Soviet exchange more like an “ordinary” program and chose to focus more on the academic merits of living and working in the Soviet Union. This further underscores the shift away from using the exchange as a method to spread American values.

One aspect of the exchange that remained constant from its first decade into its second was the significant number of exchange participants who recorded the friendly and cordial nature of the Soviet people they encountered. Throughout the second decade of the exchange, nearly half of the exchangees recalled their positive impressions of Soviet citizens they came to know through their time in the USSR. Some such as Borivoj M. Plavsic, a 1973 graduate student, noted that his Soviet roommate was “non-interfering, quiet, and friendly” and “one could not ask for a better one.”³²⁴ Others recalled similar impressions, such as Anne Frydman Weinfeld who asserted that despite the challenges involved in living in a Leningrad dormitory, sharing that experience with “an intelligent, curious, complex Russian and living in close contact with many others is one of the most edifying experiences one can have if one is interested in what the USSR is all about.”³²⁵ In 1976, Virginia Bennett recalled that she made “several lasting friendships” that were incredibly rewarding, while William Mills Todd remembered the “generosity of Soviet friends” who often invited him and his family to their homes for dinner.³²⁶ Graduate student R.D. Rucker even stated in 1979 that the Soviet people were

³²⁴ Borivoj M. Plavsic, Exchange report, March 15, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²⁵ Anne Frydman Weinfeld, Exchange report, February 23, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²⁶ Virginia Bennett, Exchange report, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; William Mills Todd, Exchange report, September 1, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

no different from his fellow New Yorkers.”³²⁷ Almost none of these individuals mentioned that they sought to use their friendships with Soviet people as a way to spread American values. Most simply noted the cordial and helpful nature of their colleagues and the positive cultural enrichment they themselves gained by getting to know Soviet citizens.

While exchange participants of this decade became more positive when describing the academic benefits of going to the Soviet Union and the impressive scholarly achievements of its people, the biggest criticisms in their reports were very similar to those of their predecessors in the 1960s. Namely, many detailed the inefficiencies of Soviet society, its bureaucracy, its weak economy as indicated by a lower standard of living, and the presence of state surveillance. These critiques indicate that despite their doubts about the necessity to export American values abroad and their sudden resistance to recognizing themselves as America’s cultural ambassadors, their sense of American superiority remained. Even though exchangees saw their Soviet colleagues and Soviet academia in a more positive light by this period, they still decried the constant inefficiencies and problems that characterized life in the Soviet Union. While they were no longer comfortable with overtly spreading American democracy to the Soviet people, these comments implied that they still believed that capitalism, and the American system more generally, provided a higher standard of living for its people than Soviet communism.

One of the most frequent remarks in exchangee reports, cited in about 120 instances, was the inefficiencies of the Soviet system and the difficulties of

³²⁷ R.D. Rucker, Exchange report, November 6, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

accomplishing anything in the face of Soviet bureaucracy. In several cases exchangees recalled that Soviet officials had delayed issuing their entrance visa, making them lose as much as a month of time in the Soviet Union.³²⁸ Like the first set of American exchange participants, their most frequent bureaucratic hurdle involved Inotdel, the office charged with handling exchange students at Soviet universities. In most cases, when an exchangee had to make any type of academic arrangements, such as gaining admittance to archives, arranging interviews for research, or obtaining travel permissions, they were expected to go through Inotdel. As many exchangees attested, getting anything useful out of Inotdel was “painfully slow” and a researcher could waste numerous days in the Inotdel office trying to get the necessary permissions.³²⁹ Linguist Janet Hoffman even contended that the Moscow State University Inotdel had “a way of making one feel that it is doing favors by performing its assigned tasks.”³³⁰ Historian Constantin Galskoy, writing about his experience in Leningrad, concurred, stating that Inotdel’s main purpose “seems to be in providing as many nuisances as possible in the path of each individual exchangee.”³³¹ Rose Glickman went even further, stating that not only was the Leningrad Inotdel “incompetent and malevolent,” but its director, Vadim Anatolich, was “an evil wretch whose goal in life seems to be dispensing misery.”³³² Many exchangees simply advised

³²⁸ David Macey, Exchange report, October 11, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Thomas Sorenson, Exchange report, November 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³²⁹ Lejb Fugleman, Exchange report, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Laura Engelstein, Exchange report, February 27, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁰ Janet Hoffman, Exchange report, August 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³¹ Constantin Galskoy, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³² Rose Glickman, Exchange report, October 17, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

future participants to avoid Inotdel if possible, but others such as historian Borivoj Plavsic found that incentives, such as “a few strategically timed little gifts,” encouraged Inotdel officials to do their job.³³³

A recurring obstacle exchangees faced with Inotdel was the difficulty of obtaining travel permissions. Graduate student in history Gloria Gibbs described this process in 1978:

No foreigner travels to another Soviet city without a visa *and* a guarantee of housing. Obtaining both the visa and the housing sometimes takes months; and, it has happened that, after the ‘Great Wait,’ the dates of the visa and housing do not coincide and the process must be started again.³³⁴

Many of these American recalled the multiple times Inotdel delayed their travel plans or even cancelled research trips mere days before their scheduled departure.³³⁵ One particularly interesting encounter with Inotdel happened to linguist Dee Ann Holisky who was on exchange in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. When Holisky and another female exchangee requested travel permission to Kutaisi in eastern Georgia, she reported that Inotdel officials responded, “You can’t go there alone. You’re women.”³³⁶ Because of the

³³³ Borivoj M. Plavsic, Exchange report, March 15, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁴ Gloria Gibbs, Exchange report, October 9, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁵ Timothy Brock, Exchange report, November 21, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Lawrence Lerner, Exchange report, June 1, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Maria Carlson, Exchange report, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Milica Banjanin, Exchange report, February 12, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁶ Dee Ann Holisky, Exchange report, January 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

extremely difficult and time-consuming nature of procuring permission to travel in the Soviet Union, many exchangeees simply gave up trying to complete the process.³³⁷

Though few drew an explicit comparison between the difficulties of Soviet bureaucracy and the more efficient nature of American society, the implicit distinction was clear. The very large number of exchangeees who spent part of their reports describing Soviet bureaucracy shows that they perceived it as a highly abnormal situation that they were unaccustomed to facing as Americans. One 1976 exchange student to Leningrad, Serge Gregory, noted his frustration that Inotdel made it difficult for American exchangeees to travel around the Soviet Union while “Soviet grantees [got] to travel around the United States with comparative ease.”³³⁸ Another in Kiev, Myroslava Ciszkwycz, recalled that the only way to overcome the Soviet establishment was to play “their game...according to their rules while using their tactics,” which included lying, faking ignorance, and belligerency in some circumstances.³³⁹ Even when Soviet bureaucracy did not cause any problems for some participants, such as with graduate student Andrea Southard, this was met with surprise. When Southard went to the Lenin Library to apply for permission to do research, the process took “little more than 15 minutes (a remarkably short time for the Soviet system).”³⁴⁰ These and the numerous other comments lamenting Soviet bureaucracy implied that Americans still felt that the

³³⁷ Kathleen Parthe, Exchange report, January 11, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Borivoj M. Plavsic, Exchange report, March 15, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁸ Serge Gregory, Exchange report, August 13, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³³⁹ Myroslava Ciszkwycz, Exchange report, February 5, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴⁰ Andrea Southard, Exchange report, April 27, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Soviet system was restrictive and cumbersome, and despite some issues with American institutions, the efficiency of the United States still surpassed that of the USSR.

The second largest criticism by American exchangeees regarded the Soviet economy, especially the quality of housing, availability of foods and basic goods, and overall living standards. Almost sixty participants recalled the poor nature of the housing provided for them in the Soviet Union. Soviet officials housed more advanced-career academics, such as those on the Senior Scholar Exchange or the American Council of Learned Societies program, in hotels. Many described what they considered to be deplorable conditions in these facilities, such as brown tap water, dirty rooms, bug infestations, and overcrowding for exchangeees with families who were confined to one small room.³⁴¹ For those graduate students and young faculty members who were assigned to Soviet dormitories, the descriptions were even bleaker. One graduate student in history, George Bournoutian, remarked explicitly that Soviet living conditions “were not up to the standard of any US facility and were difficult to get used to.”³⁴² Terms used by these individuals to describe Soviet student housing included “dismal,” “primitive,” “uncomfortable,” “dirty,” and “unhygienic.”³⁴³ Exchangee Marc Rubin described the experience of many of his colleagues when he recalled that he and his wife shared a

³⁴¹ Charles Gribble, Exchange report, September 26, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Gregory Gruff, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Stanley Grossman, Exchange report, November 7, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Richard Dobson, Exchange report, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴² George Bournoutian, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴³ Susan Smernoff, Exchange report, July 19, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Anne Frydman Weinfield, Exchange report, February 23, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Catherine Cosman, Exchange report, April 27, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

“small, drafty 9x12 room with mice and roaches.” The dorm floor had a communal kitchen, but it only had one oven and seven stove burners to service sixty people. Additionally, he remembered, the kitchen remained perpetually dirty as “rotting garbage was always strewn all over the kitchen area, and often remained there several days before being collected.” The communal bathrooms, as Rubin recalled them, were even worse.

It was so foul that the cleaning women were forced to use shovels and hoses to render the stalls useable...My wife assures me that the back wards of mental hospitals in which she has worked were cleaner...And finally there were eight showers for 250 people... [Everything was covered in mold and bacteria, and] the Soviet concept of hygiene consisted of two Sanitary Days during which they painted over the fungus rather than clean and disinfect.³⁴⁴

Even the many exchangees who did not recount such horrific experiences or claimed that Soviet housing was adequate rarely characterized it as good or up to American quality. For instance, Robert Miller, a senior scholar in political science, recalled in 1972 that the hotel he lived in was “not a bad place to stay at all by Soviet standards,” implying that Americans should have lowered expectations for adequate housing in the Soviet Union.³⁴⁵ Another exchange, Daniel Brower, noted that while Soviet housing was “barely adequate,” exchangees “should not expect to preserve in the Soviet Union the same style of life as in the United States.”³⁴⁶ Multiple participants commented that while they could handle the spartan living conditions, they missed having privacy. Even though Dean Worth liked his housing assignment, he remarked, “I do wish I could have had my own bathroom and toilet, spoiled degenerate Westerner that

³⁴⁴ Howard Spendelow, Exchange report, August 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴⁵ Robert Miller, Exchange report, August 4, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴⁶ Daniel Brower, Exchange report, May 22, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

I am.”³⁴⁷ Graduate student Stephen Baehr reiterated this, recalling that even though the Leningrad dorms were “tolerable,” he found the lack of privacy “rather depressing.”³⁴⁸ In almost every instance when an exchangee described their housing experience in the Soviet Union, even when it was veiled in seemingly positive terms, the implicit contrast to superior American housing was certainly present.

A significant number of participants underscored the problems of the Soviet economy by describing the scarcity of various food items and basic goods and the arduous task of obtaining them. Multiple exchangees noted that procuring food “took up an inordinate amount of time.” Supermarkets were almost nonexistent so grocery shopping involved “various bus trips, waiting in lengthy lines, and finally struggling homewards with weighty bundles.”³⁴⁹ Furthermore, according to participants, the food that was available was often monotonous, limited in variety, and of poor quality, and some exchangees even recalled losing a substantial amount of weight due to the poor diet.³⁵⁰ Similar to those who detailed the housing conditions in the Soviet Union, even exchangees who described the food situation in positive ways still often pointed out the shortcomings of the Soviet system through their remarks. Several Americans recalled that they had good access to food in the Soviet Union but only because they were attached to

³⁴⁷ Dean Worth, Exchange report, November 1, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴⁸ Stephen Baehr, Exchange report, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁴⁹ Jerry Floyd, Exchange report, August 28, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Alice Harris, Exchange report, 1975, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵⁰ Reginald Zelnik, Exchange report, December 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Joan Afferica, Exchange report, January 30, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Myroslava Ciszkeycz, Exchange report, February 5, 1979, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; James Mandel, Exchange report, May 24, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

a university and could thus take their meals in the university dining hall.³⁵¹ Many more remarked that grocery shopping was “not as troublesome” as they anticipated because goods that could not be obtained in regular Soviet stores could often be purchased from the US Embassy commissary or foreign currency stores, which remained unavailable the average Soviet citizen. Some recognized the privilege Americans had in this situation, such as graduate student Peter Krug who often shopped in the dollar stores and had “pangs of conscience shopping at such a place while the rest of Moscow stood in lines to purchase lower-quality food at higher prices.”³⁵²

Furthermore, several exchange participants chronicled the difficulty of procuring basic goods, such as quality clothing and footwear, toys for children, medicine, and toilet paper.³⁵³ Law student Logan Robinson observed during his difficult mission to find toothpaste that such an item could not be purchased at just any store. Because there were relatively few of them, Soviet stores were always crowded, but the profit motive that would have normally caused an entrepreneur to open another store across the street did not exist in the Soviet Union. Thus, he contended, “you must know of a store that would carry it, and there is always the possibility that toothpaste, or any other item you might

³⁵¹ Donald Barton Johnson, Exchange report, February 12, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Peter Maggs, Exchange report, September 29, 1972, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵² Samuel Orth, Exchange report, October 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Paul Bushkovitch, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Peter Krug, Exchange report, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵³ Jerry Floyd, Exchange report, August 28, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Robert Crummey, Exchange report, 1973, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Thomas Pearson, Exchange report, August 1, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; R.D. Rucker, Exchange report, November 6, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

seek, would be entirely sold out citywide and remain so for months.”³⁵⁴ Soil science graduate student Gary Halvorson recalled another interesting story about the unavailability of goods. Before arriving in the USSR, he had spoken to a soil scientist who had graduated from a Soviet university. He told him that conducting scientific research in the Soviet Union was a “waste of time” because “you will spend three days looking for a screwdriver.” Halvorson recounted:

I naturally assumed he was exaggerating somewhat. The first thing I witnessed at the Timeryazev Academy- I mean the very first thing- was a man who walked into my advisor’s office, handed him a screwdriver, said thank you, bowed very graciously, and left. My advisor immediately locked the screwdriver up tightly in a drawer of his desk.³⁵⁵

Additionally, a significant number of exchange participants described the general low standard of living in the Soviet Union. Even those who had visited the USSR multiple times before, such as historians Samuel Baron and Alfred Levin, experienced intense culture shock and depression due to the “general crudity” of life in the USSR.³⁵⁶ Others, like linguist Carl Ray Proffer, reiterated the difficulties of the “painful physical and psychological effects which go with any prolonged stay in the USSR.”³⁵⁷ Some asserted that exchangees should not be allowed to bring their spouses or children because the difficult living conditions made providing for a family so burdensome that it would “impair exchangees’ productivity.”³⁵⁸ There was even an instance when one individual in

³⁵⁴ Logan Robinson, *An American in Leningrad* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1982), 121.

³⁵⁵ Gary Halvorson, Exchange report, 1978, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵⁶ Samuel Baron, Exchange report, June 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Alfred Levin, Exchange report, February 18, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵⁷ Carl Ray Proffer, Exchange report, 1969, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁵⁸ Stephen Sternheimer, Exchange report, January 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

Leningrad contracted tuberculosis, which he said was reflective the poor living conditions and the result of “overcrowding, poor hygiene, and lack of sterilization of eating utensils.”³⁵⁹

These remarks are just a few examples of the over 130 observations of the Soviet economy and living standards recorded by exchangees, and the prevalence of these details points to a larger reality concerning how exchange participants conceptualized both the Soviet Union and the United States. Though their missionary fervor and desire to spread American values to the Soviet people had largely disappeared in the wake of the Vietnam War, this did not mean that most Americans had come to doubt American superiority or the merits of capitalism. Though the difficulties of obtaining quality housing, food, and goods in the Soviet Union was certainly a reality in this period, the fact that so many exchangees spent part of their reports describing it shows that they perceived the Soviet economic situation as abnormal by American standards. Even for those who remembered Soviet daily life in somewhat positive ways, the fact that they felt the need to counter common conceptions of the Soviet Union as a place of intense scarcity shows that this was a central part of their perception of the USSR. This allowed these Americans to continue their othering of the “primitive” Soviet society in order to reaffirm the superiority of their own way of life, despite their doubts that such American values were universally applicable.

Lastly, almost one-fourth of exchange participants from this period spent a portion of their post-trip reports discussing their encounters with Soviet police, state surveillance, and the restrictive nature of Soviet society. Donald Malament, the first

³⁵⁹ Howard Spendelow, Exchange report, August 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

American to work in the Chemistry Department at Leningrad State University, recalled the “one unhappy note” of his visit was a newspaper article published in *Pravda* that claimed he was “an ideological subversive spreading Zionist propaganda who admitted to being offered \$1,000 for getting a Soviet specialist to defect.” Malament insisted that he had merely answered questions put to him by Soviet acquaintances concerning capitalism and Israel, and the closest he had gotten to urging a Soviet citizen to defect was encouraging colleagues in his laboratory to apply to the exchange program to the United States.³⁶⁰ Another student from that year wrote to IREX and insisted the organization strongly condemn the *Pravda* article, which was written by an Inotdel official who, he argued, was supposed to be protecting and assisting foreign students.³⁶¹ A more common accusation by exchangees was that the KGB bugged their dorm rooms and phone lines. One graduate student in Leningrad in 1974, Constantin Galskoy, asserted “it is the general opinion among students and Soviet students living in the dorm that the rooms are at least selectively bugged.” Therefore, he suggested, all political discussions should be carried out outside of the dorm for the protection of Soviet friends.³⁶² Another in Moscow, Kathleen Parthe, remembered in 1976 that though most Americans wanted Soviet roommates in order to get more exposure to Russian culture and language, Soviet exchange officials had confined the Americans to one floor, which she called an “uninteresting...capitalist ghetto.” Because of this tight concentration of Americans, she lamented, most Soviet students were very hesitant about approaching them because of

³⁶⁰ Donald Malament, Exchange report, July 10, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶¹ George M., Exchange report, September 6, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶² Constantin Galskoy, Exchange report, 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

suspected surveillance in the dorms.³⁶³ Mark Adams, a 1977 ACLS exchangee to the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow, went into even more detail about his belief that Americans' rooms were monitored.

There is no doubt that these hotel rooms are “bugged.” These bugs are located in the fire alarms in the ceilings. Upon returning to his room early one day, an English exchangee saw various repairmen who were ostensibly there to fix the fire alarm. He observed one on a ladder speaking into the fire alarm saying the Russian words for “one, two, three, four, five six,” after which a phone was attached to the fire alarm and the repairman asked through the telephone whether he could be heard. Apparently receiving an affirmative reply, he came down from the stepladder and very unselfconsciously told the guest that his fire alarm worked.

Adams then noted his feeling that the Soviet government viewed these types of practices as only “natural” because “since most Soviets sent abroad have a secret agenda...the assumption is made that American exchangees may have the same kind of agenda.”³⁶⁴

The other most common observation concerning Soviet surveillance was many participants' concerns that their dorm mates and colleagues were serving as informants for the Soviet police. In 1973, Woodford McClellan contended in a letter to IREX officials that Soviet informants, whom he dubbed “little men,” surrounded every American exchangee and for participants to think otherwise was terribly naïve.³⁶⁵ Graduate student Catherine Cosman agreed, claiming that “systematic spying and informing” was “a prevalent part of Soviet life.”³⁶⁶ James Long noted in 1976 that his Soviet roommate, while “courteous and unobtrusive,” was “undoubtedly a *stukach*

³⁶³ Kathleen Parthe, Exchange report, January 11, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶⁴ Mark B. Adams, Exchange report, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶⁵ Woodford McClellan, Exchange report, September 1974, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶⁶ Catherine Cosman, Exchange report, April 27, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[police informer],” which caused his other Soviet friends to avoid coming to their room altogether.³⁶⁷ Logan Robinson, a 1977 exchangee to Leningrad, had the same doubts about his roommate Zhenya, who never studied, happened to possess excellent English language skills, and had always been paired with American and British roommates. Robinson observed that such surveillance by the state police was something that Russians were long accustomed to since medieval times; he therefore argued that they considered it a:

‘natural’ phenomenon, and therefore no more a subject for moral comment than would be a hurricane or an earthquake... People would talk about a relative who ran afoul of the secret police as if he had been hit by a falling tree. It was an accident, no one was really to blame, and these things just happen.³⁶⁸

Although there were a small number of participants, less than ten, who argued that Americans were simply being paranoid and no such surveillance existed, the majority of exchangees who discussed the subject believed that the KGB was very active around them and their Soviet friends.³⁶⁹

Similar to their discussions of Soviet bureaucracy and the struggling consumer economy, exchangees’ decisions to discuss state surveillance was another attempt to place the Soviet Union in contrast with American society. Though few framed that contrast in direct terms, their choice to include their impressions of Soviet state surveillance implies they perceived it as both abnormal and a significant part of Soviet life. Furthermore, several participants admitted they had no real evidence that they had

³⁶⁷ James Long, Exchange report, December 29, 1976, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

³⁶⁸ Robinson, *An American in Leningrad*, 71, 200.

³⁶⁹ Lauren Leighton, Exchange report, 1970, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Dina Crocket, Exchange report, September 2, 1971, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC; George Yaney, Exchange report, July 5, 1977, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

been targeted by the KGB but simply assumed that such activities occurred. This means that the existence of state surveillance was such a central part of their perception of the USSR that they believed that it went on even though they witnessed no indications of such activities. From these records, it is impossible to determine the validity of these claims by American exchange participants. Regardless of whether these Americans were actually monitored by the KGB, though, a significant number of them believed that such activities constituted a central part of Soviet life. This further indicates that even in the era of detente, when US-Soviet relations temporarily normalized and exchangees subsequently began treating the program more like a “normal” exchange, these Americans still needed to articulate the most strange and abnormal aspects of Soviet society. At a time when many Americans, including most of these exchangees, no longer felt confident in attempting to impose American values abroad, the Soviet Union and its problems remained the contrast needed to maintain confidence in the rectitude of American democracy and capitalism at home.

CHAPTER V

“A LIVING DOCUMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE,” 1980-1991

The 1980s brought many changes to the US-Soviet academic exchange program, both at the organizational and participant level. On one hand, the health of the exchange program fluctuated with the dramatic political shifts that occurred during this period. In President Ronald Reagan’s first term, when his administration assumed a confrontational and aggressive posture toward the Soviets, the exchange dwindled to some of its lowest levels yet. Conversely, when Reagan shifted to a more conciliatory approach in his second term, the exchange grew to an unprecedented size. Similarly, these political changes also had an impact on the ideas and objectives of individual exchangees. In the first three years of his presidency, Reagan reasserted that the essence of the Cold War was a battle over ideals and morality. Through a combination of his rhetoric and policies, he framed the “evil empire” as an illegitimate and morally bankrupt state that could not be reformed merely by “soft power” measures. Similarly, American exchangees to the Soviet Union in this period were not interested in serving as America’s cultural ambassadors or using the exchange to promote understanding between the two superpowers. With the international situation in such a dire state, it seems that these individual Americans did not believe their small efforts and personal contacts with the Soviets could do anything to alleviate the poor state of US-Soviet relations. In part due to his growing apprehension about nuclear warfare, however, President Reagan exhibited a

huge policy reversal starting in 1984. Even before Mikhail Gorbachev began implementing his sweeping reforms of Soviet society, Reagan began publicly calling for more dialogue with the Soviets and renewed negotiations, especially concerning nuclear arms limitations.³⁷⁰ Almost simultaneously, American exchange participants in the second half of the 1980s began to reassert that their program could help increase international understanding through their roles as positive representatives of America abroad, an idea that had almost disappeared from exchangees' post-trip reports since the late 1970s. Therefore, the difference in these Americans' perceptions of the Soviet Union and their own sense of national identity and purpose, as contrasted to previous exchangees, serve as a case study to illustrate the direct and deep effects of Reagan's ideas and policies on the mindset of Americans. Though certainly not all of these Americans agreed wholly with Reagan's policies at any point during his presidency, his approach set the parameters of what seemed feasible in regards to US-Soviet relations, and these individual Americans shifted their sense of purpose accordingly.

Furthermore, exchangees' reports from this decade and previous ones can provide additional insight into how many Americans perceived the Cold War in general and the Soviet Union. In every year of the exchange, the Soviet people themselves were hardly ever described as an enemy to the United States, but instead were almost always remembered as inherently friendly, intelligent, and good-natured. The enemy other, essential to forging American national identity throughout the Cold War, was instead the Soviet system more generally. In other words, these Americans saw the Cold War as a more abstract conflict, waged against a faceless Soviet system that had merely entrapped

³⁷⁰ Beth A. Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal: Foreign Policy and the End of the Cold War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 2-3.

the innocent Soviet people. This chapter will first outline the history of the exchange program in this period, and then examine the recollections of its participants in the 1980s.

As the Cold War entered into the 1980s and President Ronald Reagan took office, the escalating tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union continued to have detrimental effects on the academic exchange program. The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), still reeling from the collapse of detente and the American pushback against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the late 1970s, saw a continued decline in both the number of agreed-upon exchange participants and the number of applicants. Financial difficulties continued to plague the organization in the early 1980s, along with fallout resulting from international crises such as the Soviet downing of a Korean Airlines passenger aircraft in 1983. It was not until the transition to Reagan's second term, when the president began to publicly articulate a newfound willingness to hold dialogue with the Soviets and work toward improved international relations that prospects for the exchange began to improve.

In the early 1980s, IREX officials were increasingly concerned with the small number of available slots for exchangees and the dwindling applicant pool from which to fill those positions. This problem was so pronounced that they believed it would eventually have damaging effects on the entire field of Soviet and Eastern European studies. For instance, regarding the number of academics who participated in the exchange, only fifty went to the Soviet Union during the 1980-1981 academic year through IREX's three main programs combined. Concerning the shrinking number of applicants, IREX officials lamented that this was due, in part, to the fact that Soviet and Eastern European studies as a discipline was diminishing in American universities,

especially because of decreasing graduate school enrollment. The consequences for this, they urged, were already becoming apparent within the exchange program, which experienced a declining number of doctoral student applicants and some decrease in the quality of applicants as well. In this period, only a total of about 130 Americans applied for all of IREX's exchange programs to the Soviet Union. This declining number of applicants, they argued, especially for the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange, represented the "drying up of the training pipeline" for Sovietologists. The IREX officials believed this was also due in part to the shrinking academic job market and contended that in the next decade the United States would experience a dramatic shortfall in qualified Soviet specialists. This shortage, they argued, would come at a particularly unfortunate time when international crises made such expertise more necessary than ever. Shrewdly, IREX organizers framed this decline as not only an academic crisis but also a significant problem for American foreign policy, which would eventually lack the input of skilled specialists in East European affairs.³⁷¹ Reflecting the purpose of the exchange program since its inception in 1958, officials still considered it as a service both to scholarship and to national interests.

The start of the decade also brought more financial challenges. The Reagan administration made substantial cutbacks to the budgets of the National Endowment for the Humanities and the US Information Agency, and these agencies had been major contributors to the IREX budget, funding 25% and 40% of the program, respectively.

Therefore exchange officials feared that within two years they would be forced to

³⁷¹ International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1980-1981," 1981, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1981-1982," 1982, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1986-1987," 1987, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

suspend or cancel many of their programs, further discouraging prospective Sovietologists from entering the field.³⁷² However, by 1982, IREX officials were able to garner the support of the academic community and government agencies to renegotiate these shortfalls and keep the exchanges functioning at their current, albeit relatively low, levels. For instance, the US Information Agency approved a \$1.7 million grant for the 1982-1983 academic year that contained no reductions from the previous year. The National Endowment for the Humanities and the Ford Foundation also contributed more than previously expected, donating \$930,000 and \$400,000 respectively.³⁷³

In addition to dealing with exchange participant shortages and budgetary challenges, IREX officials had increasing difficulty insulating the program from the broader international US-Soviet tensions of the early 1980s. One of the first indications of this problem came in the fall of 1979. Because Moscow was to be the site of the summer Olympic Games in 1980, Soviet exchange officials informed IREX that the capital city would be closed to exchange activities that summer, necessitating the cancellation of the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers. Soviet administrators claimed this was because the Olympics had simply caused a shortage of housing, but IREX officials noted in their report that the move was certainly “exacerbated by the deteriorating political relationship between Moscow and Washington.”³⁷⁴ In the following months, as President Reagan came into office in 1981, his initial stance on US-Soviet relations also prevented any improvement in the program. As one of his first

³⁷² International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1980-1981,” 1981, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

³⁷³ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1981-1982,” 1982, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

³⁷⁴ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1980-1981,” 1981, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

strategies to restrain communism and eventually force Soviet capitulation, the president introduced the policy of “linkage,” which outlined that an improvement in US-Soviet relations had to be predicated on a positive change in Soviet behavior. This overarching “linkage” policy applied to the academic exchange program as well, making government support of the program contingent upon the current health of US-Soviet relations.

Reflecting one of the long-standing criticisms of the program, the Reagan administration initially believed that the Soviet Union benefited from the exchange program much more than the United States, particularly because of Soviet exchangees’ access to American scientific and technological training. Therefore, as long as the relationship between the two nations remained unimproved, it was extremely difficult for American exchange officials to overcome all their financial difficulties or convince officials in Washington to expand the program back to its previous levels.³⁷⁵

Additionally, this “linkage” policy created more challenges for the exchange program in the wake of the tragic Korean Air Lines Flight 007 disaster. On September 1, 1983, a Soviet pilot mistook a commercial Korean Air Lines plane for an American military aircraft and shot it down, killing all passengers onboard including some Americans. This incident served to increase the already heightened tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, and IREX officials had to confront the ensuing backlash against their programs by both American and Soviet officials. American and Soviet diplomats, who were set to finally renew the US-Soviet cultural agreement that had not been renegotiated since the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, cancelled their

³⁷⁵ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 23-26; Sarah C. Carey, *US Soviet Exchanges: The Kinds of Exchanges That Have Taken Place: What Works; How Can They be Made More Effective?* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Soviet-American Relations, 1983), 1-2.

plan for the resumption of intergovernmental negotiations. Officials with the American Council of Learned Societies cancelled their upcoming biennial meeting with the Soviet Academy of Sciences due to the perceived inappropriateness of hosting high-level Soviet guests in such an atmosphere. Perhaps most dramatically, Soviet exchange officials decided to withdraw their participants in the Graduate Student/Young Faculty Exchange mere weeks before they were set to leave for America. In addition, the Soviet government recalled home twenty Soviet scholars already in the United States on a year-long stay. Though neither side had ever before taken such an action in the twenty-five year history of the program, the status of US-Soviet relations was so poor that Soviet officials were concerned with how their citizens would be received in the United States due to the intensifying anti-Soviet sentiment among the American people.

In the aftermath of these setbacks, IREX leaders noted in their annual report that it was becoming increasingly difficult to keep their program shielded from broader political and foreign policy fluctuations. Though officials had strived since the program's 1958 inception to keep the exchange insulated from Cold War tensions, by 1983 IREX leaders feared that insulation was "wearing thin" and further deterioration of the international environment could even end the program completely.³⁷⁶ As the willingness of the American government and people to cooperate in any capacity with the Soviets continued its steady decline that had begun in the late 1970s, it remained a real possibility that the academic exchange program would finally become a casualty of the renewed Cold War.

³⁷⁶ International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1982-1983," 1983, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A History of the End of the Cold War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 75.

After reaching such a low point, prospects for the exchange program quickly and substantially improved beginning in 1984 due to President Reagan's evolving and more conciliatory stance toward America's Cold War rival. Historians continue to debate the exact reasons for and extent of this sudden "reversal" in Reagan's rhetoric and actions towards the Soviet Union. Scholars especially deliberate on the president's degree of involvement in crafting his administration's policies and the extent of his role in bringing about the end of the Cold War. The so-called "triumphal school," advocated by Reagan's conservative admirers, argue that Reagan took an active role in his administration and used an aggressive stance and military build-up to put enormous pressure on the Soviet Union. That pressure, they assert, had the intended effect of convincing Soviet leaders, and especially Mikhail Gorbachev, that their country had to capitulate and make drastic reforms, which eventually led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself and the end of the Cold War. Reagan's more conciliatory rhetoric during his second term, advocates of his interpretation argue, came only after it was clear to the president that the Soviets had begun backing down. Conversely, Reagan's more liberal critics argue that he was a passive president who was little more than a spokesperson for his administration. Reagan simply got lucky, they contend, because he happened to be in office when Mikhail Gorbachev began reforming the Soviet Union. His reversal and more friendly approach to the Soviets was merely a response to Gorbachev's actions and charms, making Reagan more reactive than active, and furthermore shows that he played no role in bringing an end to the Cold War.³⁷⁷ This study holds the view of subsequent and more nuanced approaches to Reagan's legacy, drawing from scholars such as Beth A. Fischer and

³⁷⁷ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 144.

journalist James Mann. They argue that while Reagan did not single-handedly bring an end to the Cold War, he was not a passive president and instead played an active role in shaping his administration's policies. They contend that unlike many of his recent predecessors, such as Richard Nixon, President Reagan viewed the Cold War less as a geopolitical struggle and more as a competition over ideas and values. Thus he refused to accept the permanence of the Soviet Union and instead held a firm belief that it could be reformed in positive ways. His initial aggressive tone reflected his view of the superpower rival through that lens of morality. While in office, however, Reagan developed a genuine and extremely powerful fear of the horrors of nuclear war. Therefore beginning in 1984, even before Gorbachev emerged as leader of the Soviet Union and began his reforms, Reagan began publicly endorsing renewed dialogue with the Soviets, especially in an effort to stem the nuclear arms race.³⁷⁸

The very first public sign of Reagan's changing and more amicable approach to the Soviet Union, which would have dramatic effects on the US-Soviet academic exchange program, came with a televised presidential address on January 16, 1984. To underscore the importance of this address to the American public, the Reagan administration took a number of measures to show that this speech represented an important change in direction for the president. In the week before the speech, White House officials held a series of press briefings to tout the importance of the upcoming address. They even chose to release excerpts of the speech to the press in advance, which was highly unusual. In the speech, illustrating a stark departure from his past denunciations of the Soviet Union as the "evil empire," Reagan deemphasized the

³⁷⁸ See: Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal* and Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*.

superpower rivalry and instead focused on the two countries' common interests. Specifically, he proclaimed, the most important commonality was "to avoid war and reduce the level of arms." He then called for constructive dialogue with the Soviet leadership in order to address this concern, even stating that his dream was to "see the day when nuclear weapons will be banished from the face of the earth." Reagan's national security aides drafted most of the text of the speech. However, Reagan himself crafted the end of the address, illustrating not only his penchant for storytelling but also his belief that the American and Soviet people shared common values and concerns that transcended the geopolitical competition. He described a fictional meeting between two couples, "an Ivan and an Anya" and "a Jim and a Sally." If no language barrier separated them, he asserted, the Soviet and American couples would not debate the differences between their governments or societies, but instead would have a pleasant conversation about their careers, families, and hobbies. This would prove, he asserted finally, "that people don't make wars." Throughout the rest of 1984, Reagan repeatedly asserted, both in public and in private correspondence with Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko, that the United States and the Soviet Union should work together to gain better understanding and promote international peace.³⁷⁹

As part of these early efforts to improve US-Soviet relations, Reagan directly addressed the importance of resuming and expanding America's cultural contacts with the Soviet Union as early as June 1984. At a conference sponsored by the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies, Reagan addressed a crowd of US government and private agency officials on US-Soviet cultural exchange. While White House

³⁷⁹ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 32-43; Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 79-80.

officials told the press that Reagan's primary interest was organizing nuclear arms negotiations with the Soviets, the president hoped to use renewed cultural contacts to show American flexibility and encourage Soviet receptiveness to his new push to implement arms control. By the time of that speech, some improvements were already underway in US-Soviet cultural contacts. For instance, just days before, American and Soviet officials renewed the exchange agreement between the American Council of Learned Societies and the Soviet Academy of Sciences. A few months later, in August 1984, American and Soviet representatives finally met to negotiate a new cultural exchange agreement, although it took them an unprecedented fifteen months to finalize it.³⁸⁰

The prospects for cultural exchange became increasingly positive the following year, as 1985 ushered in a new reform-minded Soviet leader and the beginning of direct summit meetings between the American and Soviet leadership. After Chernenko's death in the spring of 1985, a young Mikhail Gorbachev became head of the Soviet Union. However, even before Gorbachev unveiled *glasnost* and *perestroika* and showed just how revolutionary his new regime would be, Reagan extended an invitation for a summit meeting with the new Soviet leader. Due to Reagan's insistence on the need for renewed dialogue between the two superpowers, in November 1985 Reagan and Gorbachev met for the first time in Geneva.³⁸¹ Along with agreeing to an extremely symbolic joint statement concluding that "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought,"

³⁸⁰ Walter Pincus, "Reagan Studies Non-Arms Talks with the Soviets," *The Washington Post*, June 24, 1984; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1983-1984," 1984, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; Yale Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges, 1958-1986: Who Wins?* (Boulder: Westview, 1987), 103, 106.

³⁸¹ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 46-47; Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 43.

Reagan and Gorbachev signed a new cultural agreement that reestablished many of the exchanges that had been suspended since 1979. The accord also expanded the academic exchange program in several ways, including increasing the number of annual Fulbright lecturers, promoting more exchanges of undergraduate language students, and allowing six Soviet and American language instructors to teach at schools in each other's country for three months each year.³⁸² Returning from the Geneva Summit, President Reagan addressed Congress on the purpose of reinvigorating cultural exchange. "Americans should know the people of the Soviet Union- their hopes and fears and the facts of their lives," he asserted. "And citizens of the Soviet Union need to know of America's deep desire for peace and our unwavering attachment to freedom."³⁸³ As the US-Soviet exchange entered into its final years, Reagan revitalized the nation's commitment to using cultural exchange as a means to spread American values, and this would cause a dramatic shift in the mindset of exchange participants of this period.

Following these significant political developments, IREX officials gained a newfound optimism that their exchange program would be able to reemerge from its dismal condition, although financial obstacles still afflicted the exchange in this period of expansion. The improvement in US-Soviet relations, coupled with the fact that the new cultural agreement formed a centerpiece of the Geneva Summit, made exchange organizers hopeful for a renewed and "unprecedented role for cultural diplomacy." Knowing that cultural exchange had always played a very minor role in America's larger national strategy, IREX officials were surprised and enthused that Reagan and Gorbachev had placed cultural contacts at "the cutting edge in a deliberate effort to redefine the very

³⁸² Richmond, *US-Soviet Cultural Exchanges*, 103, 106.

³⁸³ Yale Richmond, *Hosting Soviet Visitors: A Handbook* (Washington, DC: Delphi Press, 1988), iii.

essence of superpower relations.”³⁸⁴ This new high-level appreciation and support for cultural diplomacy had tangible effects on the US-Soviet exchange. After almost a decade of decline, by 1986 the number of applicants for the research exchanges in the Soviet Union had risen by twenty-five percent compared to the previous year and the applicants for the Summer Exchange of Language Teachers had more than doubled.³⁸⁵ By 1987, about 275 Americans had applied for IREX programs to the Soviet Union, which was double the number of applicants compared to the early 1980s. This trend continued for the next year, and by 1988 IREX received a record number of applicants, including more in the fields of international relations, than ever before.³⁸⁶

The programs experienced so much growth in this period that IREX yet again had to confront serious financial constraints. Already the agency consistently had trouble reaching its needed annual budget of \$5 million to cover the cost of all its programs in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. By 1987, with the number of participants growing rapidly, IREX officials estimated that they would need at least a \$1 million increase in funding. Due to federal budget cuts and constant fluctuations in other funding, IREX struggled to meet the growing demands of their programs. For instance, funding from the US Information Agency had remained frozen for several years at \$2.4 million, while grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities fell from a high of \$1 million in 1981 to \$800,000 for 1987. Additionally, IREX officials noted that the improved nature

³⁸⁴ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1984-1985,” 1985, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

³⁸⁵ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1985-1986,” 1986, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

³⁸⁶ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1986-1987,” 1987, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1987-1988,” 1988, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

of international relations surprisingly did not encourage the private sector to make up for those shortfalls. “In one of those utterly American mood swings, yesterday’s denizens of the Evil Empire have suddenly graduated in the popularity polls,” they recorded, but this had not made funding easier to obtain. Instead, private sector funding tended “to be diverted to highly visible activities- concerts, for example, or television bridges, or activities with strong populist appeal, such as sister-city or youth exchanges.” Scholarly exchanges were simply not as exciting for the general public because their benefits only became apparent after years or even decades. Therefore, “in an era dominated by electronic mass media, where the attention to world issues is measured in seconds, it is increasingly difficult to make the case for such programs.”³⁸⁷ These financial concerns continued into the following year. By 1988, when American and Soviet representatives were discussing the prospect of doubling the number of exchangees allowed annually, IREX officials questioned whether either the Soviet Union or the United States was prepared to take on that financial burden.³⁸⁸

Despite these budgetary hurdles, IREX organizers believed that the era of *glasnost* and *perestroika* signified the fruition of their decades-long effort to promote American ideas and values in Eastern Europe. Just months after Gorbachev began instituting reforms, IREX officials noted in their annual report that “years of contacts [through scholarly exchanges] are finally leaving their mark.” While they admitted that some of the impetus for change came through internal factors within the Soviet Union,

³⁸⁷ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1986-1987,” 1987, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1988-1989,” 1989, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

³⁸⁸ International Research and Exchanges Board, “Annual Report 1987-1988,” 1988, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

they believed that these shifts represented, at their core, a revolution of ideas in part stimulated by the presence of American intellectuals in Eastern Europe. Specifically, they argued, the Soviets' recognition of the necessity for fundamental reforms was "driven in part by self-conscious comparisons to the West, and in particular the United States." US-Soviet academic exchanges, which put Soviet citizens in contact with the West either directly through a period of study in the United States or indirectly through personal contact with American scholars, provided the means to make this comparison.³⁸⁹ The IREX leaders reported that by 1987, "virtually every prominent academically-based economic reformer in the Soviet Union has participated in IREX exchanges, as have numerous sociologists who are now among the top advisers to party and government leaders." IREX officials linked their willingness and ability to implement reforms in the Soviet Union directly to their experience through the exchange. Lastly, these IREX reports concluded that American exchangeees to the USSR still had a vital role to play if Gorbachev's reforms were to continue and succeed. American scholars in Soviet studies, through their decades of "objective scholarship," had served as "custodians of forbidden or repressed interpretations." Now that the Soviet Union was opening up, these Americans could "reopen the pages of history for native intellectuals who have been cut off from large parts of their own past," and therefore help spur social change in Eastern Europe. Although exchange organizers had maintained throughout the entire history of the program their separation from US government objectives and foreign policy concerns, by the late 1980s they openly endorsed what they perceived as "American-style reforms"

³⁸⁹ International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1985-1986," 1986, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1986-1987," 1987, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

in the Soviet Union and asserted their belief that exchange programs had played an instrumental role in fostering this transition.³⁹⁰ As had been the case since the 1950s, exchange organizers continued to consider the promotion of American values as an integral goal of the program.

The American exchange participants were also greatly affected by the dramatic political shifts and changing international climate, and the remainder of this chapter will examine their experiences and their conceptions of national identity throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s. In this period, over 800 Americans went to the Soviet Union under the auspices of IREX exchange programs. Owing to the relatively recent nature of these records, however, many exchangee reports from this decade remain restricted. Thus this chapter's analysis is drawn from only sixty-eight of these participants and only analyzes reports from scholars on the Senior Research Scholars Exchange and the American Council of Learned Societies Exchange, along with many reports from Fulbright grantees. Nevertheless, the relatively small sample examined here can provide at least partial insight into the mindset of these Americans living in the last decade of the Cold War.

The most pronounced shift in exchangees' reports from the late 1970s to the 1980s was their renewed willingness to identify themselves as cultural ambassadors for the United States, though this shift did not begin until 1984. Prior to that year, only four of the exchange participants examined here mentioned that they desired to use the exchange to improve international understanding or spread American values. This shows

³⁹⁰ International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1986-1987," 1987, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014; International Research and Exchanges Board, "Annual Report 1988-1989," 1989, E-mail message to author, July 17, 2014.

that the continued deterioration of US-Soviet relations in the early 1980s, along with Reagan's rhetoric, had a direct effect on the attitudes and ideas of exchangees. Days after entering office in 1981, President Reagan asserted to the press that renewing détente was impossible because the Soviets willingly lie, cheat, and "operate on a different set of standards" in their efforts to promote a world communist revolution.³⁹¹ During a 1982 address to the British parliament, Reagan continued this aggressive rhetoric, predicting that "the march of freedom and democracy...will leave Marxism-Leninism on the ash heap of history."³⁹² Furthermore, in one of the most famous public statements of his first term, Reagan called the Soviet Union "an evil empire" in his March 1983 speech to the National Association of Evangelicals. As foreign policy scholar James Mann contends,

Reagan attempted to alter the language, the ideas, and the very thought processes used in American discussions about the Soviet Union. The purposes were to strip the Soviet Union of its legitimacy, to express a sense of moral condemnation toward the regime, and to characterize the Cold War as a battle of ideas and ideals.³⁹³

Reagan not only tried to use rhetoric to reshape American perceptions of the Soviet Union and the Cold War in his first term, though; he also implemented policies that reflected this aggressive stance. Starting in the spring of 1981, his administration proposed the largest peacetime military budget in American history and later began development of the Strategic Defense Initiative research program to build a defense system against possible Soviet missile attacks.³⁹⁴ Compounding Reagan's rhetoric and policies were the various crises of the early 1980s that encouraged increased anti-Soviet sentiment among Americans, such as the Korean Air Lines disaster.

³⁹¹ Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 27-28.

³⁹² Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 19.

³⁹³ Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 28-29.

³⁹⁴ Fischer, *The Reagan Reversal*, 26.

While earlier exchangeees from the 1960s had repeatedly touted direct people-to-people contacts as a legitimate way to help improve US-Soviet relations, by the early 1980s an overwhelming majority of participants seem to have felt that this international climate was so dire that even their direct contacts with the Soviet people could not make any real progress in improving it. Considering how dramatically this changed in Reagan's second term when a majority of exchangeees sought to again serve as cultural ambassadors, this shows how these Americans conceptualized the Cold War struggle at this pivotal point. Spreading American values, especially through positive cultural interactions, seemed no longer viable under an administration that placed no hope in these efforts nor gave them any support. Unlike past exchange participants who believed they actually held the power to help alleviate Cold War tensions, these individuals shared none of that confidence, illustrating the powerful effects of Reagan's policies and actions and the current international climate on their sense of American identity and purpose. Exchangees from the 1960s felt that spreading American values behind the Iron Curtain was as simple as talking about life in the United States and allowing the Soviets to judge for themselves the obvious superiority of the American way. Though their confidence in the American system remained, disseminating those values abroad through positive cultural methods was no longer central to their national mission.

However, the tone of American exchangees' reports changed considerably beginning in 1984 as they increasingly aspired to be America's cultural representatives and use the exchange to promote international understanding, and this shift coincided precisely with Reagan's reversal to a more conciliatory approach to the Soviet Union. Starting in 1984, over fifty of the sixty-eight participants examined here remarked that

either they actively sought to serve as cultural ambassadors, that they made a point to talk to Soviet acquaintances about American life and values, or that they believed academic exchanges could help improve international relations between the US and the Soviet Union. That same year brought the first public articulation of Reagan's belief that the United States should work with the Soviet Union to ease tensions and the related idea that the Soviet Union was capable of positive reforms. Subsequent summit meetings between American and Soviet leadership, such as the initial Geneva Summit with Reagan and Gorbachev, convinced these Americans that an improvement in superpower relations was possible and that they could play an active role in advancing it. They were even further heartened by the Washington Summit in December 1987. As the first Reagan-Gorbachev summit not on neutral ground, and more significantly in the United States, the Washington Summit convinced many Americans that the Cold War was actually subsiding. An ABC poll taken the night of Gorbachev's departure from Washington showed that an astonishing seventy-six percent of Americans now believed that their country and the Soviet Union were entering a new era. Additionally, Reagan's approval rating rose to fifty percent following the summit, which was unusually high for a president in his final year.³⁹⁵ These changes in public opinion, coupled with the similarly clear shift among American academics in the Soviet Union, suggests the great extent to which national policy affected individual consciousness in this period and illustrates that Reagan was very effective in shaping the public mood about the Cold War.

Starting in the mid-1980s, American exchangeees began to explicitly articulate their desire to serve as cultural representatives of the United States. Fulbrighters from this

³⁹⁵ Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan*, 23, 272-280.

period remarked that they aspired to be “a living document of American culture,” provide a “window” into the United States for curious Soviets, and “represent American values clearly and fairly.”³⁹⁶ One 1984 Fulbright grantee in history reasserted a common sentiment of 1960s exchangees, arguing that IREX should take great care to send participants who possess “integrating personal qualities” and who can live “in a fish bowl” and still maintain a good attitude and pleasant relationships with Soviet acquaintances.³⁹⁷ Another Fulbright exchangee in 1985, placed in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov, advised that all participants should bring some basic reference books on American history and society. These, she argued, would help provide answers for inevitable Soviet questions on subjects such as American home ownership, crime, unemployment, race relations, and gender equality.³⁹⁸ Many of these individuals also believed that they had been successful in their endeavor to be positive national representatives. A Fulbright lecturer in literature recalled feeling satisfied about his efforts to “represent the United States...and convey something of our national character and thought.”³⁹⁹ Another grantee, a geologist placed in Siberia, believed that through establishing friendships with Soviet citizens he had “changed many opinions about America for the better.”⁴⁰⁰ Thus it is clear that by this period an increasing numbers of

³⁹⁶ Richard D. McKinzie, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Jerome J. Oetgen, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Richard Jensen, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

³⁹⁷ Richard D. McKinzie, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

³⁹⁸ Judith C. Shapiro, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

³⁹⁹ Bryon T. Lindsey, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁰⁰ Frank R. Etensohn, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

exchangees were again becoming comfortable, and indeed confident, in serving as America's cultural representatives. Though only about ten of the sixty-eight individuals examined here directly referred to themselves as cultural ambassadors for the United States, many others still served in this capacity by recalling their conversations about America to Soviet friends or by asserting that these cross-cultural relationships could promote international understanding.

In addition to those participants who directly referred to themselves as America's goodwill ambassadors or cultural representatives, over twenty others simply recalled their efforts to tell the Soviet people about American society and its national values. Several exchangees, such as 1981 Senior Research Scholar in literature Mark Pomar, fondly recalled conversations with Soviet colleagues about life in the United States. "I felt comfortable discussing the complexities of our society and giving these ordinary Russians a different picture of the US from the one they were accustomed to."⁴⁰¹ By the mid-1980s, many participants sought to use Gorbachev's new policy of *glasnost* to their advantage in their attempts to spread "truths" about American life. One 1989 Fulbrighter to Lithuania noted that the recent reforms had caused many Soviet citizens to have a heightened suspicion of their own government, consequently making them more open than ever to outside information and influence. So much so, he cautioned, "that a visitor-academician must exercise special care to be calm, objective, and dispassionate in relating the 'Western way' of doing things."⁴⁰² Mirroring sentiment from those in the early years of the exchange, many of these Americans asserted that spreading that

⁴⁰¹ Mark G. Pomar, Exchange report, 1981, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴⁰² Stanley Vanagunas, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

“Western way” was not difficult and simply required an exchangee to rely on his own experiences as an American. For instance, one 1987 Fulbright grantee’s host institution in Kiev allowed him to give a series of lectures on American culture. While he depended on US Information Agency pamphlets for some of his background material, he mostly relied on his “own experience as an American,” discussing basic aspects of American life such as average salary, how credit cards work, and the mechanics of shopping.⁴⁰³ Another Fulbrighter to Moscow in 1988 reiterated this same sentiment. An exchangee did not have to be an expert on all aspects of American society in order to relay its positive characteristics, he argued. “All you have to be is yourself.”⁴⁰⁴ Harkening back to the missionary zeal of the exchangees of the late 1950s and 1960s, many of these individuals again believed that the American system was superior enough to speak for itself.

Several exchangees not only discussed American society with their Soviet acquaintances but many used supplementary methods, such as photos and publications, to further illustrate the United States. Walter Hixson, a 1991 American history Fulbrighter to Kazan, recalled that he would bring photographs of his family and home life to Soviet gatherings he attended. “My Soviet friends poured over the photographs with unbridled fascination, often flipping through the same pictures over and over,” he remembered.⁴⁰⁵ Another Fulbright grantee in 1988 further suggested that future participants be well prepared for this inevitable Soviet intrigue regarding the United States. He suggested that before their departure to the USSR, they get a photographer to follow them for a day to

⁴⁰³ Milton Reigelman, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁰⁴ John S. Adams, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁰⁵ Walter L. Hixson, *Witness to Disintegration: Provincial Life in the Last Year of the USSR* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), 41.

document everyday life in America. This should include pictures of the participant's home and workplace, along with photos of him going to the grocery store, the gas station, or any other location he would normally frequent. These photos could then be produced into slides and taken to the Soviet Union to "allow the Soviet hosts to see inside the life of the American professional household."⁴⁰⁶ Many exchangees also noted the importance of taking Western publications to the USSR. "Above all, take all the American journals and books you can afford to carry," a 1989 psychology Fulbrighter to Estonia asserted. She believed her "small lending library" was her most valuable contribution to her Soviet colleagues and assisted in her mission to give the Soviets "a greater understanding of American values, history, and politics."⁴⁰⁷ This compares starkly to the exchangees of the previous decade, who were almost without exception merely interested in disseminating Western scholarship for its academic value. Another Fulbright lecturer in urban geography recalled the same enthusiasm for American literature by Soviets in his field. Upon arrival in Moscow, he made fifty copies of the standard textbook that he regularly used for courses back in the United States, with the intention of distributing it to his Soviet students. He recorded:

I brought the xerox copies to the first lecture, and as I handed them out after class I felt a bit like a Red Cross volunteer handing out rice in Ethiopia. I expected a rush to get the handouts, but not a scene that resembled people boarding a Tokyo subway at rush hour.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁶ John S. Adams, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁰⁷ Sam G. McFarland, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁰⁸ John S. Adams, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

This Fulbrighter's image of himself as a humanitarian serving the underprivileged is a significant representation of the sentiment many exchangeees held in this period. The scene he recalls is one of a Soviet populace hungry for Western information and American intellectuals as the harbingers of true mental sustenance. Just as the Reagan administration was urging the American public to overcome the "Vietnam syndrome" and realize the positive effects of spreading American values abroad, these American exchangeees had renewed confidence in the universal appeal of American society and ideals.

Another way this shift manifested itself among participants' remarks was the large increase in those touting the great cultural enrichment made possible by the exchange program. Whereas exchangeees from the late 1970s to the early 1980s focused mostly on the academic merits of the program and deemphasized its cultural value, about twenty-five participants after the year 1985 recalled the cultural value of their experience through getting a first-hand look at Soviet society and its people. A Fulbright participant in Leningrad in 1985 remarked that it enlarged his understanding of Soviet culture, including its music, dance, and literature.⁴⁰⁹ Echoing other exchangeees, one 1986 Fulbright grantee wrote that he greatly valued getting to experience Soviet life first hand. "Earlier short trips to the Soviet Union helped my understanding of Russian culture," he recalled, "but nothing compares with living in the midst of it for a few months."⁴¹⁰ Another, placed in Armenia in 1988, found that while Armenians knew a relatively large amount about life in the United States, she was much less knowledgeable about Soviet

⁴⁰⁹ Paul Schmidt, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁰ Larry D. Soderquist, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

society before her visit. “Hence, I benefited a great deal by learning about the Soviet political and economic systems as well as about the general way of life in the Soviet Union.”⁴¹¹ Finally, an additional Fulbright exchangee in law, placed in Lithuania in 1989, asserted, “No amount of reading could substitute for the understanding I gained of Soviet communism, of Soviet society, its people, and particularly its government.” He also shared his special excitement to have personally witnessed “these historic times,” specifically the political reforms in the Baltic States as a result of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.⁴¹² Coinciding with Reagan’s assertion of the importance of cross-cultural dialogue, these individuals no longer saw the program as a “normal” exchange as they had characterized it in the late 1970s. Instead, they also viewed it as a uniquely enriching and valuable cultural experience that helped contribute to improving international relations.

Similarly, American exchange participants once again began to characterize the Soviet people as intensely curious about the United States, something they had almost entirely ceased to include in their reports since the 1960s, and some even noted that the Soviet people recognized the problems in their society and wanted Western-style reform. Beginning around 1984, and in more than fifteen instances, Americans recorded that Soviet acquaintances yearned to hear about Western society and culture. A 1986 Fulbright history grantee to Moscow recalled that Fulbrighters played an important role not only in an academic sense but also in that they provide information for Soviet

⁴¹¹ Rebecca DerSimonian, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹² Stanley Vanagunas, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

students who are “intensely curious about the USA and Americans.”⁴¹³ Another participant, placed in Armenia in 1985, recalled similarly that his curiosity about Soviet Armenian society “was at least equaled by the Armenians’ curiosity about life in the United States,” and he attempted to answer their many questions as best he could.⁴¹⁴ During his time in Kiev, another Fulbrighter noted that he would get many questions about America, some of them about its negative aspects such as homelessness, racism, and AIDs. He recalled that he spent many such conversations trying to correct the Soviet people’s “distorted picture” of life in the United States.⁴¹⁵ Finally, in one 1989 report, an exchangee remarked that he found the Soviet people “intensely friendly and intensely curious about our country.”⁴¹⁶ In essence, not only had these Americans resumed their formerly abandoned goal of preaching the values of America abroad, but they also had begun to articulate again the highly receptive nature of the Soviet people to their message. Additionally, about five stated directly that the Soviet people recognized problems in their own society and wanted reform. One Fulbright grantee in linguistics, placed in Lithuania in 1984, claimed that the experience showed him that while Soviet citizens did not have freedom of speech and expression, “I learned how resilient they are [and] how much they value the freedom we take for granted in America.”⁴¹⁷ Another in

⁴¹³ Richard Jensen, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁴ Geoffrey Goshgarian, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁵ Milton Reigelman, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁶ Bryon T. Lindsey, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁷ Jerome J. Oetgen, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Armenia in 1988 claimed that many Soviets he met recognized the “shortcomings of the Soviet system” and hoped that Gorbachev’s new reforms would improve their society.⁴¹⁸

By the 1980s, many American exchangees had a more honed and specific idea of exactly which American values and ideals they sought to impart to the Soviet people, namely free intellectual expression and critical thinking. While the cultural ambassadors of the 1960s had used American products such as jazz records, American fashion magazines, and Western newspapers to help spread American beliefs and consumer culture to the Soviet Union, many of these later participants had a much more nuanced approach to winning over their Soviet colleagues. As several exchangees noted in their reports, many Western fashions, styles, and products had already permeated the Soviet bloc by the 1980s but communism still remained intact.⁴¹⁹ Thus the academics in the last decade of the exchange began to believe that the best way to convert the Soviets to the American way was not just to encourage them to emulate American society but also to instruct them on how to be critical and analytical thinkers and to question all traditionally accepted ideas. Simultaneously, this provided a means for these Americans to bolster their own national identity. They framed American society as a completely open society where citizens were free to express any opinion they wished, which they contrasted to the restrictive and oppressive Soviet society that failed to teach its people that dissent was even possible. By the end of this period, at least one American exchange participant agreed with IREX officials that these encounters had made a positive impact on the

⁴¹⁸ Hagop V. Panossian, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴¹⁹ Dickran Kouymjian, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Stephen Vaughn, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Hixson, *Witness to Disintegration*, 144.

Soviet people. In 1991, James H. Billington travelled to the Soviet Union for a librarians' conference as a representative for the Library of Congress and witnessed the collapse of the Soviet state. He concluded that academic exchanges had given the Soviet people vital exposure to the West, which helped "transform the consciousness of a new Russian generation" and helped lead to the collapse of communism.⁴²⁰

Several exchangees in this period attempted to portray American society to the Soviet people as a culture that encouraged diversity of opinion and the challenging of accepted beliefs. After criticizing US leaders in his lectures, one American historian recalled telling his audiences that "the great thing about America is precisely an intellectual atmosphere in which nothing is sacred and all ideals are subject to devastating iconoclasm."⁴²¹ Another Fulbrighter in linguistics lamented that the Soviet people were restricted in what they could say and do, but that they valued "the freedom we take for granted in America." Therefore, he argued, lines of communication must remain open between the United States and the Soviet Union in order to encourage this unorthodox thinking.⁴²² An additional Fulbright exchangee in journalism used half of his class time to show American and British broadcasting programs to his Moscow students. He asserted that from his lectures and these videos, "the students must have realized we are an open country, we encourage diversity, [and] we not only permit but encourage the publication of a wide range of opinions."⁴²³ Others complained of the "narrow" nature of Soviet

⁴²⁰ James H. Billington, *Russia Transformed: Breakthrough to Hope: Moscow, August 1991* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 99-100.

⁴²¹ Edward Pessen, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²² Jerome J. Oetgen, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²³ Burton Paulu, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

education, but remained hopeful because many of their students and colleagues were very interested in American scholarship and methods. A historian placed in Moscow in 1985 noticed that many students seemed “quietly pleased” when he argued that the worth of a historical argument did not depend on its “correctness” but instead on its intellectual quality and originality.⁴²⁴ Many other exchangees noted the same phenomenon as students in their fields showed an intense interest in Western scholarly techniques, which relied on new and innovative ideas and intellectual freedom.⁴²⁵

Going further than simply espousing the merits of analytical thinking, many American exchangees attempted to introduce Soviet instructors and students to new teaching methods that would encourage such an approach. Several Fulbright instructors recalled that they frequently implemented discussion periods into their courses, and the Soviet students usually struggled with the format at first. One literature professor remembered:

I devoted most of the class period to discussing assigned readings. For the first two weeks the students had difficulty with this approach. One of them told me after class one day that their teachers only asked factual questions: ‘What happened to so-and-so on page twenty-five?’... They hesitated giving their own interpretations. However, I took *glasnost* at face value, asked them to do the same, and we had a great semester.

Soon Soviet instructors began to hear about his unorthodox approach to instruction, and actually asked him to speak about it at a department meeting. The Soviet professors, he

⁴²⁴ Dennis Lynn Meadows, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Edward Pessen, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²⁵ Richard D. McKinzie, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Ames V. Wertsch, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Levon A. Chorbajian, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

recalled, “had not been taught to analyze literature critically, so they didn’t know how to ask questions or what questions to ask.”⁴²⁶ Others reported similar experiences, including an economics professor assigned to Kharkov. As she attempted to lead a discussion-based seminar course, she “had the impression that participants in the seminar were supposed to normally ask only short questions.” However, as the students became more comfortable with her methods, she prodded them into discussing their own opinions and ideas at length.⁴²⁷ Another lecturer in urban geography also noted that the students were “not accustomed to question-answer activity in the classroom,” but that they eventually caught on to this “interesting and unusual” teaching style.⁴²⁸ One Fulbrighter in American literature asserted that by 1987 the Soviets were realizing that in order to compete with the West “they must teach their students to thinking independently rather than to parrot back political clichés,” and some Soviet students were even organizing debate groups in order to learn how to discuss sensitive political issues freely.⁴²⁹

These were just a few of the many instances of American exchanges underscoring the importance of instructing Soviet academics on how to think critically, and the frequency of this sentiment is significant in illustrating these Americans’ perception of their country and national identity. To help further regain the confidence to serve as cultural ambassadors for the United States, these Americans repeatedly contrasted their own intellectual abilities to the inferior Soviet other. They cast

⁴²⁶ Edward L. Nordby, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²⁷ Judith C. Shapiro, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²⁸ John S. Adams, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴²⁹ Milton Reigelman, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

themselves as promoters of intellectual freedom and critical thinking, ready to guide the Soviets out of their own ignorance. In essence, this was the return of the same American exceptionalism propounded in the 1960s, merely in another form. While the American exceptionalism of the 1960s mostly focused on winning over the Soviet people with American affluence and consumerism, this brand focused on actually changing the thought processes of the Soviet people. This sentiment fit precisely with the attitude exhibited by President Reagan in his second term. Viewing the Cold War as primarily a war of ideas, he believed it was desirable and indeed possible to reform the Soviet Union from within. His initial negotiations with Gorbachev, which preceded the massive reform program soon put forth by the Soviet leader, instilled in these Americans the possibility that people-to-people contacts could actually lead to deep and meaningful reforms in the Soviet Union.

The other biggest contrast to previous exchange reports of the late 1970s was these Americans' renewed concern with promoting international understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. While fewer than ten percent of exchangees examined in the previous era were interested in using the program for the furtherance of American foreign policy goals, almost half of participants in the 1980s noted that the program should promote improvement of US-Soviet relations. Exchange participants of this era increasingly believed that not only should they be cultural ambassadors for the United States but that their combined efforts could contribute to a renewal of detente between the United States and the Soviet Union. Still, this trend was not consistent throughout the decade but instead grew in parallel with President Reagan's new commitment to improving relations with America's Cold War rival. Before 1984, almost

no exchangees recorded “international understanding” as being an important motivation or result of their time in the Soviet Union. As Reagan transitioned into his second term in 1984 and 1985 and abandoned his “evil empire” rhetoric, American exchange participants became increasingly optimistic about the exchange serving as a means of international cooperation and peace. This dramatic shift shows not only the revival of these Americans’ national self-confidence but also serves as a further illustration of the profound effect of Cold War national policy on individual Americans.

Before 1984, when Reagan still publicly maintained a hardline and aggressive approach toward the Soviet Union, exchangees who did mention international understanding in their reports were generally skeptical that it could be achieved. Senior Research Scholar Tyrus Cobb recorded in 1981 that while academic exchange would be a good first step in easing Cold War tensions, he was “under no illusion that this kind of visit in itself [would] place Soviet-American relations on a more stable, solid footing.”⁴³⁰ Other exchangees agreed with this sentiment, arguing that educational exchange only played a “small” or “modest” role in creating international peace.⁴³¹ One Fulbrighter to Lithuania even noted that although the exchange created understanding because he learned about a different culture, seeing Soviet society and its lack of freedoms firsthand

⁴³⁰ Tyrus Cobb, Exchange report, 1981, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴³¹ Richard D. McKinzie, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Edward Pessen, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Judith C. Shapiro, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Peter Castro, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

made him feel very glad to be an American. “I think I have a deeper understanding of the virtues and strengths of American society,” he contended after returning in 1984.⁴³²

Starting in 1984, though, as Reagan began publicly advocating a new and more amicable approach to the Soviet Union, over twenty individuals recorded that the exchange program could be used to improve US-Soviet relations. One sociologist on a Fulbright grant to Armenia recalled that his experience was “very useful” in contributing to international understanding, and another Fulbrighter in literature also recorded in 1987 that the exchange program was “extremely important” in encouraging direct contact between American and Soviet intellectuals in the spirit of international understanding.⁴³³ An additional Fulbrighter to Armenia in 1988 argued that the exchange contributed “tremendously towards international cooperation, communication, and world peace.”⁴³⁴ A participant the following year even went as far as to state that “the Fulbright program contributes more to international understanding than any other single program.”⁴³⁵ These, along with numerous other reports that touted the international benefits of the exchange, illustrated a marked change in the perceptions of this set of Americans in the 1980s. The fact that this shift coincided almost directly in parallel with Reagan’s new initiatives to increase cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union illustrates the powerful implications of national rhetoric and actions on the individual psyche of

⁴³² Jerome J. Oetgen, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴³³ Levon A. Chorbajian, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Dickran Kouymjian, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴³⁴ Hagop V. Panossian, Exchange report, 1988, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴³⁵ Richard M. Abrams, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Americans. In the entire decade previous, American exchange participants had almost entirely abandoned the idea that their program was anything more than a scholarly exchange. However, by the second half of the 1980s, a large number of exchangees suddenly reasserted the idea that cultural contacts could indeed contribute to larger foreign policy concerns of international peace and understanding. As Reagan and Gorbachev engaged in multiple summit meetings and forged international agreements, these Americans now felt that a renewal of detente was indeed possible and that direct American-to-Soviet interaction would help make it a reality.

Finally, these Americans' reactions to the starkly disparate political fluctuations that took place during the 1980s help illustrate the overarching abstract nature of the Cold War to individual Americans. Specifically, despite the Reagan administration's shift from confrontation to negotiation and individual Americans' similar ideological reversals, conceptions of the Soviet *people* remained unchanged throughout the life of the US-Soviet exchange. In fact, for the entirety of the exchange program, even during periods of heightened Cold War tensions, the majority of exchangees recalled the generosity, kindness, and helpfulness of their Soviet friends and colleagues. It is especially significant that even during Reagan's "evil empire" period, when exchange participants lacked the will and confidence to actively spread American values abroad, exchangees overwhelmingly continued to note the friendly and intelligent nature of the Soviet people. This shows that even by its last decade, the Cold War really remained an abstract conflict for these Americans. The enemy-other was not the Soviet people themselves, but the faceless Soviet system.

Despite the political shifts of the 1980s, American exchangees of this period, similar to those who came before them, consistently asserted that the Soviet people were extremely hospitable and friendly. Andrejs Plakans, an ACLS exchangee to Latvia, recalled in 1981 that his stay in Riga was “greatly enhanced” by numerous invitations to visit Soviet friends in their homes.⁴³⁶ Senior Research Scholar in literature Michael Heim also remembered the generosity of Soviet friends, recalling in 1983 that whenever Soviet bureaucracy got in his way, his associates were more than willing to “stick their necks out” to help him.⁴³⁷ In 1981, exchangee Mark Pomar sought to further counter the stereotype that Russians were inherently mean and instead insisted that they were merely tired and overworked. If Americans would exhibit just a small amount of “kindness and understanding,” he argued, this would melt away their seemingly standoffish nature.⁴³⁸ During the mid- to late-1980s, American exchange participants continued to commend the goodness of the Soviet people. One Fulbright Lecturer in American literature, placed in Georgia in 1987, recalled that she made numerous friends and “fell in love” with Georgians. She even recalled her ironic “problem” of getting too many invitations to friends’ homes. “Some ‘problem.’ Too many nice people all wanting to make a fuss over you. You won’t be fit for America afterwards. You’ll expect people to throw big feasts and wait on you and propose elaborate toasts, etc.”⁴³⁹ Another Fulbrighter to Armenia added to these sentiments, contending that many Armenians were more “friendly” and

⁴³⁶ Andrejs Plakans, Exchange report, 1981, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴³⁷ Michael Heim, Exchange report, 1983, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴³⁸ Mark G. Pomar, Exchange report, 1981, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴³⁹ Karen Osborne, Exchange report, 1986, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

“warm” than some Americans. “Their lifestyle is much more human than ours,” he recalled. “They place a great deal of importance on friendship and family ties... They will do anything to help you.”⁴⁴⁰ An additional exchangee in Kiev noted that Soviet acquaintances would give him and his family numerous gifts, such as homemade jams, packaged foods unavailable in Soviet shops, records, and books. “This generosity was all the more moving,” he recorded, “given the relatively low salaries and the pervasive lack of decent consumer goods available in the Soviet Union.”⁴⁴¹ These favorable recollections were not just limited to the Soviet republics, though. A 1985 Fulbright exchangee to Moscow remembered that he often dined with Soviet friends and had exhilarating conversations covering every subject imaginable.⁴⁴² Another lecturer in Moscow recorded in 1989 that he had “never met warmer hospitality anywhere” and that the Soviet people “appear prepared to offer courtesies to virtual strangers that we would normally reserve for old friends.”⁴⁴³ These types of remarks were present in over half the reports examined here, and they show that while the Cold War raged on, these Americans did not view it as a conflict with the Soviet people themselves.

Even more exchangees in the 1980s recorded a favorable personal impression of their colleagues and students. For instance, linguist Roy Jones remarked in 1983 that his Soviet colleagues in Leningrad could not have been more “helpful and cooperative.”⁴⁴⁴ A

⁴⁴⁰ Dickran Kouymjian, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴¹ Milton Reigelman, Exchange report, 1987, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴² Edward Pessen, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴³ Richard M. Abrams, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴⁴ Roy Jones, Exchange report, 1983, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

1989 Fulbright exchangee to Estonia echoed the same sentiment, asserting that his “professional relationships were excellent” and “our hosts were helpful in every way.”⁴⁴⁵ Others noted the academic benefits of their relationships with Soviet scholars, such as Alton Donnelly who asserted that his consultations with Soviet colleagues while on the Senior Research Scholars exchange was “an especially useful part of my stay in the Soviet Union.” He was even able to create a collaborative research project with Soviet historians.⁴⁴⁶ Another research exchangee in literature, Julia Alissandratos, developed such a good relationship with her Soviet peers that they invited her to publish her research in a Soviet journal.⁴⁴⁷ Others had fond memories of the personal friendships they developed with their fellow Soviet academics. One 1984 Fulbrighter in Lithuania remembered his faculty colleagues as “warm.” He came to “regard many of them as friends” and asserted that establishing those friendships was one of the highlights of his experience.⁴⁴⁸ Another exchangee in 1985, who was a World War II veteran, remembered a particularly heartfelt experience on the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. His department hosted a celebration and “I was asked to attend and was pleasantly surprised when they called me up as a veteran of the war for recognition and a bouquet of tulips.”⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁵ Sam G. McFarland, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴⁶ Alton Donnelly, Exchange report, 1981, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴⁴⁷ Julia Alissandratos, Exchange report, 1980, International Research and Exchanges Board Collection, The Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

⁴⁴⁸ Jerome J. Oetgen, Exchange report, 1984, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁴⁹ Paul Schmidt, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Further illustrating these Americans' positive attitudes toward the Soviet people, many Fulbright lecturers tasked with conducting classes in Soviet universities complemented the quality of students at their institutions. One Fulbright exchangee in Kazakhstan found all of his students to be "widely read and with excellent academic backgrounds judging by the questions they asked."⁴⁵⁰ Another exchange lecturer asserted that his fifth-year students were of such a quality that they were "comparable to graduate students in better American universities."⁴⁵¹ While others recalled that a few students relied too much on Marxist ideology in formulating their ideas, "such doctrinaire pronouncements were rare. Faculty and students alike seemed more concerned with understanding and profiting from my non-Marxist observations than with judging them against a Marxist-Leninist standard."⁴⁵² These exchange participants, along with a majority of others, held their Soviet peers and students in high esteem and clearly respected the Soviet academics for their work.

From the beginning of the US-Soviet exchange in 1958 to its last years in the 1980s and early 1990s, one of the most frequent observations by the program's alumni was the generosity and kindness of the Soviet people, whether friends, colleagues, or students. This points to the conclusion that, to this significant group of Americans, the Cold War enemy-other was not the Soviet people themselves, but the colossal faceless Soviet system. Consistently throughout this thirty-three year period, American exchangees repeatedly criticized the Soviet bureaucracy, economy, and academic

⁴⁵⁰ Peter Kotzer, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁵¹ Fuller Moore, Exchange report, 1989, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

⁴⁵² Edward Pessen, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

structure, and denounced the presence of state surveillance and censorship. However, only a small minority placed blame for these inadequacies on the Soviet people or spoke negatively about most of the Soviet citizens with whom they came into contact. This provides an interesting lens through which to examine the perceptions of these Americans during the Cold War. Their image of the Soviet people was not the caricature of the sabotaging communist lurking around the corner or the mindless pawn of the communist regime. Instead, their perception of the Cold War was driven by the idea that the Soviets were decent people who needed to be set free from an oppressive system they merely inherited. While these Americans' sense of national purpose transformed in this period to one that focused once again on spreading American values abroad, the only constant remained their overwhelming positive impression of the Soviet people.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, several scholars of American foreign relations have explored the extent to which cultural exchange played a role in the final demise of the Cold War. Robert English, a political scientist and a former IREX exchange student to the Soviet Union from 1989 to 1991, argued that the stage for Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms and the subsequent breakup of the Soviet Union was set as early as the 1950s when the Soviet Union began to be more open to foreign influence, especially from the West. What made the end of the Cold War possible, he contended, was "the emergence, over the preceding two decades, of a Soviet intellectual elite" whose new, reformist thinking was "rooted in the cultural thaw, domestic liberalization, and burgeoning foreign ties of the early post-Stalin era." These academics, some of whom formed these foreign ties through the exchange program, became senior colleagues in Gorbachev's government. They desired to belong to the West and to adopt a new Western-oriented national identity, and their support encouraged the Soviet leader to progress with his reforms.⁴⁵³ Historian of US public diplomacy, Nicholas J. Cull, agreed with English, as evident through his own examination of the United States Information Agency. He contended that since 1991, Eastern European leaders have repeatedly asserted that Western cultural diffusion through mediums such as radio, exhibitions, and

⁴⁵³ Robert English, *Russia and the Idea of the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals, and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 2-5.

people-to-people contact allowed the Soviet people to learn of the freedoms and material abundance in the West. Eventually, their desires for these advancements “drew the Kremlin into a race it could never win.”⁴⁵⁴ Other historians of American cultural diplomacy, such as Laura A. Belmonte, saw the fruits of these efforts in the post-1991 developments in Eastern Europe. She concluded her monograph on Cold War propaganda by arguing that although it is difficult to draw a direct link between American cultural efforts and the collapse of communism, the subsequent evolution of the former Soviet bloc showed the obvious influence of American ideals, especially democratic capitalism. These governments, to various degrees, allowed freedom of speech, the press, and religion, and American consumer goods became even more popular. Therefore, she contended, “American officials correctly believed that democratic capitalism would appeal to peoples oppressed by communist political oppression, economic regimentation, and police surveillance.”⁴⁵⁵

Since the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, former academic exchange participants have also presented their ideas on the direct connection between their efforts at cultural diplomacy and the collapse of the Soviet state. Alfred Rieber, an exchangee to Moscow in the first year of the program in 1958, recalled in 1999 that the exchanges were important in keeping an “open avenue of contact when others were closed.” This meant, he contended, that “*perestroika* did not have to begin at ground zero” because when the official barriers to the West came down, all those personal and professional relationships that exchangees had created over the previous decades were allowed to

⁴⁵⁴ Nicholas J. Cull, *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945-1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 482.

⁴⁵⁵ Laura A. Belmonte, *Selling the American Way: US Propaganda and the Cold War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 179.

flourish. Terence Emmons, who participated in the graduate student exchange to the Soviet Union from 1962 to 1964, more directly asserted that the development of Western-oriented values and ideas among Soviet intellectuals, which was encouraged by the exchange, was “a fundamental aspect in the collapse of the Soviet Union.” He contended, “Stalin and his epigones were right; intercourse with the West was a dangerous thing.” George Demo, a former exchangee to Moscow in 1962, also agreed. In 1999, he characterized the exchanges as a “very significant pipeline of ‘truth’ or Western values and information” to the Soviet elite, whose influence culminated in the Gorbachev era reforms. Former 1967 participant James Muller added to these sentiments, speaking directly on the debate as to why the Cold War concluded when it did. He argued years later that while many believed President Reagan’s military build-up forced the Soviets to capitulate, “I believe it likely that cultural and scientific exchanges, and the resulting cooperative contacts between the Soviet Union and the United States, played a more important role than increasing nuclear over-kill.”⁴⁵⁶

Additional former exchangees have published works on their experience of being in the Soviet Union as the communist regime was disintegrating and also have explained their belief that academic contacts were an important contributor to these dramatic events. The very first exchange participant introduced in this work was James Billington, who initially went to the Soviet Union on a 1961 exchange to the University of Leningrad. By 1991, Billington was again in the Soviet Union as a representative of the Library of Congress for the annual gathering of the International Federation of Library Associates. He was present in the Soviet capital during the attempted August coup

⁴⁵⁶ Yale Richmond, *Cultural Exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2003), 49-58.

against Gorbachev's government and witnessed the subsequent resistance staged by many Soviet people against these opponents to reform. When the putsch threatened to restore dictatorial control and the old "politics of fear," he watched the Soviet people assert themselves and their support of reform through protests, thus "reaffirming a new politics of hope" and paving a new path for their nation. Billington stated plainly that this transformation of the Russian consciousness was directly linked to the influence of the West, especially the cultural interchange promoted by the academic exchange program. He recalled several Soviet academics he had encountered as proof of this connection. Rem Khokhlov, a prominent Soviet laser scientist, went to the United States through an academic exchange to Stanford University. The experience exposed "this remarkable man...to more than just physics." Upon his return to the Soviet Union, he helped create the first American Studies courses at Moscow State University and subsequently worked to expand those classes to other Soviet institutions. Alexander Yakovlev participated in an exchange to Columbia University and later became one of Gorbachev's closest political advisors. Billington asserted that Yakovlev's experience exposed him to a "free society" which allowed him to more effectively "explain the West to the more sheltered Gorbachev." Finally, Soviet political scientist Vladimir Shtinov, after spending time at an American university through the exchange, introduced to his home institution Sverdlovsk University "some of the first series studies of comparative politics and democratic political philosophy anywhere in Russia."⁴⁵⁷

Finally, Walter Hixson, who taught at Kazan State University as a Fulbright scholar from September 1990 to July 1991, also later connected the disintegration of

⁴⁵⁷ James H. Billington, *Russia Transformed: Breakthrough to Hope: Moscow, August 1991* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 3-4, 99-101.

Soviet communism to American influence. His book, which described his experience as an exchangee, contained numerous anecdotes that showed the great influence of Western culture in the Soviet Union, especially the Soviet peoples' "uncritical fascination...with Western consumerism." Although before his visit he admitted his skepticism of the idea that Western values were significant in creating change within the Soviet Union, he recorded that he became more receptive to the notion as a result of his time among the Soviet people. "After spending ten months observing Soviet society 'from the bottom up,'" he recalled, "it did become clear to me that, in certain fundamental respects, the West had indeed conquered the East" because "as their own system disintegrated, millions of former Soviets looked to Western-style capitalism for salvation." This development could not have been possible without the influence of Western culture.⁴⁵⁸

My research has been premised on the idea that Americans' descriptions of the Soviet Union provide a more accurate picture of exchangees' own ideas and values rather than giving any substantial insight into the Soviet society and culture they observed. Therefore it is outside of the scope of this work to analyze whether US-Soviet cultural exchange did indeed play a pivotal role in bringing about the end of Soviet communism. Still, it is significant that even years after the Cold War had come to an end, several exchangees still believed that their combined individual efforts made such a deep impact on the Soviet consciousness, and thus the Soviet political system. Not one of the over 500 exchange reports examined here ever included a concern that the presence of Soviet exchange participants in the United States posed a danger of convincing Americans of the merits of communism. If an exchangee discussed cultural transmission, it was always in

⁴⁵⁸ Walter L. Hixson, *Witness to Disintegration: Provincial Life in the last year of the USSR* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), ix-x, 170-171.

the context of spreading American values to the Soviet Union, not vice versa. This fact, along with countless remarks made by these individuals throughout the life of the exchange program, show that they had internalized the concept of American exceptionalism and that it was through this lens that they viewed the Soviet Union. Consistently until the end of the Cold War, American exchangeees used the image of the inferior Soviet other to reinforce that sense of superiority. Even in the late 1960s and 1970s when many Americans questioned the viability of spreading American values abroad, the image of the inferior Soviet system helped this specific group of Americans, and most likely many others, to maintain a more unified national identity formed around the idea of American exceptionalism.

In every type of travel writing, the traveler does not narrate the experience in its entirety but chooses to record what he or she believes is significant or abnormal about the society being observed. Thus, exactly what author-travelers choose to include in their accounts illuminate their own cultural assumptions and values, and this principle can be applied to reports by American exchangeees to the Soviet Union. The American culture they lived in had inundated them with notions of American superiority, even after the ultra-patriotic fervor of the early Cold War period had receded.⁴⁵⁹ They were therefore forced to compare their preconceived notions of Soviet society to the reality they saw on the ground. Consistently, in every period, the majority of exchangeees chose to focus mostly on the inefficiencies and problems of the Soviet system, especially the stifling bureaucracy, the low standard of living, and the presence of state surveillance (whether witnessed first-hand or not). While they consistently noted their favorable impressions of

⁴⁵⁹ Richard Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming! Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 140.

the hospitable Soviet people, whom they often framed as innocents trapped within a broken system waiting to be reformed, they used their critiques of the overarching Soviet society to confirm these preconceived notions of American exceptionalism.

Though this repeated reaffirming of American superiority remained a constant throughout this period, these exchange reports also provide a look into the ways that public perception of the Cold War and America's goals in the conflict constantly shifted. Namely, while these Americans' commitment to their own national uniqueness remained, their willingness to serve as cultural ambassadors waxed and waned at various points. Throughout the late 1950s and most of the 1960s, an overwhelming majority of exchangees described their efforts to tell the Soviet people about the virtues of American democracy and capitalism. Many suggested that a central purpose of the program was to use exchange participants as representatives of the United States, and they repeatedly recalled their attempts to relay the merits of American life to the Soviet people through stories about themselves and through disseminating Western products and publications. Though US-Soviet relations were far from consistently positive in this period, this showed that there was not yet a widespread questioning of the Cold War consensus and the strategy of containment among this segment of ordinary Americans. Likely emblematic of larger trends in American public opinion, these individuals still maintained that American values could and should be transplanted abroad, especially behind the Iron Curtain. These trends changed so dramatically after 1968, though, that they were certainly indicative of a widespread shift in public perception of the Cold War. Almost none of the exchangees from the late 1960s to the early 1980s relayed any concern with actively promoting a positive image of the United States or working to transplant

American values abroad. At a time when the quagmire of the Vietnam War made many Americans question the feasibility of such efforts, the vast majority framed the exchange as simply an academic endeavor and eschewed the prospect of serving as America's cultural diplomats. This indicated a temporary shift away from a central facet of American identity, specifically the idea that national greatness depended on exerting power and influence globally. It was not until the mid-1980s, when President Ronald Reagan began to show that cooperation with the Soviets at the high policy level was indeed possible, that American exchangeees began overwhelmingly to reassert their desire to promote American values among the Soviet people. Though examinations of public opinion polls, the media, and public figures show that shifting perceptions of the Vietnam War created a sea change in Americans' opinions on US foreign policy and America's role in the world, these exchange reports provide a specific and detailed case study of just how important these changes were in shaping the beliefs and actions of individual Americans.

Lastly, this research reinforces the important connections between diplomatic, cultural, and social history. Throughout the exchange, American policymakers in various agencies and levels throughout the US government sought to use the exchange as a foreign policy tool to improve America's image abroad. While it is significant to understand these top individuals' goals and desires for the program, especially to fully comprehend America's Cold War strategy, it is also extremely important to know whether the participants themselves shared these overarching aims and actually carried them out. Throughout the Cold War, there appears to be a constant interplay between high foreign policy and American public opinion, with each influencing and reshaping

the other. Because these two threads were never fully independent of one another, each would be difficult to fully comprehend individually. Therefore, as has been the case with the historiography of American foreign relations in recent years, diplomatic historians should continue to incorporate non-government perspectives and public opinion into their works in order to provide a more complete image of the formulation of American foreign policy. These two fields of study, diplomatic and cultural history, are not at odds with one another but can be effectively utilized together.

Sources such as these post-trip exchange reports provide a fascinating look into the beliefs and perspectives of ordinary Americans living under the shadow of the Cold War. While each individual was different, overarching trends observed in their narratives show that the conflict did alter their worldview and that it framed how they conceptualized their own country and its place in the world. Although most of them treasured the cultural enrichment gained from a firsthand look into Soviet society, most indicated their readiness to return to “normal” life back in the United States. Judith C. Shapiro, an economist who spent a semester in the Soviet Union, described this situation aptly in 1985. “In short,” she said, “it is very much like going to the moon.”⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁶⁰ Judith C. Shapiro, Exchange report, 1985, Council for International Exchange of Scholars Collection, University of Arkansas Library, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

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