

PREFACE

The idea of this series originated twenty-five years ago at Stanford in the course of a research project on the world revolution of our time. Lasswell and Lerner were then, respectively, senior consultant and research director of this project. Speier was then head of the social science division at RAND; he joined Lasswell and Lerner as coeditor in 1967. Although the editors have since lived through changes of venue, they have not suffered a change of heart.

Our purpose, then as now, has been to fill the great void in our knowledge of the historical contexts from which our present preoccupation with communication and propaganda evolved. The literature in this field is barren save for the unique book entitled *Die öffentliche Meinung in der Weltgeschichte* by Wilhelm Bauer, which proved to be fertile but not seminal—without offspring. This book has never been translated. Published in 1929, it antedated the rise of Nazism and its “propaganda state,” the subsequent global diffusion of “psychological warfare” in World War II, and the “cold war” that shaped the postwar quarter century. Beyond its isolation in a language no longer lingua franca, Bauer’s book broached a subject that has since grown beyond the reach of a single scholar.

This led to our first important editorial decision—that our projected study would be the work of many minds from many lands. We next decided that we should try to enlist the very best scholars available to take a fresh look at each historical period and analytical issue we selected. A glance at our table of contents will reveal that these editorial aims have, in the main, been realized.

No editorial strategy, however, can survive so many years without adapting its tactics. In a few instances, where enlisted contributors proved to be mortal or otherwise vulnerable to time's arrow, we have reprinted the best paper extant that was relevant to our editorial aspirations. Two such papers are included in volume I. Surely no apology is needed for reprinting here the papers on ancient Judaism by Max Weber and on ancient Egypt by John Wilson.

Originally we planned for two volumes in which every paper would integrate the historical and analytical modes of exposition within its own framework. This plan has been executed with the happy results presented in the first two volumes. However, it turned out to be impossible to encompass contemporary research within the confines of a few concluding chapters in volume II. Accordingly, we added a third volume to this study and trust that the publication delays this entailed will reward the reader's patience with enhanced enlightenment.

Volume III shifts the expository mode of the first two volumes from historical focus within a conceptual framework to analytical focus within a historical context. We believe this mode will be rewarding to many readers, particularly those who have been afflicted by the crippling conception that the development of communication and propaganda in our own time is a sort of historical "sport"—a "spontaneous" creation of Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, and the like. It is rewarding—and perhaps reassuring—to be reminded that contemporary communication is a societal phenomenon with a long past and with a future.

Volume I spans human history from its recorded beginnings in primitive and tribal communities through the formation of centralized empires (the Great Society of the ancient world) to the medieval system of Western Europe. We have not sought to cover this vast stretch of historical experience in encyclopedic or

textbook fashion. Rather we have been guided by the work of modern scholars, whose painstaking labors among ancient records and relics have reconstructed for us the form and content of societies that contributed significantly to shaping the symbolic instrument.

Thus, after a review of earlier societies, we turn to the great valley-empires in which, for the first time in available records, social communication was not only practiced but codified and transmitted to posterity. Our contributors pass in review the riverine societies that arose and flourished for a time, along the Tigris-Euphrates, the Nile, and the Indus Valleys. Out of these beginnings, and sometimes parallel to them, grew the great and durable social systems that did not rely exclusively upon conquest and commerce. These systems built the continuing stateways and lifeways that have earned them, among scholars, the sobriquet "civilization"—here exemplified by the Mesopotamian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, and the classical (Graeco-Roman) civilizations of ancient Europe.

A major force in shaping the symbolic instrument, in the context of early civilization, was the codification of belief and behavior in the great religions that originated in the Mediterranean basin. We examine here the roles played by Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam in this historical process. The focus on these codes implies no editorial parochialism. It is a plain historical fact that these particular codes, for reasons that may or may not be related to their virtues as theology and ritual, did diffuse far beyond their original time and space confines to become world religions. Although the mode of diffusion was different in each case—Judaism by diaspora, Christianity by propaganda, Buddhism by transfer, Islam by conquest—all played significant roles in the evolution of world communication. Other major religions such as Hinduism and Shintoism did not, despite their inherent virtues, achieve this degree of global diffusion. Moreover, our editorial efforts to enlist for volume I scholars specialized in other religions came to nought.

If some opportunities were lost, however, others were gained. We are fortunate to include three convergent studies of the Ottoman Empire that illuminate the unique communication system developed under this aegis—studies that converge from

diverse social, political, and aesthetic starting points. Volume I concludes with a retrospective analysis of communication in the ancient empires and a perspective on the medieval transformations that shaped the symbolic instrument for future epochs and arenas. The story continues in volume II. Each volume contains its own introduction, notes on contributors, and index.

**PROPAGANDA AND COMMUNICATION
IN WORLD HISTORY**

