A Blueprint for Cold War Citizenship:
Upper Class Women in the U.S. Foreign Policy, 1945-1963

Dissertation

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Abstract

This dissertation discusses the ways two upper class magazines, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*, helped shape the manner in which upper class women acted as informal cultural diplomats during the early Cold War. The major source base for the study included foreign policy articles from these two magazines and the papers of four women - Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Lee Radziwill. The biographies of this group of women help define the parameters of upper class women’s role in fighting the Cold War. Research indicated that, at least in the opinions of editorial staff at the two most influential upper class women’s magazines, upper class women were expected to live up to a very clear set of behavioral standards to help promote U.S. Cold War diplomatic interests. Women were supposed to have a clear and in-depth understanding of international foreign policy, help rebuild the postwar economies of key allied nations like France and Great Britain through purchasing luxury goods like fashion, and combat the image of the “Ugly American” abroad by acting as refined, cultured, and well-behaved examples of American womanhood. Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Lee Radziwill all established, shaped, and lived up to each of these standards.
Dedication

Dedicated to my supportive and patient family.
Acknowledgments

I am not terribly good at acknowledgments, but I would like to thank my parents for their support during my very long graduate school career. My advisor, Dr. Peter Hahn, has been a joy to work with, and I cannot count the ways I have benefitted from his advice. Dr. Hahn is the best editor I have ever met, a wonderful writer and instructor, and an even more patient dissertation advisor; it is an honor to have worked with him. Dr. Hartmann and Dr. McMahon provided invaluable input into my dissertation and I was thrilled they agreed to be on my committee, particularly since I was hardly ever in Ohio. Working from a long distance was made much less difficult by their kindness and flexibility. Finally, thank you to every one of my friends and family who put up with me throughout graduate school!
Vita

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A Blueprint for Cold War Citizenship:
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When Princess Lee Bouvier Radziwill stepped off a jet to India in March of 1962, neither she nor her older sister Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy had expected the bombardment of attention surrounding their goodwill tour of India and Pakistan. Certainly both knew their trip would be news, but the minute detail paid to the sisters’ every move was doubtless surprising. *Life Magazine* covered the tour in a multi-page spread, *Newsweek* felt the story merited mention, and newspapers across the nation reported in detail on every outfit and accessory each wore.¹ The United States Information Agency (USIA) deemed the trip so important they hired a Hollywood producer and cameraman to film it, rather than using its regular staff of documentary filmmakers.² The sisters’ reception was “watched by multitudes of people shouting…Mrs. Kennedy long life and [their] every public act was recorded by swarms of reporters and thousands of feet of movie and television film – for Indians, she [and her sister] were a


smash hit.”³ Their trip was even memorialized in a series of miniature watercolor paintings by the artist Jacqueline Duheme, commissioned by Elle Magazine.⁴ Although Jacqueline Kennedy’s first solo visit abroad was an officially sanctioned effort to build goodwill for the United States in foreign nations around the world, Radziwill’s role was not official; she was simply accompanying her sister.

This trip was not, of course, Radziwill’s first venture overseas. Indeed, she and her sister had traveled the world since youth, and by the 1960s helped embody the newly coined term “jet set” (particularly after Jacqueline Kennedy’s marriage to Aristotle Onassis). During the late 1950s and early 1960s, the sisters’ international excursions became fodder for upper class magazines like Harper’s Bazaar and Vogue. Their first major trip abroad in the early 1950s, however, met with considerably less fanfare, and the girls charmingly chronicled it themselves in a journal the two compiled for their mother called One Special Summer. The journal, in which both drew pictures, wrote poetry, and compiled a series of letters home, details the sisters’ overseas adventures. The Bouvier sisters spent their summer abroad attending diplomatic parties, visiting royalty in Italy, and otherwise meeting their parents’ social connections, in addition to touring major European sights.⁵

Their initial visit to Europe set up both sisters for a lifetime of travel and international associations. The later goodwill tour was important because it represented

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⁴ The miniatures were on display at the Field Museum in Chicago through May 8, 2005. They were part of a traveling exhibition entitled Jacqueline Kennedy: The White House Years.

⁵ Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier, One Special Summer, (New York: Rizzoli, reissued 2005).
the epitome of American efforts at informal cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. Radziwill and Kennedy, as archetypes of refined upper-class American women, were perfect for the job. The sisters had traveled since youth and were multi-lingual, internationally-minded, and most importantly, well-bred. When travel abroad resumed after the Second World War, writers in popular magazines began counseling Americans visiting overseas to accept roles as informal, cultural diplomats who might help solidify good (or at least peaceful) relations between the U.S. and its wartime allies France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union or to accept as allies former enemies like Germany, Italy, and Japan. Many efforts to create “informal diplomats” were aimed at women of leisure - wives of wealthy and prominent men who had the time and money extensively to travel. In turn, those women had the status and connections that made their trips fodder for fashionable magazines and newspaper social columns spreading messages to a female audience about a new responsibility to act as international, informal cultural diplomats. More broadly, especially at the beginning of the Cold War, when television was not a prevalent form of entertainment, magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* reached an audience across the American social spectrum, encouraging readers to dress or behave like upper class ladies. The symbiotic relationship between upper class women, magazines, and their audiences reached full force in the early 1960s, when Jacqueline Kennedy became First Lady, but began evolving as soon as the mid-1940s.

As the U.S. socially, politically, and economically mobilized for the postwar ideological conflict with the Soviet Union, women of all classes learned new roles. On the home front, many women, particularly those in the middle classes, embraced roles as
housewives and mothers, believing their work within the family helped the nation better prepare for staving off communism around the world. Upper class women, like their middle class counterparts in newly sprawling suburbs across the United States, were not immune to societal expectations for starting families as a weapon during the Cold War. They too, married and began families, sometimes giving up paid wartime jobs, or full-time volunteer work in charity and fundraising.

Upper class women, though, unlike their middle class counterparts, had a different set of social expectations to fulfill during the Cold War. First, they needed to “marry well” to maintain their social standing and wealth. Next, when married, they were expected to help their husbands’ careers by entertaining with aplomb and running efficient households with large staffs. If they were particularly fortunate, some, like Jacqueline Kennedy, were eventually able to use their husbands’ positions to branch into influential (albeit not always official) political positions of their own. And for the most part, expectations for upper class women, on the surface, at least, reflected (and were perpetuated by) views in the popular media, just as they were for middle class women. Social morés for upper class women, however, were reflected in the different venue of high society journals like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar. Writers for these two magazines, and others like them, tutored their readers to act as role models of American education and refinement. As such, upper class women helped fight the Cold War differently from their middle class counterparts while at the same time influencing that group’s role as “Cold Warriors.”

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As exemplars of U.S. society, upper class women were encouraged to act as the epitome of American womanhood in order to fight the Cold War both at home and abroad in a few different ways. At home, such immediately recognizable women as Jacqueline Kennedy and Lee Radziwill might be portrayed as the embodiment of cultured and educated American femininity. Because of this, they might be role models for middle class women in their own Cold War roles as professionals, wives, and mothers. Abroad, upper class women could potentially use their husbands’ positions, or their own social connections, purchasing power, and social and educational refinement as tools to attract foreign nations to the American capitalistic and democratic way of life. Molly Wood’s study of foreign service wives in the early part of the century points out that “the State Department hoped that these [women] would serve as exemplars who would, through their domestic presence overseas, introduce the most cultivated Americans to the rest of the world and help project a message of overall goodwill.”7 Upper class women’s roles in fighting the Cold War were considered informal, but members of that group, through their social status and, oftentimes, not consciously, held considerable sway in foreign affairs. Or, bucking stereotypes, some later on quite consciously carved out niches in which they could more directly (but usually still informally) assert their own political beliefs.

Women of leisure had an informal but important role in fighting the Cold War for a number of reasons. First, because of their husbands’ careers or their own international contacts and travels, they could project overseas a certain refined, educated, and stylish

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image of American women that contrasted with the European vision of “…America as restless, anti-intellectual, conformist, hedonist, technological, materialistic, consumerist, and beset by bad taste.”

Upper class women could disprove European notions that “Americans lacked a sense of history and led standardized, stupefied, and shallow lives.” An improved perception of American women may have played a significant role in helping make the United States an international role model for capitalism at a time when foreigners perceived Americans as crude, rough, and ignorant global bullies. In fact, through the media and social pressure, upper class women were encouraged almost to “sell” a particular image at home and abroad, not only to nations like France and England, whose loyalties were critical to the success of NATO and the Marshall Plan, but also to the Soviet Union. Their role with the Soviet Union was slightly more complex because women were both encouraged to foster cultural understanding between the Soviets and the United States, and project an image of a certain standard of living only attainable through capitalism and the American way of life.

Editorial staff at Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar promoted active political roles for their upper class audiences, urging readers to travel overseas, buy foreign products and foreign foods, and develop a sophisticated understanding of different cultures so they might better relate to overseas social counterparts. The trend was not entirely a new one in that upper-class women previously took roles in world affairs and politics. Molly Wood, for instance, suggests ways in which “gender helped to create and maintain a

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9 Ibid.
positive American presence all over the world, and helped to define the conduct of American diplomacy” even before World War Two. Such roles, however, were often formalized during and after World War II as more and more women ran for (and were elected to) public office, were appointed as overseas diplomats, worked as nurses, or joined the armed forces or Red Cross in paid positions. Jacqueline Kennedy, for instance, was able more directly to impact world affairs because of her social standing as a First Lady and because of her associations with prominent political figures. But while not all upper-class women shared her position, they had the opportunity to affect Cold War politics in other, more subtle ways.

When overseas travel resumed after the Second World War, editors at magazines with upper class readerships in particular started counseling American travelers to accept roles as informal, cultural diplomats who could help solidify good relations between the U.S. and its British, French, and Soviet wartime allies or former enemies like the Germans, Italians, or Japanese. Many efforts to create “informal diplomats” were aimed at women of leisure - wives of wealthy and prominent men with the time and money to extensively travel and entertain. Probably more important, such women could spend a great deal of money overseas on luxury items like haute couture clothing or gourmet foods, in the process helping send American money to needy countries (possibly in place of or in addition to Marshall Plan dollars) while at the same time making American style

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capitalism attractive to struggling postwar nations. In turn, they had the status and connections to make their trips fodder for fashionable magazines and newspaper social columns spreading these messages to a national audience.

Almost immediately after the war, the media, and those working at fashionable magazines in particular, recognized the possibilities for a symbiotic relationship, encouraging upper-class American women to help foster international goodwill in their travels around the world. International goodwill not only benefited the magazine’s readership, but also helped increase its subscription base and spread a message positive to the American cause during the Cold War. Magazines like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar extensively documented upper class women’s travels to foreign nations in their social pages. They also carried, before and during the war, in-depth coverage of major foreign policy issues. At the dawn of the Cold War in 1945, the rate of this coverage only slightly decreased from the almost constant reporting on the Second World War. During the war, there might have been four to five foreign policy articles in each magazine’s monthly issue, but only two or three per copy after the war. Since Harper’s Bazaar published monthly (with occasional special issues), and Vogue every two weeks, however, the rate of postwar foreign policy coverage was still substantial.

The nature of foreign policy reporting, however, perceptibly shifted at the dawn of the Cold War. Although there was not an overtly declared editorial policy on this matter, editorial staff at both magazines began a clearly identifiable trend toward increased emphasis on educating readers in diplomacy and their roles as cultural diplomats at home and abroad. Writers at both periodicals started tutoring audiences in
pertinent American foreign relations concerns, the cultural histories and traditions of nations they might visit, and most importantly, how to behave with respect to particular cultures when traveling abroad. Magazine editors also promoted fashion and luxury goods from war-torn nations like France and Britain, encouraging women to spend in the name of rebuilding the postwar European economy. Behaving appropriately and liberally spending American dollars might help upper-class female travelers better represent the nation as a whole and favorably shape the postwar image of the United States.

This dissertation explores the roles upper class women’s magazines prescribed for readers to act as role models at home and abroad during the Cold War. Naturally, like their middle class counterparts, not all upper class women neatly fit into Cold War categorizations of how women should act domestically and abroad to combat communism. Even if they resisted the stereotypical pattern of marriage and family in favor of careers, though, few could completely escape the influence of popular images and social expectations so prevalent during the early Cold War. This influence was compounded by the government’s efforts to utilize upper class women at home and overseas as a tool in its Cold War arsenal. As Helena K. Finn points out, “early in the Cold War, American efforts at cultural diplomacy were funded by the CIA as well as the State Department’s Division of Cultural Relations,” and “when the United States assumed the mantle of global leadership after World War II, cultural diplomacy was considered a central part of its strategy. Efforts at cultural diplomacy continued into the 1950s, under the auspices of the newly created U.S. Information Agency (USIA).”

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though women were not an official part of the U.S. cultural diplomacy strategy, upper-class women, for example, might be employed in programs to help generate favor for the Marshall Plan overseas, or encouraged through Fulbright grants and university scholarships to study abroad in an effort to build international goodwill. Or, as Molly Wood’s research indicates, they might be assets to their husbands in the diplomatic corps or other government positions as sophisticated hostesses with highly-placed international contacts.

There are numerous studies on the roles of middle class women during the early Cold War, but few examine the conflict through the viewpoint of an often overlooked group of women, those in the highest reaches of society. At times these women were behind the men in power, but they also were politically influential in their own right, albeit in an informal, socially prescribed fashion. This work focuses on four of those women, Susan Mary Patten Alsop, wife of both Foreign Service reserve officer in France Bill Patten and later of reporter Joseph Alsop; her best friend and political activist Marietta Peabody Fitzgerald Tree; the socialite and former princess Lee Radziwill, Jacqueline Kennedy’s sister; and finally, Jacqueline Kennedy herself. All four women represented their class in different ways, and thus they serve as excellent models for the variety of ways upper class women held socio-political power during the early Cold War into the 1960s.

The four women married well, often held jobs formally or as volunteers, and helped their husbands’ careers, but also used their influence (consciously or not) to act as informal cultural diplomats. First, their international connections helped to combat the common idea of the “ugly American” overseas. Second, each could act as a hostess to powerful people in their circles, helping create a potent mix of society and politics. Next, the four had the money, leisure, and intellectual desire to travel and educate themselves about international affairs. They could also shop overseas, volunteer at home, or otherwise help promote the economies of politically important European nations like France and England. Later, all used their marriages or lovers to gain social or political power, and later, influential positions where they exercised their own political convictions. Most important, the group judiciously used its powers to further personal political agendas, following the cultural messages promoted by upper class magazines aimed at them as a target audience. In all these ways, this group of women often bucked 1950’s stereotypes, carving out successful careers and advancing their own political agendas through beneficial marriages or social connections.

Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, and Lee Radziwill were first and foremost perceived as socialites (despite their significant roles as philanthropists, businesswomen, and political activists), but their life stories also underscored upper class women’s considerable informal influence on world affairs, sometimes through their husbands, but mostly through their acquaintances, travels, entertaining, and spending. The two best friends and two sisters nicely represent their class because they followed or even set standards for behavior abroad, became fashion icons, were married to politically
prominent men, and forged political identities and agendas of their own, which they carried overseas.

Jacqueline Kennedy took this influence one step further in her career as a representative of her class and later, First Lady. Kennedy’s social status, for example, like her sister’s, shaped her role in society throughout her college years and afterward. Later, much like the other women, her role as a politician’s wife placed Kennedy in positions of power throughout the Cold War, but unlike the other three, her major importance stems from her role as First Lady. During the Kennedy administration, Mrs. Kennedy constantly traveled in an informal diplomatic capacity to places like France, England, and India, acting to foster goodwill in a manner even a particularly politically active First Lady might not have undertaken. Although the other three women were informal cultural diplomats, and sometimes exerted or gained power and position through their husbands, Jacqueline Kennedy eventually represented more than that ideal. Her active role in the White House and her travels overseas culminated the formalization of upper class women’s specialized and previously informal roles in international affairs. As a result, after Kennedy’s tenure in the White House, Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, and Lee Radziwill moved to more influential roles as political salonistes or even as representative to the United Nations.

**Gender, Class and Foreign Policy in the Historiography**

Traditional diplomatic relations historiography often ignores upper class women, purporting that the 1950s was the era of the middle class, or discounts women’s influence on diplomacy altogether. More traditional political histories from different schools of
thought on Cold War diplomacy, such as William Appleman Williams’ *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* or John Lewis Gaddis’ *The United States and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1947* thoroughly explore the domestic and foreign political aspects of the Cold War. These political histories typically focused on policy-making at the highest reaches of the government, but not necessarily on domestic or class and gender issues.

In the past three decades, the study of diplomatic history, like other areas of history, has been influenced by new and innovative methods for researching old issues. Rather than simply detailing the communications between diplomats or national leaders, diplomatic historians now seek to bring to the forefront a more multifaceted understanding of how diplomacy worked during the Cold War. Today, it is particularly fashionable to reexamine through this lens United States and Soviet diplomatic relations during the Cold War. The “new diplomatic history” practiced by recent scholars has been particularly successful at teasing out the political impact of previously overlooked groups like African-Americans, homosexuals, and women.

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Diplomatic history particularly made strides in presenting the impact of the middle class and of upper class white males on domestic and foreign policy issues in the Cold War. Authors like Elaine Tyler May in *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* and other works, Robert Dean in *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*, and Joanne Meyerowitz, Emily Rosenberg, and Molly Wood paved the way for other historians to integrate race, class and gender into their studies of diplomatic history.\(^{16}\) May’s work asserts that the rise of a middle class with domesticated wives working in the home happened during and was an integral weapon in the Cold War.\(^{17}\) Her conclusions, by inference, assume a corresponding decrease in power of the upper classes, and contrast with Joanne Meyerowitz’ findings that women were encouraged to participate in the political process more than ever before, or Dean’s picture of upper class white men as the prime power brokers in mid-century America.\(^{18}\) Emily Rosenberg asked if there had “been women’s work in foreign relations,” and Molly Wood answered her in studies about Foreign Service wives’ critical roles in promoting a good American image overseas.\(^{19}\) When such works do explore


gender, however, they focus either solely on upper class white men and middle class white females, or women with specific, prescribed roles as Foreign Service wives, but do not look at upper class women without official diplomatic responsibilities. In the 1950s and into the early 1960s, the upper classes were still at an apex of power, and upper class women (as opposed to movie stars, fashion models, or other celebrities) were cultural and style icons with the money and social connections to influence diplomacy.

Still, general perceptions of women in the early Cold War, particularly between 1945 and the early 1960s, hold that postwar women left their wartime jobs, turning their attention to a more domestically based lifestyle. Popular media reinforced that stereotype in movies, television shows, and magazines. Newer historiography about women’s roles during the Cold War presents a more complicated picture. Especially during the 1950s, “women were using power in various nooks and crannies,” May writes, “to affect the political process.”20 While May’s assertion that some women accepted roles as housewives and mothers is true, her picture of the postwar family is more complicated than it initially appears. May contends that women in the Cold War believed their roles as housewives and mothers were politically significant. Similar to Republican Mothers of the Revolutionary era, their choice of a career inside the home represented a conscious decision to help fulfill an important duty in fighting the Cold War (although of course, Republican Mothers had few other choices in life).21 Additionally, they saw their role as consumers as increasingly important in maintaining the U.S. capitalistic system. Popular


21 May, Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era, xi-xxvi.
media, in her view, reinforced the duties of raising a strong republican family within a
democratic, capitalist society impervious to communism through magazine articles,
advertisements and television shows.

Contesting May’s vision is Joanne Meyerowitz, in her book *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* and her further work challenging Betty Friedan’s research. Meyerowitz argues that women as a rule did not stay home, but instead, somewhat like Kennedy, Radziwill, Alsop, or Tree, took more public, and politically and economically active roles in American society than in previous eras. Similar to the domestic ideal, she asserts that popular media also sanctioned and reinforced women’s political activity and achievements outside the home.\(^\text{22}\) What emerges from this historiographical debate is a complicated portrait of women during the early Cold War. They were traditional, but often saw their embrace of traditional values as a political act. Women were also modern, accepting work outside the home, forging careers, and taking more active roles than ever before in government and politics.\(^\text{23}\)

A study of Cold War upper-class women’s socio-political roles must incorporate both May’s and Meyerowitz’ viewpoints. On the one hand, upper-class women did not generally work outside the home unless they wanted careers (primarily because outside employment was unnecessary), while on the other, they were conscious of a political


slant to their social lives. A close study of magazine articles suggests that as a class, women of leisure understood their dual Cold War roles as representatives of the nation both at home as wives, mothers, and social role models, and abroad as informal ambassadors and consumers with the means to help rebuild economies of foreign nations and promote a favorable American image overseas. This was especially true in the 1950s when air travel became available to a larger public as ticket prices dropped. But, during the early Cold War, when efforts at cultural diplomacy were at their inception, few outside the upper classes could afford such a luxury. Most overseas travel still took place on ocean liners, and even if those in the lower classes could have afforded such accommodations, few might have been able to afford the time it took for such a trip.

Upper class elites, and especially women in this class, had both the money and the leisure time to devote to extensive travel, and to volunteer or other work at home, allowing them to fulfill a role as informal Cold War diplomats.

Although May and Meyerowitz focus on white, middle class women, excluding women in the upper classes, there is an extensive literature on the white male upper class’ impact on foreign policy. Probably the best example of this is Robert Dean’s previously mentioned book *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*. Dean carefully reconstructs the cultural milieu in which government officials like John F. Kennedy, Dean Rusk, and Lyndon B. Johnson were raised. He provides a convincing argument that the values of duty, courage, honor, and sacrifice with which these men were inculcated (particularly through the schools they attended), helped shape
key Cold War foreign policy decisions such as the U.S. entry into Vietnam.\textsuperscript{24} Still, corresponding studies on female counterparts to elite, powerful males do not exist. Conjecture assumes that the wives, mothers, and sisters of these men were raised in similar atmospheres, which incorporated like values aimed at their gender. Lee Radziwill, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Susan Mary Alsop attended elite boarding schools paralleling those described in Dean’s book, and typically attended single-sex universities like their male counterparts.\textsuperscript{25} Marietta Peabody Tree’s grandfather founded Groton, the \emph{ne plus ultra} of upper class boys’ boarding schools, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended grade school. Upper class women’s lives were steeped in similar values, which they put to use in their different Cold War roles.

Little work, then, has been done to uncover the influence on foreign policy of the upper class female counterparts to Dean’s \textit{Imperial Brotherhood}. Molly Wood’s work on the (generally upper class) wives of U.S. diplomats in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries established that women held considerable power in their husband’s diplomatic careers, but there is not much other research examining the informal roles of their “civilian” counterparts as a class.\textsuperscript{26} This is surprising when examining other work by authors like

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} Molly Wood, ““Commanding Beauty” and “Gentle Charm”: American Women and the Early Twentieth Century Foreign Service,” \textit{Diplomatic History}, Volume 31, Number 3, (June 2007), p. 505-530;
\end{itemize}
Edward Said, Andrew Rotter, and Frank Costigliola, because, interestingly, the logic of their studies implies that the idea of using women as informal cultural diplomats made good sense. If, in fact, as these authors assert, men of certain cultures were perceived as soft or effeminate, then it is not such a leap in judgment to assume that using women (consciously or not) to deal or interact with such men (particularly in the case of Jacqueline Kennedy’s 1962 trip to India) was a good idea.27

Taking ideas about gendered diplomacy a step further, Frank Costigliola, in his article “The Nuclear Family: Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance,” even goes so far as to compare the NATO relationship to a marriage. The United States was the husband, and European nations were, in a sense, wives. If his ideas were true, then it would have been logical to utilize upper class women as “informal diplomats,” smoothing the way for the United States to act as a powerful “husband” in world affairs. Theoretically, at least, women understand other women, and upper class women in particular had access to the highest reaches of power. As socially connected women, they could also use, consciously or not, “backdoor” channels to create social relationships with

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power players in Europe, influencing politics through less official means.\textsuperscript{28} In other words, American wives might better relate to European “wives” in the NATO alliance.

In a related area of research, and although they do not touch upon gender or class, are historians who look at the role of travel in fostering international relations. Christopher Endy, for instance, found that the American tourism industry actively worked at promoting travel to France to overcome negative perceptions of Americans in the Fifth Republic. The French government correspondingly tried to counteract the inhospitality of its own citizens toward American tourists to make France a more alluring place for U.S. travelers and their dollars.\textsuperscript{29} Adding to Endy’s picture, Brian McKenzie found that the U.S. government encouraged utilization of Marshall Plan funds toward improved tourism in France between 1948 and 1952. Marshall Plan spending was directed at building new hotels or refurbishing old resorts, and encouraging the creation of more transatlantic flight routes to France. The French tourist industry was not entirely enthusiastic, fearing the effects of Americanization. With that concern in mind, the U.S. government made substantial efforts to overcome French reluctance through advertising and other public relations efforts. The government’s idea was that if more U.S. dollars were spent overseas, fewer Marshall Plan dollars might be needed to rebuild European economies.\textsuperscript{30} These studies indicate a flourishing, but rather broadly based interest in

\textsuperscript{28} Frank Costigliola, “Tropes of Gender and Pathology in the Western Alliance,” \textit{Diplomatic History}, Volume 21, Number 2, (Spring 1997), pp. 163-183.


culture’s integral role in the Cold War.

On a state level, other studies continue in a similar vein by examining the role of big business in creating diplomacy. The work of authors like Nate Citino in *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa’ud, and the Making of U.S. – Saudi Relations* made clear that government and big business, aside from popular media, actively encouraged efforts to build goodwill in oil-producing nations in order to keep a tight control on the world’s oil supply. Karal Ann Marling, in her book *As Seen on TV: the Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*, briefly touched on how the business as diplomacy idea played out in Russia when she described American big-business sponsored cultural exhibitions in the Soviet Union. Marling particularly highlights the political role such exhibitions played in her description of the Nixon-Khrushchev “Kitchen Debates.”

Helena K. Finn took a higher-level look at the topic, and showed that the U.S. covertly supported cultural diplomacy abroad through the CIA and publicly through the U.S. Information Service (USIA) and the Division of Cultural Relations branch of the State Department. She asserted that “cultural diplomacy was a central part” of Cold War strategy in Europe. For example, U.S. soldiers regularly received handbooks on the cultural backgrounds and manners of the nations in which they were stationed, and were urged to exhibit only their best manners and courtesy towards the people of their host.

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nation. None of these studies, however, addressed the role women, particularly those with considerable money and spending power, played overseas, especially as friends to people in high places or as consumers of luxury goods like clothing, perfume and cosmetics, or gourmet foods.

Additionally, while historians like Karal Ann Marling or Nate Citino looked at business’ role in Cold War foreign relations, such studies generally, and often by necessity, centered on men.\(^{33}\) But, a careful study of fashionable magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* indicated that women, too, if the preponderance of articles devoted to the subject are proof, were concerned with foreign affairs. These two magazines, which were primarily aimed at a wealthier audience, ran extensive coverage of foreign policy and international issues, indicating an interested readership. Foreign policy articles tended to be feature length (generally 10,000 words), and prominently placed at the front of each issue. Members of the magazines’ audiences even wrote for *Vogue* or *Harper’s Bazaar*, putting them in a position to shape foreign policy coverage to meet their own interests. Since *Vogue* was published bi-weekly, and *Harper’s Bazaar* was published monthly, this amounts to an extensive database from which can be drawn a nicely rounded picture of the political interests of upper-class readerships as portrayed in the media. From magazine coverage, it can be inferred that upper class women, too, played an important role in fostering healthy Cold War international relations.

Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, Jacqueline Kennedy and their compatriots became superb informal cultural diplomats. Along with their counterparts, \(^{33}\) Nate Citino, in *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa’ud, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2002.)
the group was encouraged by media messages to help smooth out four of the United States’ key diplomatic issues during the Cold War: fostering good relations with the prickly French government and maintaining the U.S./British alliance, especially at significant times like the Suez Crisis in 1956; getting those nations’ economies back on track in the tumultuous postwar period while balancing domestic concerns at home; transforming Germany, Italy, and Japan into domestically acceptable postwar allies; and maintaining or improving the uneasy U.S./Soviet relationship. The four women, and others like them, could support U.S. diplomatic goals by taking an active interest in and cultivating a knowledge of foreign affairs, honing their ability to entertain socially and politically prominent people, presenting a positive image of Americans overseas, and spending money on traveling and luxury goods to reinvigorate potential allies’ economies.

The parameters of upper class women’s prescribed role in diplomacy were clearly outlined in foreign policy articles in the two top fashion magazines of the 1940s and 1950s, Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar, and the papers of the aforementioned socially prominent women, among other sources. The importance of top fashion magazines and the upper class they covered will be discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation. Chapters Two and Three continue on to illustrate what magazine foreign policy coverage had to say about, and how articles in turn shaped, the image upper class women might have had of nations central to the United States’ foreign policy agenda. Next, using popular media’s portrayal of foreign nations in addition to its behavioral guidelines, Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, and Jacqueline Kennedy, along with
their upper class compatriots, went on to exemplify paradigms of behavior for other women in the United States. Chapter Four describes the ways this group lived up to media and society-generated standards dictating how American women should act as politically conscious consumers and overseas representatives of the nation. Chapter Five finishes by addressing how the media encouraged the group and its counterparts to advance foreign policy goals like reshaping the image of Americans abroad from 1945 to the end of the Kennedy presidency in 1963.

While the government and popular culture struggled with whether to present an image of American women as middle class housewives with wide access to educations, homes, and household gadgets, or as elegant, refined, and stylish creatures that were the epitome of the American democratic, capitalistic system, magazines actually show that the latter was the more successful. During the early Cold War, upper class women were at the height of their domestic influence and informal involvement in foreign policy. Periodicals like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* present a picture of a nation of middle class women striving to move up in the world through education, marrying well and helping their husbands’ careers, or even just dressing and behaving like society women to present a positive image of American womanhood. Middle class women also emulated their upper class counterparts through spending, if on smaller scales, on fashions and luxury goods to help the faltering economies of former wartime allies. Their striving upward worked, and European characterizations of American women overseas (as told to American upper class magazine editors) show that the upper class image won out, at least during the early Cold War. This successful image was finally epitomized in Jacqueline
Kennedy’s tenure as first lady. During that era, the upper class was at the zenith of its power, and for a time, at least, that group’s women seemed incredibly successful at combating the image of the “ugly American,” helping further American interests and smooth relations between the U.S. and European nations.
Chapter I

Magazines and American High Society
After the Second World War

Susan Mary Patten began her first post-collegiate job at *Vogue* Magazine in the spring of 1939, when she got a job as a receptionist at the Condé Nast offices for twenty-six dollars a week. Close friend Barbara Cushing (later Paley), already a “glamorous fashion editor” helped Patten get the position, personally asking *Vogue*’s “formidable editor-in-chief Edna Woolman Chase” to bring her on board.¹ *Vogue* employed a staff of young, socially well-connected women, and was famous for discovering and launching the careers of young authors like Truman Capote, so a job there could prove invaluable to the aspiring writer. Patten’s first article was a fashion feature on the future of the open-toed shoe, and she later modeled for *Vogue* (for the then astonishingly high rate of seventy-five dollars an hour) with Cushing and her best friend Marietta Tree. Not long after starting the job, however, Patten married her husband, Bill, ending her formal career at *Vogue* and beginning a life as a foreign service wife that was well documented in its pages.

Patten’s career at *Vogue* was brief but important because it typified that of many other women in her class. *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* both regularly employed upper class women as writers and models. They attended and wrote about society parties for each magazine, traveled to fashionable destinations and reported back on their trips, worked as foreign correspondents, and of course, wore the clothing sold in each publication. Upper class periodicals like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* held a unique position in postwar high society. Their publishers and editors helped create and promote a specific image of a “new” upper class woman who worked outside the home, was politically active, and well educated and cultured. At the same time, however, the image each upheld was in turn refined by upper class readers working as writers and correspondents, fashion editors, and models, and embodying standards they both followed and set.

**Magazines: Target Audience and Impact**

Although both magazines reached a public far outside the social circles Susan Mary Patten and women in her set inhabited, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar’s* core target audience and readership bases provide an excellent overall representation of the characteristics of the Cold War era upper class woman. *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* are two examples of what magazine publishers call “class” (as opposed to mass) publications. Each magazine was, of course, mass produced and sold to a wide variety of people outside the upper class because their publishers were also businessmen out to make a profit. The “class” label simply means that both were created for specifically upper class readerships, using a particular frame of reference those readers easily
understood. Contrasting with the typical fare of middle class women’s interest magazines that published recipes or household and child-rearing advice, editors at “class” periodicals wrote about the rarefied world of fashion, art, music, theater, and world affairs. Because of their unique focus, “class” publications can be an excellent tool for exploring what upper class women thought about not just fashion, but also domestic and international politics, among other topics. Because “class” publications are also considered aspirational; that is, editors present images or standards for readers to work toward or live up to, their content can also provide information about the beliefs and desires of people outside the target audience, but still part of a larger readership.

Magazines, as a vehicle for transmitting popular culture, are important primary resources because they both reflect and can shape their readers’ opinions. Historian Lawrence Levine’s work discussed that dynamic, arguing that consumers leave individual imprints on anything they draw out of popular culture, giving mass produced goods like movies or songs intrinsic meaning as historical resources. Upper class magazines are no different, and might actually be read as relatively direct reflections of what the audience they appealed to believed or felt about the world. Both titles were led by female editors-in-chief and male publishers who were also members of the class reading their publications. Women in the upper classes themselves wrote for both magazines, appeared in society columns, and modeled in their fashion shoots. In this instance, consumers of this particular form of popular culture often were the very same

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people who produced it, making upper class magazines a useful tool for understanding the audience’s mindset.

Circulation figures and corresponding population counts can also provide keys to helping determine the audience’s scope and mindset. Voting patterns and other social demographics are also useful in creating a well-rounded portrait of the typical reader. Circulation figures for *Vogue* magazine were slightly higher than those of *Harper’s Bazaar*, but both magazines reached roughly equal numbers of readers, generally without duplicating content. For the wartime years, figures are harder to come by because both magazines urged women to circulate personal issues to friends and even send them to soldiers overseas. Editors gave this advice in response to a paper shortage that often curtailed each magazine from meeting subscribership demands. Internationally, publication of French and British versions of the magazines was temporarily halted due to wartime constrictions. American *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* (among other magazine titles) became popular gifts for inclusion in overseas care packages because they were otherwise unavailable to Europeans.

In the first few years of the Cold War, readership increased as paper and other rationed goods came back into the marketplace. *Vogue* magazine, for example, saw circulation grow from 241,551 in 1946 to 386,666 by 1949 (a 38 percent readership increase), and *Harper’s Bazaar* had a readership of 204,436 in 1946 and 362,706 in 1949 (a readership boost of 44 percent). When calculating circulation figures, it is also

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3 Association of National Advertisers, *Magazine and Rate Trends: 1940-1965*, (New York: Association of National Advertisers, Inc., 1966), page 98. Circulation figures for magazines during this era were taken only every three years, so the figures available from 1945 to 1947 are from 1946 and 1949; also,
important to figure what is termed a “pass around” rate. The Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC), which tracks magazine circulation figures, estimates that three people tend to read each magazine actually purchased either because issues are passed off to friends after reading or left in places like waiting rooms or doctors’ offices. By this calculation, *Vogue* actually reached approximately 724,653 people in 1946 and 1,159,998 people in 1949 (about one percent of American women in both years). *Harper’s Bazaar* reached approximately 613,308 people in 1946 and 1,088,118 in 1949 (about .08 percent and 1.5 percent of the U.S. female population each year). By 1962, *Vogue’s* circulation was 508,310 (a 47 percent increase since 1946), while *Harper’s Bazaar’s* circulation was 471,031 (a 43 percent increase since 1946), meaning the magazines had respective pass around rates of 1,524,930 and 1,413,093 for that year. By 1962, the U.S. population was about 186,538,000 people (92,066,000 men and 94,472,000 women) meaning each magazine continued reaching a steady target audience of approximately one percent of American women.\(^4\)

According to census figures, there were approximately 100 women for every 98.6 men in 1950 and 1960, so American women clearly presented a significant and potentially politically and economically powerful audience for each periodical. *Vogue* published biweekly, while *Harper’s Bazaar* published monthly, and each provided somewhat different standpoints on fashion or world affairs. Because of their varying perspectives, it can be assumed that although the magazines had similar circulations and

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target audiences, many women read both publications. Additionally, because of pass-around rates, both magazines were probably also read by women outside the subscription group. And with upwards of 73 percent of registered voters participating in presidential and other elections in the 1940s and 1950s, readerships were presumably politically active. Women voters were active participants in the political process who would likely be interested in each magazine’s extensive foreign policy coverage. Comparing early postwar circulation figures to population figures makes it clear that these two magazines reached a small and select but growing, socially influential, and ostensibly politically active readership.

The audience both periodicals reached had other distinguishing characteristics. According to research editors at both magazines, each aimed its content at females in the 18-45-year-old age range. These women were college educated, planning on careers outside the home, and typically of upper class economic standing (although again, this does not mean only upper class women read the magazines). Roland Marchand’s study Advertising the American Dream, Making Way for Modernity: 1920-1940, points out that the economic and social standing of both magazines’ target audience was significant because this class “sponsored fashions for the nation, popularized new forms and places

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6 Telephone conversation with Jill Derryberry at Harper’s Bazaar and Phyllis Ryfield at Vogue February 22, 2002, 10:30am. Both women are research editors at their respective magazines and are in charge of maintaining magazine archives as well as researching historical facts for their magazines’ writers. Also spoke with Derryberry and new Vogue research editor Walter Rosenthal on January 30, 2007 at 2:30pm to re-confirm my statistics.
of amusement, and pioneered new styles of living.”\textsuperscript{7} More importantly, “this class...also exercised influence...as the ‘key people of the country’...far fewer in numbers, [but] vastly more effective in thinking power, in purchasing power, and in the power of leadership.”\textsuperscript{8} Both magazines targeted content at the upper class, and because of that class’ influence, “the rest of the country soon followed” its lead in style, trends, and thinking, giving magazines considerable weight as vehicles for reflecting and influencing the larger culture.\textsuperscript{9} The sway upper class periodicals held was made clear by a notable doctor who, when calling for blood donations, exclaimed that he “was sure that what \textit{Vogue} has to say to women was much more influential than all [other magazines] put together.”\textsuperscript{10}

Both magazines held similar audiences, and doubtless there was readership crossover, so each held comparable consumers in mind for editorial features, fashion shoots, and advertising. \textit{Vogue}’s publisher and owner Condé Nast, for instance, aimed his magazine squarely at the upper classes with the goal of “lift[ing] out of all the millions of Americans just the hundred thousand cultivated persons” to form his readership.\textsuperscript{11} Its editor-in-chief, Edna Woolman Chase, together with Nast, helped create “a magazine


\textsuperscript{8} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{9} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{10} Dr. Irkine H. Page, Dr. Jessie Marmorston, Dr. Irving S. Wright, “Your Heart’s Blood,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 133, 1 January 1959, pp. 114-17, 138, 140.

woven into the American pattern” which “helped shape the taste and manners of America.” In keeping with this point of view, “Vogue coined the phrase ‘the art of gracious living’ to suggest a social atmosphere of luxury and leisure desired by highly cultivated men and women who commanded concentrated buying power.” Harper’s Bazaar, originally published by Harper and Brothers Publishing (who also founded HarperCollins publishing) “was the foremost competitor to Vogue, although it never overtook that magazine in circulation or advertising figures.” Harper’s Bazaar’s target audience was similar to Vogue’s, and “by making no ‘editorial concessions to the masses’ [the magazine] achieved the tone necessary for an effective appeal to [its] discriminating class.” Harper’s Bazaar kept its influential audience in mind at all levels of its business, when it “urged advertisers to cultivate the ‘inner circle,’ the class with the most influential purchasing power, which set the example for the rest of society.” Since both magazines were privately owned and independent of larger conglomerates like Hearst Publications or the Henry Luce owned Time, Inc., editorial and publishing boards held considerable power over content and were less subject to advertiser whims. (Harper’s Bazaar is today owned by Hearst Publications, but Vogue remains part of Condé Nast publications).

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14 Peterson, p. 271.


16 Ibid.
Magazine staff understood their own publications’ reach. In a statement endorsed by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, magazines like *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue* were a “leading force for moral and cultural growth, the bulwarks of our liberty,” and “for more than a century…reflected and helped create living history; helping to mold opinion, manners, taste; helping to sharpen…awareness and understanding of domestic and international problems.” The Office of the Secretary of the Treasury chimed in, emphasizing that magazines embodied “a three-way partnership that benefits everybody: the public, the magazine publishers, and the government” because all three “cooperated to help keep the economy growing always stronger.” And most important, advertising in fashion magazine pages made good sense if businesses wanted to reach women. Advertising is driven by subscription rates, and consistently growing audiences made both magazines important vehicles for businesses wanting to reach a rarefied, moneyed group of consumers. *Vogue* asserted that “among national magazines edited to appeal specifically to women, *Vogue* carry[d] the greatest volume of advertising…and ha[d] done so for years.” In 1954, *Vogue* published 1,696 pages of advertising and *Harper’s Bazaar* ran 1,165 advertisements. With these numbers in mind, *Vogue* asserted “fashion is an amazing selling force,” and of course “advertising in *Vogue* is the best way to use

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this force.”¹⁹ Fashion magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* influenced not just fashion, but also cultural norms and consumer habits.

Understanding the subscribership’s economic standing and purchasing power is important, then, because the select group of women at whom each magazine aimed had money to travel and purchase products advertised or featured in each issue. In 1945, average yearly income was $2,379 per family, with women earning on average $1500 yearly and men on average $2500. Approximately .8 percent of men earned more than $10,000 yearly, and .1 percent of women earned more than $10,000 per year.²⁰ In 1947, average income was $3,031 yearly, and .3 percent of women made $10,000 or more yearly, while 6.1 percent of the male population made $10,000 per year or more. Only .9 percent of families out of the population made an annual income of $25,000 per year or more.²¹ *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar’s* target audiences were those small percentages of women either earning more than $10,000 yearly on their own, or more commonly, married to men earning between $10,000 and $25,000 or more per year.

The magazines’ editors-in-chief and editorial staff during the immediate postwar period were drawn from the small group of socially and economically prominent women with international lifestyles; those small percentages of people earning more than $25,000 annually. *Harper’s Bazaar* had an impressive editorial line up, with Mrs. Carmel Snow

¹⁹ *Vogue* and Audit Bureau of Circulation, “*Vogue Research Report,*” Advertisement, *Vogue*, 15 February 1955, Volume 125, p. 115. Interestingly, *Good Housekeeping* and *Seventeen* Magazines respectively had 1,379 and 1,200 advertising pages in 1954, figures supporting the idea that advertising in fashion magazines was the best way to influence female purchasers.

²⁰ U.S. Census, 1945.

heading the team as editor-in-chief from 1934 to 1958, when her niece Nancy White replaced her. Although from a wealthy family, Snow worked her way up from the mailroom to the top position at the magazine. Harper’s Bazaar’s assistant editor in chief from 1937 until 1962 was the formidable Diana Vreeland (Mrs. Thomas Reed Vreeland), a distant cousin of Pauline de Rothschild of the Rothschild banking family and rumored to be a direct descendant of George Washington. She worked with Snow from 1933 to 1958, but joined Vogue in 1962, where she became the world’s most famous style arbiter.\textsuperscript{22} Vogue’s editor-in-chief from 1914 to 1952 was Edna Woolman Chase, close friend of Parisian designers like Poiret and Chanel, and then Jessica Daves in 1952-1962, when Diana Vreeland took over editorship of that magazine at the end of her Harper’s Bazaar career.

Both editors-in-chief were not only socially prominent, but were also style and opinion arbiters. Each had absolute control over her magazine’s contents, and primarily published articles promoting her own socio-political viewpoints, which were liberal and internationalist. In the fashion world, the two also dictated trends and could, if they so chose, make or break a designer’s career. Carmel Snow fostered the career of influential French designer Christian Dior, and discovered artists from renowned photographer Edward Steichens to the painter Andy Warhol. She published some of Truman Capote’s first short stories, and discovered the actress Lauren Bacall, making her a cover model.

\textsuperscript{22} Sylvia Rubin, “Seeing Fashion in a New Light: Carmel Snow Lived for the Magazine She Brought to Life; A New Book Captures a Largely Forgotten Trendsetter’s Name,” The San Francisco Chronicle, 27 November 2005, p. D-1. To get a good idea of Diana Vreeland’s personality, reference the film Funny Face, with Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, and Audrey Hepburn. Thompson plays the role of a fashion editor and her character is based on Diana Vreeland’s personality (the two were also close friends).
and launching her acting career. Edna Woolman Chase, Snow’s counterpart at *Vogue*, started an innovative women’s executive group called the Fashion Group International in 1928. This group was comprised of female fashion editors and clothing designers interested in promoting American fashion, and still exists today. Chase also internationally popularized modern art, and contemporary architecture from avant garde creators like Mies van der Rohe. Both women increased their magazines’ readerships throughout the Cold War by publishing a potent mix of politics, fashion, and cutting edge art while setting styles in clothing and home furnishings that attracted a diverse audience of internationally-minded women.23

This select audience included wealthy women in the highest income percentage like Susan Mary Alsop or her friends Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Lee Radziwill, all occasional editors, models, and frequent subjects of the magazines’ social pages. All four women traveled the world and set fashion standards even during a time when middle class power and influence presumably was on the rise. Also, as outward style became more important in the conformist 1950s, upper class women inspired others to copy the way they decorated, ate, and lived. Advertising, subscription, and readership numbers make clear that a wide audience of females looked to fashion magazines for ideas not just on how to live, but also on how to buy. Recognizing upper class women’s import in the United States, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* began during the Cold War to actively draw other classes into their readerships through promotional products like patterns home seamstresses in other classes could use to make their own

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European fashions similar to ones upper class women purchased and wore. In the post-and Cold-War eras, American purchasing power could also the dire world economic situation through stimulating foreign industry.

Internationally, each magazine attracted readers by sponsoring special fashion shows at overseas economic fairs or conferences, ensuring women of other classes and nations would not only see current fashions, but also get a taste of the magazines’ political point of view. Involvement overseas also helped encourage American readers to spend dollars on foreign products to help (generally the European) economy. If magazines carried this much influence, the women featured in them, by association, presumably held the power to inspire other women to dress, shop, and live like them. Imitating upper class habits of buying in or from foreign markets like France, Great Britain, and Italy, where upper class women vacationed and shopped, therefore, had global economic and political implications. Magazine editors understood that potential, urging readers throughout the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s to spread American good fortune around the world by buying foreign products. Consumer spending reinvigorated economies and created global goodwill. Because the women were held up as social exemplars, understanding the lives of the four women under investigation, their upbringing, and their roles in society as illustrated by fashion magazines is key to learning how American women helped the world economy and acted as cultural diplomats after the war.

*Portrait of a Lady: The New Postwar Upper Class Woman*
Before their impact on the United States as social and fashion role models can be discussed, understanding the world in which Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, and Jacqueline Kennedy were raised is important. Theirs was admittedly a rarefied world, but also one many Americans during the early Cold War aspired to join (or at least imitate). All four women followed fashion, while at the same time setting it, and they traveled extensively to countries in the direst economic straits after the war, beginning with France and England, and later expanding to Italy. They were products of their upbringing, which shaped the way they presented themselves to the country and around the world, both as fashion plates, and as informal diplomats.

Paul Fussell, in his book *Class: A Guide through the American Status System*, asserts that even though Americans typically dislike the notion that the United States can be a strongly class-based society, it is far more elaborately stratified than most people recognize. In fact, American society is so stratified that Fussell wished “the word caste were domesticated in the United States, because it nicely conveys the actual rigidity of class lines here, the difficulty of moving – either upward or downward – out of the place where you were nurtured.”

Still, many Americans hold fast to a belief in the United States as a melting pot where anyone can become rich with the right amount of hard work and diligence. Of course, in a few special instances, this happens, and people who achieve success are held up as examples of the “American Dream.” In general, the American public is willing to believe in the idea of pulling oneself up by the bootstraps so strongly that some people, even though accepting that poverty exists in the country,

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blame poverty on the poor themselves. Following this train of thought, classes might exist, but they are flexible, and entry is open to all. Fussell proves that idea wrong through his detailed description of a complicated American social structure with almost impenetrable class lines.

Certainly, the class system in the United States was nowhere nearly as rigid as countries like Great Britain, where members of the upper classes even today inherit titles, land, money, and social standing, all of which are usually immutable. In the United States, an upper class of wealth and background with deep roots in the nation’s beginnings grew over time, but compared to England, was not as strictly stratified, nor did it have such a strong societal foundation. By the 19th century, however, this class in the United States was firmly enough entrenched in the social structure it developed its own strict set of social rules, rituals, and behaviors for its members. Entry was limited to an exclusive few families not only of significant wealth, but also of prominent lineage.

The American upper class’ power grew to an apex during the Cold War, and while names like Peabody, Jay, or Bouvier might not be familiar to Americans today, they were as well known to Americans of the late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s as names like Donald Trump or Oprah Winfrey are today. The major difference in today’s class system is that even though it is just as stringently stratified, it is based more on wealth or fame, and entry into the upper class does not necessarily require an established family pedigree.25 But during the early Cold War, “there was still a strict class structure in the

United States…a frontier that the middle class didn’t dare cross” but desperately wanted to emulate.26 Fussell supports the idea of a complicated American social system established in the late 19th century and lasting until today. He also delineates each class’ manners and mores and the limited ways in which people could (and indeed, wanted to) move upward through the system. Although Hollywood’s image of “high society…diving tipsily and fully dressed into a pool” was “recognized all over the world,” periodicals like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* presented a far different picture of that class.27 In *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster*, author Dana Thomas echoes Fussell’s work, detailing the post-war class structure and asserting that “luxury was something you really wanted. You looked at society’s ladies and you wanted to live like them.”28 *Harper’s Bazaar* went so far as to identify the epitome of the upper class, the “debutante, [as]…America’s golden girl.”29

Even if they might not reach the upper class, however, American middle class women could emulate its “golden girls” through the way they dressed, from their sweaters right down to their underwear. A Peck and Peck clothing advertisement, for example, claimed that even though “your ancestors may not have come over on the Mayflower, your Braemer (sweater) did!” The Scottish cashmere manufacturer ingeniously appealed to a middle class desire to at least appear well-bred by exporting its


27 Staff Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, July 1956, Volume 128, pp. 84-85.


sweaters on the Mayflower II. A Maidenform bras advertisement in 1955 perfectly captured the desire to emulate high society’s ladies when it featured a model in its newest brassiere exclaiming “I dreamed I was a social butterfly in my Maidenform bra.” Warner’s, another undergarment maker, chimed in, declaring “Warner’s beautiful bras put any lovely at the head of the upper class.” During the 1950s, at least as seen in advertisements like these, class carried weight, and women wanted so much to be like the ladies they saw in magazines, they might even purchase their same brand of clothing.

During the post World War II era, unlike today, membership in the upper class required more than just money; it was also dependent upon family background, behavior, and adherence to a rigid set of social and ethical principles. These principles were taught in elite male boarding schools like Groton, Exeter, and Andover, or at their female counterparts Miss Porter’s, Foxcroft, and St. Timothy’s, to name just a few. Male and female private boarding schools were fashioned after the British model of public schools, which inculcated students from a young age with the values of their class. Places like these espoused “the highest standards of academic achievement, intellectual growth,

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31 Maidenform, “Maidenform Bras,” Advertisement, *Vogue*, 1 September 1955, Volume 126, page 44. This advertisement was just one in a well-known series featuring women “dreaming” they were social butterflies, ambassadors, or even presidents dressed only in underwear that ran throughout the 1950s.

ethical awareness and behavior, sportsmanship, athletic endeavor and service to others,”
or “challenge[s]…to become informed, bold, resourceful, and ethical…citizens.33

Robert Dean describes male private boarding schools in his book *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy*, but neglects to examine their female counterparts, which taught the same values using much the same means.34 Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, and Lee Radziwill attended similar schools and were indoctrinated with their values through methods like those Dean identified in male boarding schools. Similar to Groton, Exeter, or Andover, women’s boarding schools had secret societies, valued intellectual achievement, and lauded athletic prowess and good sportsmanship. Marietta Tree (then Peabody), for example, was most well known not for her slender five foot ten inch figure, thirty-nine inch bust, and beautiful face, but rather for her considerable skills on the lacrosse field and her good sportsmanship during games.35 As Dean pointed out, admittance to elite male boarding schools was limited to a select class of men, and for women, standards were no different. Acceptance to boarding schools like Foxcroft (Susan Mary Alsop), St. Timothy’s (Marietta Tree), or Miss Porter’s School (Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier) required money and an appropriate social pedigree.


Fussell points out that in the pre- and post-World War Two worlds social breeding was largely determined not just by wealth, but also by family heritage. To keep tabs on family heritage, as well as births, marriages, and deaths within the upper strata of society, a circular developed called the *Social Register*. The *Social Register* has somewhat murky origins, but was (and is still) distributed only to the families whose names appear within its pages. It acts as a sort of “yellow pages” for the upper class. Membership in the *Social Register* could not be bought, and neither was it guaranteed (acceptance is not guaranteed today, but members must pay a fee), but everyone among a certain class knew which families belonged in the *Social Register*. Removal from the *Social Register* was so scandalous it meant eradication of a family’s place in the elaborate upper class social structure.\(^{36}\)

The *Social Register* was first published in 1886 and in most accounts of its heritage, began as a list of the most prominent four hundred families in New York. The American *Social Register* was modeled on England’s publication, *Burke’s Peerage*, which listed the names, titles, and interrelations of British nobility. Unlike *Burke’s Peerage*, however, the American *Social Register* ostensibly originated from visiting lists prominent hostesses kept to let their staff know preferred guests, or which persons were not allowed entry into the household on calling or visiting days. From these visiting lists, Louis Keller, a sort of Victorian “man about town” with wide social acquaintances (but

\(^{36}\) The *Social Register*’s hold over society lasted until the early 1980s. It was broken when Cornelia Guest, daughter of fashion icon and Boston blueblood Lucy Cochrane Guest and Winston Frederick Churchill Guest wrote the book, “A Debutante’s Guide to Life,” skewering the debut process. The book got her family expelled from the social register, but their influence was such and the upper class system was waning so much that it hardly mattered for either Guest’s social life. Cornelia Guest, *A Debutante’s Guide to Life*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1986).
interestingly, dubious family heritage and little money) created an intricate compilation
of people in high society.\(^{37}\) The first list of socially prominent families on the register
consisted mostly of the descendants of New York City’s Dutch and English settlers (also
known as “Knickerbockers” for the knickers, or short pants that they wore during leisure
activities), but grew to include founding families from Boston, Philadelphia, and San
Francisco. Until the 1960s, membership in New York, however, was limited to four
hundred families (not all necessarily from New York), and popular legend holds that this
number arose from the size of Mrs. Caroline Webster Schermerhorn Astor’s (Mrs.
William Backhouse Astor Jr. of Waldorf-Astoria fame) ballroom, which could hold only
four hundred people. The compilation of this list was even marked as a “New York
Milestone,” when “New York society took its name and number.”\(^{38}\)

By the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the list included some prominent families from
Boston (generally families who could trace their lineage back to the Mayflower), and
Philadelphia (families called “mainliners” because they lived close to the main line of the
city’s major railway). Membership in the *Social Register*, however, was not a given for
prominent families, nor was it always permanent. Wealth certainly helped, but family
heritage and adherence to a set of unacknowledged, but well-known social codes

\(^{37}\) The Social Register Association, *The Social Register: A Brief History of the Association*, (Privately Published: New York, 2007). Among the upper classes, there is a breed of gentleman who has had access to the wealthy, even though he himself was not wealthy or prominent. Usually, these types of men, nicknamed “walkers,” escorted wealthy women to parties when their husbands were unable to attend, and were kept around for their style, wit, or even because they knew scandalous gossip about the ladies on whom their social lives depended. The writer Truman Capote is probably the most famous example of this type of society gentleman, who was often homosexual (and therefore a safe escort for a married woman, in the arts, or simply a bachelor about town with previous social standing, but no money.

mattered more for membership. Expulsion could occur if a member chose a certain career, such as acting, or behaved in a socially unacceptable manner, like obtaining a divorce (although this unspoken rule was tacitly relaxed during the 1930s). Certain rules loosened during the post and Cold War eras, but families could still be expunged for social deviances, which meant loss of class status. Today, guidelines for admittance are less strict, and although the Social Register still functions as a sort of telephone book for the upper class, it now includes over 20,000 names and has much less social influence. Membership today is also, in most cases, a paid privilege. Women like Susan Mary Jay, Marietta Peabody, or Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier descended from families who either helped found the nation and its prominent institutions, or made names for themselves in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Their family names were included in the Social Register from its first publication, so each woman’s class standing was unquestionable. Women of their background and with money grew up in a rigid social system that prescribed certain behaviors similar to those of the men they married, such as respect for duty, honor, and public service.

Upper class women, though, were raised with an added set of social pressures – to get married, and to marry “well.” Their families, with few exceptions, rarely would have allowed marriage outside their social class, and with its behavioral and social codes, women were unlikely, in any event, to meet men outside a select group of bachelors. Since most went to gender-segregated schools, the upper class developed an elaborate set of rituals (based on the English debut system) for introducing men and women, with the intention that most would meet and marry one another. Starting in elementary school,
children attended weekly ballroom dance lessons to prepare them for later weekly dances, or cotillions, informally given by class parents. Then, beginning at age sixteen (or eighteen if the girl in question aspired to graduate high school and attend college), an elaborate system of debuts followed by a season of parties developed. A debut party, generally held by a girl’s parents or a close relation, introduced her to society as ready for marriage. Then, a following round of constant social engagements for young women (called a girl’s “season”) introduced them, from the time of their debut, to appropriate, and sufficiently wealthy, males. The debut system ensured that upper class families kept close ties with one another, did not bring outsiders into the social fold, and that they learned the manners and behaviors expected of their set.

Magazines like *Vogue* or *Harper’s Bazaar* diligently recounted upper class women’s debuts, marriages, parties, and later, careers or social work. By the beginning of the Cold War, articles in both magazines indicated that women were expected to entertain smoothly at a moment’s notice, run large households full of servants, help their husband’s careers, perhaps hold their own jobs, and volunteer for charity organizations. They could even, like Washington society hostesses Mrs. Carolyn Hagner Shaw, or Mrs. Morris “Buffy” Cafritz, influence politics through projects like Mrs. Shaw’s “Social List of Washington,” a list of influential people that was somewhat like the *Social Register*, or informally run salons like Buffy Cafritz. Mrs. Cafritz was known for her dinners that mixed ambassadors, cabinet members, and congressmen from both political parties in

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39 The idea of becoming a debutante was so popular in the culture of young American women, in fact, that a line of cosmetics aimed at young women, called “Debutante,” was advertised almost monthly in *Harper’s Bazaar* beginning in the late 1940s and well into the 1950s.
groups that often reflected her own or her husband’s political interests. Indeed, according to Joanne Meyerowitz, “the postwar popular magazines were …unequivocally positive on increased participation of women in politics,” even if that meant simply supporting her husbands’ career through hosting political salons and dinners with influential guests. Later on, Susan Mary Alsop would carry on in Cafritz’ footsteps, becoming one of Paris’ most celebrated hostesses and a prominent Washington, D.C. hostess whose dining room often doubled for a diplomatic conference space.

Of course, Radziwill and Kennedy were some of the most high profile, but not the only women, to act as informal cultural diplomats during the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s. Hundreds of other upper class women similarly participated in this trend throughout the era. Radziwill and Kennedy were fabulous representatives of this movement, as were the two other women, philanthropist, hostess, writer and Washington socialite (the previously mentioned Mrs. Susan Mary Alsop), and her best friend, Marietta Peabody Tree, socialite, presidential campaign worker (for both Adlai Stevenson’s campaigns), and representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. These four women represented their class in a number of ways -- through association with powerful men, business and philanthropic acumen, their reign as social queens in New York, Washington D.C., Paris, and London, and most important,
international travels and associations. Additionally, all were bona fide members of the social register, so their class status and standing were incontestable.\textsuperscript{42}

When looking at women as a group, it is important to note that naturally, not all women belonged to the middle classes, even though the 1950s is often thought of as the era of the middle class homemaker. Of course, all classes of women had significant socio-political roles to play in the Cold War, but upper class women in particular are an interesting group deserving further study for a number of reasons. Despite the fact that they admittedly made up only a small portion of the overall female population, their influence was extensive. Featured in a variety of magazine articles and advertisements during the war, they set the styles in fashion and beauty, as well as in other areas like war work or volunteering.

Additionally, upper class women like the four mentioned above were married to wealthy husbands, many of whom worked in the government or in other positions of power. Therefore, even if their effects on the government and diplomacy were indirect, they could, presumably, have select powers to affect certain political events through influence with their husbands. Most importantly, upper class women’s roles appear markedly different from those delineated for middle class women. From the articles

\textsuperscript{42} Various Contributors, \textit{The Social Register} (Independently Published), 1918-2006. The Social Register is a listing of the names and addresses of the social elite, some of whom are well known, but most of whom are not, except to people who read social pages in newspapers. It had more influence in the mid-twentieth century than it does today, and removal from the Social Register could cause scandal and social ostracism for a family. The Social Register originated in 1886, when a German-American named Louis Keller, friend of Mrs. John Jacob Astor, counted the number of couples that could fit in her ballroom, which totaled 400. Afterward, anyone invited to her home became known as one of “the 400,” or in other words, one of the wealthiest families in New York, and acceptance into this group was formalized by the Social Register, which listed the names of these families. See also, Justin Kaplan, \textit{When the Astors Owned New York: Blue Bloods and Grand Hotels in the Gilded Age} (New York: Viking Press, 2006).
examined, it seems clear that unlike middle class women who might be home bound, upper class women like these four had a different and more elite role. Their money and social positions allowed them to travel, work without pay, or otherwise subtly influence politics in different ways from their middle class counterparts. As influential informal cultural diplomats, Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, and Jacqueline Kennedy embodied the upper class values they represented. Their backgrounds and upbringing, although individual to each, were similar to those of other women who formed the American upper class social set and therefore bear further exploration.

Like many of their contemporaries, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* faithfully chronicled the lives of Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Bouvier, and Lee Bouvier. Articles and fashion spreads provide an interesting perspective on these four women’s lives as exceptionally gifted social and fashion role models. First, each woman’s evolving fashion sensibilities were recorded soon after their marriages. But more than this, fashion magazines documented each woman’s daily life, including the births of children, the decoration of homes, divorces, remarriages, and paid or unpaid careers outside the home. Like their contemporaries, all four set styles in decorating, entertainment, and, most importantly, fashion, where upper class women helped extensively to boost the economies of suffering Allied nations (particularly France, the center of fashion) in the postwar period. Later, as world travel became easier and less expensive, they became important examples of how Americans should travel and behave overseas. Examining all four women’s lives through magazine coverage explains how they may have fulfilled, consciously or unwittingly, roles as informal cultural diplomats.
Mrs. Susan Mary Patten Alsop was probably the most socially prominent, if least well known, of the four representatives of upper class women. She was truly an American blueblood, but also, according to biographer Susan Braudy, was “the darling of postwar Paris diplomatic circles,” “JFK’s favorite Georgetown hostess,” and later in life, “an acclaimed author.” Born in Rome in 1918 to Peter Augustus Jay and Susan McCook Jay, Alsop grew up among powerful people around the world. She was related to Founding Father John Jay and to the once richest man in the world John Jacob Astor. Alsop’s father was U.S. Ambassador to England in the 1920s and later U.S. Ambassador to Argentina. She attended the prestigious Foxcroft School in Virginia. Alsop spent winters in Maine with her mother after her father died at age 56, and summers in Paris with a wealthy aunt. She cultivated a passion for politics and international affairs through her early travels and education, and often heartily debated issues with friends like Marietta Peabody Tree beginning in high school and throughout the rest of her life.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, Mrs. Alsop was close friends with Marietta Peabody Tree, wife of CIA spymaster Desmond FitzGerald, Babe Cushing, wife of CBS Chairman Bill Paley, and Lady Diana Duff Cooper, British socialite and actress. Although Alsop did not attend college, she did, according to her biographer, completely master her foremost passion, diplomatic history. Her first marriage was to Bill Patten on October 28, 1939. Patten became a foreign-service reserve officer to the U.S. embassy in

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44 Braudy, “Camelot’s Second Lady,” p. 159.
Paris in 1945 and later worked for the World Bank. Mrs. Patten, who took naturally to the
diplomatic life in which she was raised, became the most popular diplomatic hostess
Paris had seen to date. She hosted, for example, Chip Bohlen, Head of the Military
Assistance Program for France, and held embassy parties for Secretary of State George
Marshall. She even threw the first postwar ball (a charity benefit for orphans) in Paris.
Alsop had two children, Bill Patten Jr. in 1948 (whose father was rumored to be British
Ambassador to France and husband of one of her best friends, Lady Diana Duff-Cooper,
Sir Duff-Cooper), and Anne Patten (fathered by Bill Patten) in 1950.

When her husband Bill Patten died of asthma complicated by emphysema in
1960, Mrs. Patten almost instantly received a second marriage proposal from one of her
husband’s best friends, powerful New York Times writer Joseph Alsop. Because he was a
homosexual, Alsop needed a socially “appropriate” wife to allow him continued access to
Washington social and diplomatic circles, particularly during the hyper-masculine
Kennedy administration, and Susan Mary Patten perfectly fit the bill. Alsop pursued Mrs.
Patten for over a year, and they were married in 1961. The union in turn provided her
access to Washington notables like Senator William J. Fulbright, Lyndon B. Johnson,
Kay Graham (owner of the Washington Post), and columnist Ben Bradlee, all of whom
fed Alsop’s need for intellectual stimulation and a sense of socio-political power as a sort
of Washington saloniste. Alsop’s most famous and powerful acquaintance was, of course,
President John F. Kennedy, who liked her style, wit, and intelligence. The two were often
seated together at dinner parties or official functions, and she befriended Jacqueline
Kennedy to assuage her fears that Alsop and Kennedy might be having an affair.
Susan Mary Alsop left Joseph Alsop in 1972 and went on to become a noted amateur historian, with four books and seventy articles for *Architectural Digest* to her credit.  

Mrs. Alsop died at the age of 86 on 14 August 2004. According to her biographer, her political influence was more than immense; “Henry Kissinger wrote to Alsop’s [son] Bill Patten, ‘It is safe to say that more questions of policy were discussed around her table than at any diplomatic conference.’” This quotation, more than anything, sums up the manner in which Mrs. Susan Mary Alsop (and many other upper class women) exerted informal diplomatic power throughout the Cold War.

Alsop began her career in the public eye as a receptionist at *Vogue* in 1939, later working as a fashion editor and paid model with her friend Babe Paley. In their first modeling assignment, the two modeled ball gowns at the New York World’s Fair for the then extravagant rate of seventy-five dollars an hour. Her work at *Vogue* helped Susan Mary Jay (her maiden name) begin to establish herself as a fashion role model.  

After marriage to William Patten, Susan Mary Patten first appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* in May 1945, when she was featured as “The Young Perfectionist.” The spread pictured Patten at the American Embassy, shortly before she and her husband left for diplomatic service in France. It discussed her wardrobe choices for her future role as a foreign services...

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officer’s wife. Patten again appeared the next year, in the June 1946 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*. She and her husband were firmly settled in Paris (attached to the American Embassy), and had a circle of influential friends including the likes of Lady Diana Duff-Cooper. In this feature, Patten modeled a Pierre Balmain ball gown, from one of the designer’s first postwar collections, important because it re-established the house as one of the first to open its doors after the war. The photograph was accompanied by Alsop’s suggestions on how to extend the life of a ball gown by adding different accessories. In her view, if women could only afford one ball gown, it was important to purchase the best quality and make it last by creating a different look with each wearing. Additionally, since fabric was still scarce, one gown might be all that was available for purchase at the time. Patten knew the ramifications of her appearances in fashion photo shoots, remarking to her friend Marietta Tree, “I shall be all over the fashion magazines this spring, and you will be ashamed of me, but it does help [the French economy].”

Patten’s first social triumph in Paris, which solidified her reputation as one of the most popular hostesses in the city and among diplomatic circles, was chronicled in the September 1946 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*. Patten held the first of what became a series of annual balls, called the “Pré Catalan,” an “elegant masked ball organized for the

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children of Lorraine.”52 (Actually, the ball was almost an abject failure until Patten’s friend Lady Diana Duff-Cooper intervened, creating a tumult for invitations to the ball, which went on to raise 600,000 francs for displaced French children).53 The magazine, of course, mentioned none of her difficulties, instead hailing the ball as a complete success and a shining example of an American contributing to the postwar French economy by helping its children. Not long after that, and largely because of her ball’s success, in November 1946 Vogue hailed Patten as “one of the most popular hostesses in Paris,” with “flawless French and fresh good looks.”54 Because she spent much of her time raising children in France, and nursing her husband, who was ill with severe asthma, Patten appeared in magazines somewhat less frequently than her contemporaries. As a foreign service wife, she was still influential as a fashion model and informal cultural diplomat, however, helping promote the houses of Balmain and Dior in France and the United States and charming luminaries like Winston Churchill. Her husband’s death in 1959 curtailed many of her social activities, but after her 1961 marriage to Joseph Alsop, Susan Mary Patten’s social and political influence was rekindled. For instance, and initially

52 Staff Editor, “For the First Time Since 1939, Paris Has Had a Season,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 80, Number 2817, September 1946, p. 222. When Lady Duff-Cooper learned that no one in Parisian society had agreed to come to her friend’s charity ball, she stepped in by asking her own friends if they had their masks created for the ball. When they replied they had not, she informed them that every couturier in Paris was booked to make masks for other attendees (none were even aware of the event at the time), and perceiving the ball to be an exclusive event, upper class women around Paris scrambled to attend, spending fabulous amounts of money on their costumes and donating even more to Alsop’s charity, which ended up raising 600,000 francs for the orphans of Lorraine. From Susan Braudy, “Camelot’s Second Lady,” Vanity Fair, Number 546, February 2006, pp. 164, 166.

53 Ibid.

because he liked her style, Susan Mary Patten (then Alsop) even became an inside member of President John F. Kennedy’s inner circle.  

Marietta Endicott Peabody Fitzgerald Tree traveled in the same circles as Susan Mary Alsop, and had the New England pedigree to match her lifelong best friend’s social background. Marietta was born on 17 April 1917 in Lawrence, Massachusetts to the Reverend Malcolm Peabody and Mary Peabody, a civil rights activist. The Peabodys were one of the oldest families in the United States and had a long history of public service. The public service ideal was an integral part of her upbringing from birth, influencing her later careers. Tree’s grandfather, the Reverend Endicott Peabody, founded and was the first headmaster of the Groton School, which educated future politicians like Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the responsibilities expected from privileged young American men, like duty, honor, and manliness. Marietta Tree attended Groton’s sister school, St. Timothy’s, where she was inculcated with many of the same ideals of public service, duty to country, and honor. Her four brothers attended Groton, and went either into the clergy, business, or politics. Devoutly interested in politics, “every week she rushed to the faculty room where the one copy of *Time* magazine was kept…and devoured it, cover to cover.”  

After high school, Marietta Tree toured Europe and then put her political enthusiasm to use working as a research editor for *Life* Magazine and as an occasional model and editor for *Vogue* Magazine. During the war, she also volunteered at the New York City Office of Inter-American Affairs, a position

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obtained through her friendship with Nelson Rockefeller. Before marriage, Tree attended the University of Pennsylvania and after marriage, Barnard College in New York, but quit both before graduation.

Tree’s first marriage was to Harvard graduate Desmond Fitzgerald on 2 September 1939. Fitzgerald, like many of his friends, served in the Second World War, and later went on to become one of the founding members of the CIA. Together, the couple had a daughter, Frances Fitzgerald (the respected historian and Pulitzer Prize winner for her book *Fire on the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*).

During the war, Marietta worked as a fact checker for *Life* Magazine, while on the side volunteering in New York planning programs in the inner city, which fostered a lifelong passion for promoting education for the underprivileged and for civil rights activism. Upon returning from the war, Desmond Fitzgerald demanded his wife end her career, which, combined with his uncontrolled drinking habit, ultimately caused the demise of their marriage. Later, on 26 July 1947, she married Ronald Arthur Lambert Field Tree, the heir to the Marshall Field’s department store fortune and former worker in the Ministry of Information under Winston Churchill.

During the 1950s, Marietta Tree had another child, Penelope, a 1960s top model, and while raising her two children, worked for the Democratic State Committee and later, on the two presidential campaigns of Adlai Stevenson. (Stevenson was also rumored to be her lover, and she was at his side in London when he died in 1965). During the 1960s, President John F. Kennedy appointed her as the United States Representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, where she labored for the passage of
the Bill of Human Rights and for religious and women’s freedoms around the world.

When her husband Ronald Tree died in 1976, Marietta supported herself through work on the boards of companies like Pan Am and CBS while remaining closely involved in politics, particularly focusing on civil rights. She died of cancer on 15 August 1991 at the age of seventy-four.57

Tree made her first appearance in *Vogue* in the November 1946 issue, shortly after she became Mrs. Desmond Fitzgerald. She was featured in a spread with Mrs. Barbara (“Babe”) Cushing Mortimer and Mrs. Palmer Dixon in fashions bearing a Spanish influence. Her blonde good looks and tall, lean figure made her a natural model, and in addition to *Vogue*, she appeared in *Harper’s Bazaar* after the war in the March 1947 issue, when she was featured for her work as a member of the board of Sydenham Hospital in New York. The hospital was a charity organization for underprivileged youth in African-American neighborhoods.58 After divorce and a second marriage to Mr. Ronald Tree, former husband of Nancy Tree, and son-in-law of Lady Astor, Tree’s new home, Ditchley Park (also spelled Dytchley in England), was the scene of a multi-page fashion and decoration feature. Ditchley Park, “one of England’s Great houses,” was photographed from every angle, each room declared “period perfect.”59 This description applied to the new lady of the manor herself, in a portrait taken in her green dining room. Tree was regally posed on an antique sofa in a sweeping ball gown. Great care was taken

57 Seebohm, *No Regrets: The Life of Marietta Tree*.


to mention that Winston Churchill, for whom her husband worked during the war, often visited the home.\textsuperscript{60}

In 1949, the Trees sold Ditchley Park (like many other British manor houses after the war, Ditchley Park became too expensive to maintain) to move to the United States. Before this, the couple threw a combination farewell party for the home and a welcome party for Miss Melissa Weston, the 1949 \textit{Vogue} “Prix de Paris” winner serving at an internship in France and England. Miss Weston wrote a report about the party, including a lavish description of the house, the hospitality of her hosts, and the sparkling guests, which included Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, in a letter to \textit{Vogue} reporting on the London Season.\textsuperscript{61} After establishing themselves in the United States, Tree appeared in the July 1951 issue of \textit{Harper's Bazaar} modeling an evening gown in the doorway to her new home in New York, the “scene of many brilliant gatherings,” of politically influential men and women.\textsuperscript{62}

In New York, Marietta Tree began a new career as a political hostess, using contacts she met through her husband, a former advisor to Churchill. Tree’s new apartment was portrayed in \textit{Vogue} as a comfortable home, decorated in her individual style with “treasures from Ditchley Park.”\textsuperscript{63} In this article, \textit{Vogue} also carefully

\begin{footnotes}
\item[63] \textit{Ibid}.
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delineated her lineage, making sure readers knew she was the former Miss Marietta Endicott Peabody, granddaughter of Groton’s famous headmaster, Dr. Endicott Peabody, and that her husband’s maternal grandfather was Mr. Marshall Field, founder of the Marshall Field department stores. By the mid-1950s, the Trees recovered their finances enough to purchase a second home in Barbados, featured in a multi-page spread in the May 1954 issue of Harper’s Bazaar. Lillian Bassman, the magazine’s photographer, caught images of Marietta, her husband, two children, Frances Fitzgerald and Penelope Tree, and her daughter-in-law Lady Anne Tree, in and about the property on the newly-fashionable island. The home was later converted into a hotel called “Sandy Lane,” and run solely by Marietta’s husband, Ronald Tree. The couple had, for all intents and purposes, separated by the late 1950s, when Marietta began working for the Adlai Stevenson campaign, entering into a rumored affair with the candidate. After this, while “Sandy Lane” was often featured as a popular travel destination, Tree fell out of the fashion pages, but her work with Stevenson cemented a new political influence, and both magazines reported her activities in this arena (as did more news-oriented publications like Time or Newsweek).

Much like her friend Susan Mary Alsop and acquaintance Marietta Peabody Tree, Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy Onassis also gained fame and influence through her husbands or lovers. Like Alsop and Tree, among other women of her class, she had the

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64 Home and Garden Editor, “The New York Home of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Tree,” Vogue, 1 November 1954, Volume 124, pp. 112-15.


66 Travel Editor, “Sandy Lane,” Harper’s Bazaar, December 1960, Volume 94, Number 2989, p. 70.
social standing and later, the fortune, to run her own life and exert socio-political
influence through acquaintances separate from those of her husband. Jacqueline
Kennedy’s life story is probably better known than those of the other three women simply
because it was so well documented in paparazzi photographs, magazine articles, and
biographies. Jacqueline Lee Bouvier was born on 28 July 1929 in Southampton, New
York, to John “Black Jack” Vernou Bouvier III and Janet Norton Lee Bouvier (later
Auchincloss Morris). She and her sister were related to the Lee family of Virginia and
supposedly, to French nobility on her father’s side of the family. She attended the posh
Chapin School in New York City, and later, the socially exclusive Miss Porter’s
Finishing School in Farmington, Connecticut. Kennedy attended Vassar College and
graduated from George Washington University with a degree in French literature. Her
ability fluently to speak French, Spanish, and Italian would later greatly benefit her
husband’s political career. Before marriage, though, she was offered a job as an editor at
Vogue Magazine after winning that magazine’s prestigious Prix de Paris essay contest,
but instead accepted a position as a news photographer at The Washington Times-Herald.
Her last assignment at the paper (before her marriage) was to cover the 1953 coronation
of Queen Elizabeth II.

Jacqueline Bouvier married John F. Kennedy in September 1953, and with him
had four children, two of whom died at birth. As a mother, she fiercely protected her two
living children, John Jr. and Caroline, from the spotlight. As a wife, by contrast, Mrs.
Kennedy greatly aided her husband’s political career (and often her own cultural causes)
by helping him as a fundraiser, hostess, writer, and television guest. As First Lady, she
became a crucial aid to her husband’s career as an informal diplomat with Soviet leaders like Vyacheslav Molotov and Nikita Khrushchev as well as French leaders like Charles de Gaulle and André Malraux. All were taken with Mrs. Kennedy’s charm, ability easily to converse in their languages, and her intelligent inquisitiveness. They were also impressed by her efforts to bring culture and the arts to the Kennedy White House. Jacqueline Kennedy was particularly crucial to the U.S. relationship with France both because she loved Parisian haute couture clothing and spent a great deal of her clothing budget there, and because the French people were taken with her style and wit, even if they at times disliked her husband and country. In fact, much of the time, anywhere her husband could not form good political relations, she was often able smoothly to exert her intelligence, wit, and charm to befriend difficult leaders.

After Kennedy’s death, Jacqueline Kennedy married Greek shipping tycoon (and opera star Maria Callas’ lover) Aristotle Onassis in 1968, divorcing him just before his death in 1975. Her companion from then on was Belgian industrialist Maurice Tempelsman. She worked as an editor at Doubleday books from the mid-1970s until her death in 1994, continuing to associate with the rich, famous, and socially elite throughout that time.\footnote{There are numerous biographies of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, written by everyone from her most hated paparazzi to her social secretary Letitia Baldridge. Probably the best of these is Janice Pottker’s \textit{Janet and Jackie: The Story of a Mother and Her Daughter}, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2001); Letitia Baldridge’s, \textit{A Lady First: My Life in the Kennedy White House and the American Embassies of Paris and Rome}, (New York: Viking Press, 2001); and Donald Spato’s \textit{Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis: A Life}, (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2001).} She represented upper class women of her time in that she married well (although not always happily), had money, style, and connections, and served as a helpmeet to her husband’s career, but also wanted to work on her own. Kennedy had a
unique influence on international relations, however, particularly when she became First Lady.

From the time of their late 1940s debuts, Jacqueline and her sister Lee Bouvier were fashion magazine favorites, and both had similar first features after their coming out parties, showing each girl’s clothing selections for the round of her season’s events. Because they were best friends and rarely went out without one another, Jacqueline and her sister usually appeared in both magazines together early on, although occasionally, Lee Bouvier was featured on her own, particularly when she married Prince Stanislas Radziwill in the late 1950s. As Jacqueline’s social star rose higher than her sister’s throughout the late 1950s, though, each was photographed increasingly on her own. (By the 1960s, after Jacqueline Kennedy and Lee Radziwill’s trip to India and Jacqueline Kennedy’s marriage to Aristotle Onassis, her sister’s former lover, the sisters were rumored to have had a split and supposedly rarely spoke to one another until Jacqueline’s death in 1994). Jacqueline Kennedy, by the time of her husband’s presidency, was a master at utilizing the press, and particularly fashion magazines, to promote her husband’s career and her own social causes.

While neither sister (as did Susan Mary Alsop or Marietta Tree) worked specifically as clothing models for either magazine, Harper’s Bazaar and Vogue regularly consulted Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier (among its usual coterie of other prominent socialites) about fashion tips and clothing choices, and both appeared in their social columns most seasons. Harper’s Bazaar, for example, detailed Jacqueline Bouvier’s wardrobe choices for the holidays in its December 1947 issue, detailing the
dress selections she made for the round of social engagements she and her sister attended during Jacqueline’s debut season. In the mid-1950s, as her husband’s political career was on the rise, Harper’s Bazaar began detailing Jacqueline Kennedy’s social life with ever-greater attention. When her career took on a more political tone, the magazine also made sure to emphasize not only Jacqueline Kennedy’s looks, but also her intelligence. For example, Harper’s Bazaar was careful to note, in its coverage of the 1956 conventions, that “Mrs. John F. Kennedy [had] good looks reinforced by brains…once a Washington newspaper woman, she [now] takes a politically educated interest in her husband’s career.” In Vogue, Kennedy’s portrait by the artist René Bouché was accompanied by a description of her “straight out beauty with three extra qualities; brains, gentleness, and charm.” Of course, few publications of any genre forgot to emphasize Jacqueline Kennedy’s beauty, and Harper’s Bazaar even featured her in an article on different types of beauty – “the Six Faces of Beauty,” along with notable and prominent socialites like Mrs. Patrick Guinness and Mrs. William “Babe” Paley.

Jacqueline Kennedy’s greatest press relationship was with Vogue, however, in which she appeared multiple times, generally in the social pages or in political profiles, and for which even her husband contributed articles. Again, she and her sister were first

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70 Staff Editor, “Mrs. John F. Kennedy, Wife of the President of the United States,” Vogue, 1 February 1961, Volume 137, pp. 132-137.

featured as a pair, and later, in separate articles. After her debut, Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier appeared in *Vogue’s* social pages in 1947 when she and her sister made the summer party rounds in Newport, RI. In 1951, the Bouviers were photographed and profiled in *Vogue*, whose editors provided a quick summary of Jacqueline’s college career at Vassar, the Sorbonne, and at Georgetown, where she took her degree. Lee was at the time attending the Sarah Lawrence School. The sisters again attended events during the Newport, Rhode Island summer social scene, where they were photographed at an annual Tennis Week event.

Later that year, *Vogue* announced that Jacqueline Lee Bouvier was the first prize winner of the magazine’s prestigious “Prix de Paris” contest. The “Prix de Paris” was held yearly, and entrants had to plan an issue of *Vogue*, suggesting fashion spreads and articles. Contestants also had to answer a series of essays on topics like politics or fashion and how magazines played a role in college students’ and career women’s lives. First place winners could choose between a junior fashion editor position at *Vogue* or one of its sister publications, rotating between the New York, London, and Paris offices, or receive a cash prize of one thousand dollars. Jacqueline Bouvier chose the junior editor position, although she later changed her mind (at her parents’ bequest) to work for *The

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Washington-Times Herald, nonetheless beginning an official relationship with *Vogue* that lasted one year, and an unofficial one covering her lifetime.\textsuperscript{75}

Two years later, before Jacqueline Bouvier and John Kennedy were married in September 1953, *Vogue* first photographed the couple at his sister’s wedding to Mr. Peter Lawford in June 1953. While his sister’s wedding “stopped traffic,” and mention of her own wedding was admittedly small, after she and Kennedy married, coverage of her social, and later, political life, exponentially increased. (In the early 1950s, *Vogue* also always prominently highlighted her former position as one of its Prix de Paris winners, and later as a newspaper woman).\textsuperscript{76} She and her husband began increasingly to be photographed at fundraising events such as the 1956 “Night in Monte Carlo” ball, which benefited the Hospitalized Veteran’s Service of the Musician’s Emergency fund.\textsuperscript{77}

As her husband’s political career became more prominent, Mrs. John Kennedy started to be pictured at political functions, like the Democratic convention in 1956, and a Spanish embassy party for Don Juan Carlos, Prince of Spain.\textsuperscript{78} The couple still sparkled

\textsuperscript{75} Jessica Daves, Editor-in-Chief, “Prix Winners’ View of the Prix de Paris,” 15 August 1951, *Vogue*, Volume 118, pp. 164, 193-4. Unfortunately, the magazine editors only occasionally printed Prix de Paris winners’ essays, and Bouvier’s was not included in this issue.

\textsuperscript{76} Social Editor, “Miss Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Marries Senator John F. Kennedy,” *Vogue*, 15 September 1953, Volume 122, p. 115. Interestingly, her sister in law, Mrs. Peter Lawford’s marriage received more elaborate coverage (perhaps because Peter Lawford was a film star), in the *Vogue* article “The Wedding that Caught the Imagination of Enough New Yorkers to Stop Traffic for Blocks,” Social Editor, *Vogue*, June 1953, Volume 123, p. 81.

\textsuperscript{77} Social Editor, “Night in Monte Carlo – The Imperial Ball,” *Vogue*, 1 March 1956, Volume 127, p. 184. This ball was one of the first to be officially sponsored by a company in addition to being chaired by a committee. The sponsor would pay for the party, while the money from tickets went entirely toward the charity. In this case, Chrysler was celebrating the introduction of its newest model, the Imperial.

socially, however, and later that year, they were photographed on the theater circuit in New York at the premiere of the play, “The Reluctant Debutante,” as part of an audience that included “half the stars in town.”

This was the last time until after her husband’s death that Jacqueline Kennedy received coverage that was strictly social in nature, even though political coverage was combined with stories on her fashion and social activities. This was especially so as high society’s focus turned toward the capital, and Washington D.C. became the scene of glittering balls, receptions, and diplomatic functions. *Vogue* in particular carried extensive coverage of almost every aspect of Kennedy’s life, including her interest in and promotion of the arts, and even the ways in which she organized her day.

By 1960, when John F. Kennedy ran for President, interest in Mrs. Kennedy was at a high point, and she was featured in a spread about the wives of the presidential candidates, which also included Mrs. Lyndon B. “Lady Bird” Johnson, Patricia Nixon, and Mrs. Stuart Symington. After her husband was elected, interest in the family rose to a fever pitch, and noted photographer Richard Avedon shot a series of portraits of the entire family that appeared in the February 1961 issue of *Harper’s Bazaar*. Similarly, almost all of *Vogue’s* 1 February 1961 “Americana Issue” focused on the new president and his wife, never forgetting to mention her association with the magazine and even

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81 Richard Avedon, “Observations on the 34th First Family,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, February 1961, Volume 95, Number 2991, pp. 96-101. The original photos from this shoot were lost, but recovered in 2007, when they were printed in their entirety in Robert Dallek’s article, “As Camelot Began: The Unseen Portraits of the Kennedys by Richard Avedon,” *Vanity Fair*, November 2007, Number 567, pp. 281, 283-289.
reprinting Kennedy’s winning Prix de Paris essay from 1951. Of course, her fashion choices were documented in minute detail, from her Oleg Cassini inaugural gown to her famous Halston-designed pillbox hats. Interest in the family was so great, in fact, that Mrs. Kennedy’s press secretary, Miss Pamela Turnare, even merited her own photo spread.82 Because news magazines had exclusives on Mrs. Kennedy’s and Princess Radziwill’s trip to India, it was mentioned only in passing in *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue*. *Harper’s Bazaar* magazine noted that because of a reception given for her in Pakistan, the country’s traditional “exotic shamanah, or…pavilions of riotous paisley,” would undoubtedly be used in “the smartest garden parties next summer here at home.”83 Anything Mrs. Kennedy wore or promoted instantly became fashion news.

Kennedy himself was featured upon publication of his book *Profiles in Courage*, and even wrote an article for *Vogue* that same year.84 In “Brothers, I Presume?,” an article based on a speech he gave at the National Book Awards, Kennedy urged writers and politicians to get along. He argued that while writers disdained politicians and vice versa, in fact, both had similar interests. Writers (and particularly magazine writers) and politicians had a symbiotic relationship wherein each influenced the other and were motivated by the same challenges.85 Kennedy recognized this in his own life, and utilized

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84 Staff Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, 15 February 1956, Volume 127, p. 99.

Jacqueline Kennedy’s sister, Princess Caroline Lee Bouvier Canfield Radziwill Ross, was born on March 3, 1933, also in Southampton, New York. Lee Radziwill, as she is today known, was married three times and mostly known as a socialite despite her long-term, successful career in public relations. (Incidentally, this was typical of representations of all the upper class women profiled here – each was first categorized by biographers as a socialite and wife, and then careers were mentioned, generally only in passing). Her parents were well established in New York and Newport, Rhode Island society, and although genteelly poor, sent both Lee and her sister Jackie, to the best schools. Like her sister, Radziwill attended Miss Porter’s Finishing School and later, Vassar College. Radziwill, unlike her sister, worked periodically as an editor at *Vogue* before marriage. After graduation and into the 1950s and 1960s, Radziwill’s set included women like Susan Mary Alsop and Marietta Tree, Mrs. William (Babe) Paley, and C.Z. Guest (Mrs. Winston Frederick Churchill Guest) - women married into and from the wealthiest families in the United States. All appeared regularly in the pages of both books about him include excellent sections on the life and times of “The Swans,” and they effectively ruled New York and European society. Also, they were major patrons of the author Truman Capote. Two books about him include excellent discussion of this group is David Grafton’s *The Sisters: Babe Mortimer Paley, Betsey Roosevelt Whitney, Minnie Astor Fosburgh: The Life and Times of the Fabulous Cushing Sisters*, (New York: Villard Books, 1992).

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86 The women in this social set also included Gloria Guinness (of the Guinness beer family), Marella Agnelli (the Italian heiress to the Fiat automobile fortune), Gloria Vanderbilt (great granddaughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt and heiress to his fortune), and Slim Keith, wife of film producer Howard Hawks. Collectively, this set was known as “The Swans,” and they effectively ruled New York and European society. Also, they were major patrons of the author Truman Capote. Two books about him include excellent sections on the life and times of “The Swans” - George Plimpton’s *Truman Capote: In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career*, (New York: Doubleday, 1997), and William L. Nance’s *The Worlds of Truman Capote*, (New York: Stein and Day, 1997). Lee Radziwill composed an essay in Plimpton’s book about her friend Truman Capote. Another biography which includes an excellent discussion of this group is David Grafton’s *The Sisters: Babe Mortimer Paley, Betsey Roosevelt Whitney, Minnie Astor Fosburgh: The Life and Times of the Fabulous Cushing Sisters*, (New York: Villard Books, 1992).
magazines as models, in the social columns, or as subjects of feature articles on their travel and everyday lives.

Her first marriage, in April 1953 to Michael Canfield, ended in divorce in 1959. Lee’s second and most prestigious marriage was to Polish prince Stanislaw (or Stanislas) Albrecht Radziwill, with whom she had two children, and whom she divorced in 1974, two years before his death. Her third marriage was to film director Herbert Ross in 1988, and they divorced in 2001. Lee Radziwill was an actress, writer, *Vogue* editor, and most recently, public relations executive for Giorgio Armani, an Italian couturier. Radziwill obviously was probably best known because of her sister, but she made a name for herself through her associations with famous figures like ballet dancer Rudolf Nureyev, *Vogue* editor Diana Vreeland, Truman Capote, Andy Warhol, and even the British rock and roll band the Rolling Stones. In the 1950s, Radziwill was most noted for her personal style and the decoration of her homes. In this manner, she represented a “typical” upper class woman who made good marriages, came from a good family, and had style, taste, and a leisured but socially active lifestyle. Radziwill, however, also had strong political convictions, and her associations with the Kennedy clan put her in a position to exercise her ideas.\(^7\)

When Lee Bouvier married Michael Canfield in 1953, she started to be recognized as a fashion plate on her own accord, but was still primarily featured in fashion spreads with her sister. Her first major appearance as Mrs. Michael Canfield was

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\(^7\) Diana DuBois, *In Her Sister’s Shadow: An Intimate Biography of Lee Radziwill*, (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995). There is only one existing biography of Lee Radziwill, and this tends to be a bit more gossipy than biographical, but does provide the basic facts of her life.
in a 1955 article “American Sisters: In Sweaters,” where she and Jacqueline modeled newly fashionable cardigan sweater sets. Later, in 1958, Lee Canfield spent her summer in Brussels as Vogue’s permanent representative to the World’s Fair, in which the magazine participated at the express request of the U.S. State Department. Vogue chose hundreds of what it considered typical American outfits and was responsible for a popular daily fashion show in the U.S. Pavilion. Canfield’s job was to be “on the spot to cue the show from the opening, April 17, to the last round of fireworks, October 19.” She also managed the enormous daily fashion shows, casting models to show American ready-to-wear clothing.

When Lee Canfield married Prince Stanislas Radziwill and became Princess Radziwill in 1959, Lee started appearing in fashion magazines without her sister. The first of her appearances as Princess Radziwill was when Vogue profiled her “fashion personality,” in a series of interviews with prominent socialites about their wardrobes and lives. Her style began with “one enchanting, instantly visible asset – her beauty,” and it had to work with an international lifestyle that rotated between homes in England, France, Italy, and the United States. Radziwill detailed what she would pick for her “mostly Givenchy” wardrobe, particularly highlighting the clothes she would take to the Democratic Convention. Later she would be photographed in stories mostly

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highlighting her beauty. For example, Radziwill appeared made up in the new “Sphinx” hairdo in the April 1960 issue of Harper’s Bazaar. The next year, she appeared in a beauty and cosmetics feature wearing a strikingly smooth, lacquered hairdo markedly different from the new first lady’s trademark “flip” hairstyle. During the 1940s and 1950s, however, Lee Bouvier was just as recognizable a fashion plate as her sister, if less photographed until later in the 1950s and early 1960s.

At the postwar beginning of their long reigns as fashion icons and international social leaders, Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, and Jacqueline Kennedy were perfectly poised to lead other women in and out of their class into roles as informal cultural diplomats. All traveled extensively, spoke foreign languages, held keen interest in politics and foreign affairs, and most importantly, cultivated the international contacts necessary to make a significant, positive impact on foreign relations. Susan Mary Alsop’s popularity as a hostess and political grande dame spanned three nations, the United States, France, and Great Britain, and over four decades. Marietta Tree’s contacts

91 Fashion Editor, “Princess Radziwill, Ninth in Vogue’s Series of Fashion Personalities,” Vogue, July 1960, Volume 136, pp. 73-75. Hubert de Givenchy was an influential French couturier famous for his relationship with Audrey Hepburn, for whom he designed film costumes – the most famous two costumes were featured in Sabrina and in Breakfast at Tiffany’s. Givenchy and Hepburn maintained a lifelong friendship and collaboration on her personal and film wardrobes, and her death was probably one of the biggest contributors to his retirement in the 1990s.

92 Beauty Editor, “The Sphinx Within,” Harper’s Bazaar, April 1960, Volume 94, Number 2981, pp. 112-115. The “Sphinx Hairstyle,” among other trends, was inspired by the film Cleopatra with Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, which began production in 1960. The movie took three years to make and inspired everything from hairstyles and cosmetics (Revlon’s “Cleopatra” eyeliner kit was especially successful), to clothing and home decoration. The movie finally premiered in 1963, almost bankrupting 20th Century Fox and causing an international scandal when Richard Burton left his wife for his co-star, Elizabeth Taylor.

included men and women in the higher echelons of British society, and she too, was a popular hostess whose parties combined American politicians, foreign officials, and people from the art and fashion worlds. Lee Radziwill’s marriage to Prince Stanislaw Radziwill led her to an international life with homes in Rome, London, and Paris and friends from every walk of life, from politicians to rock and roll bands. Finally, Jacqueline Kennedy’s marriage to John F. Kennedy catapulted her into the highest reaches of power. As First Lady, Kennedy had a world stage on which to play out her role as an informal cultural diplomat, and she did so with aplomb, charming the French, befriending the Queen of England, and of course, entrancing all of India.

Because Kennedy and her three compatriots were first and foremost fashion icons, the most immediate way this group acted as informal cultural icons in the postwar world was as consumers, and magazines immediately urged readers like them to rebuild through spending. Before World War Two, fashion, textile and luxury goods production were three of the most profitable French and British industries. With the European economy in a shambles, and because these industries had never entirely stopped production, the three trades could be quickly reinvigorated. Because of this, purchasing eagerly awaited *haute couture* clothing and luxuries like perfume from France, the world’s fashion leader, and textiles and clothing from British tailors was a fast way to pump dollars into the European economy. Later, these dollars might supplement Marshall Plan funds to help reconstruct both nations’ infrastructures. In turn, American dollars could help create goodwill between France, Britain, (and later, Germany, Japan, and Italy) and the United States, which desperately needed the former countries as postwar allies, particularly in
the face of swiftly deteriorating relationships with the Soviet Union and China. Susan
Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Lee Radziwill, and Jacqueline Kennedy, after years without
French fashion or British tweeds and tailoring, all took the first opportunity they could to
start spending. Their dollars and support might go far towards creating mutual amity
between potentially powerful allies against the spread of communism, and magazines
both covered travel and shopping exploits while encouraging other women to follow suit.

To complete effectively the task of economic rehabilitation, all four, and other
women who followed their lead, first needed to have good grasp on how and why to help
former wartime allies, as well as why former enemy Axis powers would become essential
Cold War partners. Many upper class women learned those reasons primarily through
magazine coverage of the British and French postwar situation, and through changing
representations of the Soviet Union and China and the Axis powers of Germany, Japan,
and Italy. *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* both adeptly caught and reported on trends in all
seven nations, publishing an array of articles tracing the situation in each country and
detailing what women could do to help, especially as informal cultural diplomats.

According to magazine editors, probably the first thing women needed before turning
their attention to forging strong alliances with friends and former enemies, however, was
a better understanding of how the Cold War developed in the first place. Magazine
editors spent a great deal of time explaining how the Soviet Union and China transitioned
from being wartime friends to postwar enemies. Their depiction of the nature of the new
Cold War American relationship with the Soviet Union and China made clear why
fostering goodwill among old allies and new friends had become so critical. Once readers
understood U.S. diplomatic goals, the media encouraged them to turn toward helping achieve policy objectives through spending, travel, and acting as informal cultural diplomats to build a positive image of Americans overseas.
Chapter II

From Allies to Enemies:
The Soviet Union and China

Mrs. Harry Hopkins visited the Soviet Union in 1945 with her husband, a special advisor to President Truman. Her travel diary, published in *Harper’s Bazaar* that same year, related Hopkins’ pleasure with everything about the trip. She provided readers with detailed descriptions of Soviet women’s style, the types of food served at parties, and even a bit of diplomatic conversation. Mrs. Hopkins’ role as Harry Hopkins’ trusted confidante gave her the opportunity to provide American readers a more intimate glimpse into Russia’s government and society than magazine readers might be used to seeing. When the Soviet Union and the United States became postwar enemies, upper class readers of magazines like *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue*, if the articles each ran were any indication, longed for a peek into the secretive, intriguing world of Soviet society. Reader interest may have stemmed from the simple fact that news from inside the Soviet Union was scarce, a situation with the potential to nourish natural curiosity about the nation. Audiences were no doubt also interested in the Soviet Union for political reasons; as it positioned itself for a new role as foil to the United States, diplomatic relations with the country became big news, which in turn increased sales figures.
In Hopkins’ travel diary, Russia came off quite favorably as a nation with a history worthy of American support and understanding.¹ Mrs. Hopkins’ entries reflected pleasure with the nation, its people, and its culture; the architecture was stunning, Russian women were warm and attractive, and she particularly enjoyed her visits to museums and the ballet. So soon after the war’s end, a strong postwar political partnership seemed entirely possible and even likely, particularly when Hopkins saw successful examples of wartime cooperation like “the wonderful Lend-Lease equipment sent from the United States…proudly pointed out to her” by Soviet guides, enthusiastically grateful for U.S. aid.² The diary’s publication in Harper’s Bazaar allowed Hopkins to record and directly relay her opinions to a group of influential, politically active, upper class readers who could potentially help shape public opinions about issues like the Soviet/American relationship.

Upper class women’s magazines like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar did not just give readers fashion news; they also provided upper class women like Hopkins the potential to shape attitudes using a popular open forum for expressing political views. Hopkins, similar to the magazine editors she worked with on this piece, favored a close postwar relationship with the Soviet Union that, if not based in mutual political goals, could at least be founded on understanding and respecting different cultures. Whether readers felt the same is difficult to determine, but since magazine editors continued


writing in the same vein throughout the initial postwar years, presumably, audiences might have agreed with their views.

After the war, the Soviet Union began reestablishing itself as a sophisticated, cosmopolitan nation poised to take its place among the world’s centers of culture. Moscow, for example, favorably compared with other world capitals like London and Paris. Its Bolshoi Ballet Company was perhaps better than the London’s Royal Ballet, and after her visit, Mrs. Hopkins was even left with an impression that the arts consumed public interest more than did the war. Like she was with their culture, Hopkins was similarly taken with Soviet women, who were educated and dignified, generally well dressed (except for the most impoverished), and civilized. Moreover, Russian women were friendly and made Mrs. Hopkins feel comfortably at home. When visiting Moscow’s landmarks, Hopkins noticed the Russians’ easy nature, remarking that “strangest of all, [she] never felt strange…I never felt myself stared at, and I loved the way they all went about their own business,” but took the time to answer questions or give directions when necessary.\(^3\) Russian women were concerned with the same things as American women, such as “fashion, Jack London novels, the theatre,” indicating that there were some areas over which American and Russian women might bond.\(^4\)

Initially favorable reports about the Soviet Union did not, however, as happened with Great Britain and France, or Germany, Italy, and Japan, translate into long lasting amity with the United States. Although at first supportive of Soviet leadership, when

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international events turned the ally into a potential enemy, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* editors instead started placing greater importance on understanding Russia’s history and culture as a way to promote peaceful relations. Cultivating sympathy through cultural understanding of people trapped under Communist rule might keep a potentially volatile situation more stable. At first, writers tried to provide positive coverage of the Russian people and their leaders, perhaps in an effort to foster good will between the two nations or to counteract ill will among American readers. At the very least, optimistic reports on the country could remind readers of Soviet wartime sacrifices, and at most, convince them that Communism did not have to be incompatible with American democracy.

Magazine editors initially took a tack similar to one they would use when covering France and Great Britain, exploring Soviet leaders’ personality and agenda, upholding aspects of Russian society like its rich artistic culture, and letting readers into the everyday lives of its people. Later, editors shifted their attention to what life was like inside the Iron Curtain in efforts to generate sympathy among peoples, if not governments. They then started to set the stage for reporting on new alliances in the face of a breakdown in relations between the United States, the Soviet Union, and China.

Writers for the two magazines, possibly because access to Soviet leaders was limited, devoted fewer column inches to the country’s political figures than they did to other European leaders. Even though at times ambivalent about the Soviet government, they still, at first, continually urged cooperation to keep peace. Contributors like Senator J. William Fulbright, although warning that Americans “might not like being compared to the Soviet Union,” suggested that the United States put differences aside to recognize
common traits between the two governments, and work from similar political and economic stances to achieve mutually beneficial postwar goals. Because the Soviets were expanding in Central Europe out of a sense of fear of the new and a distrust of capitalism, he believed making peaceful overtures was up to the United States. Fulbright also recommended that the United States give up its own prejudices at home and abroad, remembering their own revolutionary heritage, which provided some common ground with the Soviets.

Echoing Fulbright’s sentiments, Vogue editors admired Soviet leaders like Molotov when he attended the San Francisco conference establishing the United Nations. Reporter Vera Michaels Dean praised him as a magnetic personality guiding the Soviet Union towards a peaceful relationship with the United States. In Dean’s opinion, the Soviets would be no danger to the United States because diplomatic trouble was not in either nation’s best interest. As long as the United States maintained its anti-isolationist stance and joined the United Nations, the U.S./Soviet balance of power should remain stable. The Soviets found isolationism threatening, and editors felt this would be the worst position the United States could take in an era where all nations needed the security of a worldwide police organization.

Holding Soviet steps toward a peaceful relationship up as an example, magazine staff and outside contributors initially argued that the United States should actually

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shoulder the bulk of responsibility for maintaining peace. In the July 1945 issue of *Vogue*, Senator J. William Fulbright commented on “the price of peace” in an article on the faltering partnership with the Soviet Union. Beginning with a brief history of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy, Fulbright asserted that the United States was generally responsible for tense relations with the Soviet Union, because of its previous interventions into Soviet affairs, and because of its unrelenting suspicion of Communist diplomacy.⁷ Fulbright explained that, from a Soviet perspective, most of Moscow’s actions stemmed from concern for national security and should not be read as aggressive. The political “price of peace,” in Fulbright’s opinion, particularly one that favored the United States, was bearing the burden of approaching other nations in a realistic manner, recognizing that they too, had valid postwar diplomatic concerns. The United States, in his opinion, was in a position of authority, and had to use its power responsibly. He continued on, arguing that to achieve permanent and lasting peace, the United States needed to “lose its prejudices” and work to create a world more open to different forms of government.⁸

Mary Jean Kempner continued his train of thought, warning that the two powers, whatever their disagreements, had “better make it [the peace] stick.”⁹ Kempner, though, believed that both nations, not only the United States, bore mutual responsibility for creating a postwar world resistant to future wars. She asserted that both countries must

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⁹ Mary Jean Kempner, “They’d Better Make it Stick,” *Vogue* Magazine, September 1, 1945, p. 118. During the war, *Vogue* stopped publishing bi-weekly issues, limiting issues to once a month. In September, the magazine went back to bi-weekly issues.
understand each other through open lines of diplomatic communication and extensive cultural exchange. Kempner recommended that the wartime partnership, although imperfect, be carried through to the postwar world. Future U.S./Soviet policies, particularly regarding spheres of influence in Germany and Central Europe, should create a stable world which bowed to the security interests of both powers. Given the gift of power, the United States and the Soviet Union could work together to help create a better, safer world. Writer Lt. Col. Frank Ebey supported Kempner’s pragmatic approach, and while commanding troops in Germany, ordered his men to stop speaking poorly about Soviets in front of Germans. He was not, in his own words, “a pinko or a Red,” but felt “the Russians [were] our allies. They had guts, and by God, I never want to fight again.”

Over the next two years, Hopkins’ carefully painted portrait of the Soviet Union and Fulbright’s efforts to explore common interests shifted, most likely because each magazine’s staff recognized that the nation, due in part to rising anti-communist sentiments at home, would not long be a U.S. ally. Reflecting this change, contributors began relating mixed reactions to the Soviets, indicating nervousness about the postwar relationship. Photographer Lee Miller ran a series of her own photographs of the U.S./Soviet meeting in Germany depicting regular troops from both nations meeting with jokes, laughter, and drinks, but did not mention Soviet leadership. Later, other Vogue editors supported the 1949 Western European Union (with the Schuman Plan) as a

10 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 107, 15 April 1946, p. 154.

defensive alliance based on a program of economic, social, and cultural cooperation that was “clearly designed to erect a bulwark against the Soviets” and was a “direct result of Soviet policy since the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.” They felt the Union encouraged a cooperation that created “a climate where democracy could survive,” helping other nations resist attack through mutual aid. In any case, the Union was inspired by Soviet occupation of and cooperation with pro-Communist states, meaning that ultimately, the Soviet Union could not be trusted.

By the mid-1950s, American perception of the Soviet Union became even more cautious because of crises like the Berlin Airlift, the Korean War, and the French defeat in Indo-China. Reflecting a new wariness brought on by world events, profiles of the Soviet Union became more complex. Prominent photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, the first Western photographer admitted into the Soviet Union since the late 1940s, captured a complex people filled with contradictions in his photographs of the Soviet Union. Cartier-Bresson focused on the Russian people in photographs of churches, collective farms, and new factories. The old and the new coexisted in a slowly opening society. Russians practiced their religions in elaborate churches filled with priceless ancient icons and intricate stained glass windows, but in theory had moved, through scientific knowledge, beyond religious superstitions. While the Soviets were officially atheists, the government had in reality relaxed its prohibition of religion. Unofficially, the government

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respected religion as a private affair, but at the same time pushed propaganda efforts to substitute Marxist concepts for the old faith.

Like its faith, the Soviet economy was also caught between eras. Cartier-Bresson pictured a relatively open and technologically advanced economy functioning alongside farms that were hundreds of years old. Farmers were able to sell produce grown on their own plots without modern machinery in village marketplaces, but they also took their foods to bigger city markets on beautiful, modern subways. Russians maintained ancient customs while moving swiftly ahead with scientific research and technological achievements. If Soviet culture was this contradictory, editors might feel its leadership could not be trusted to remain stable diplomatically.

As the Cold War intensified and news from the Soviet Union became scarcer, many attempts at political and cultural understanding faded. Lines of communication slowly broke down, and some Americans grew to blame the Soviets for perpetuating diplomatic hostility. When inside sources of news from the Soviet Union dried up, Americans looked to their own experts to provide perspective on the developing Cold War, even if those experts promoted a more rigid position against the Soviet diplomatic agenda. A specialist in U.S./Soviet relations, George Kennan was an especially popular source of information about how the Soviet government worked. After his “X Article” and appointment to the Soviet ambassadorship, “Mr. X” was even more sought after for his views on the burgeoning Cold War.15


15 Staff Editor, “Who is Mr. X?,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 86, Number 2883, February 1952, p. 162.
Editorial staff at both magazines heartily accepted Kennan’s containment ideology, moving from a cooperative to a closed stance on the U.S./Soviet partnership. “America’s great expert on the Soviet mentality” frequently appeared in Vogue’s and Harper’s Bazaar’s pages and editors at both magazines followed his lead in hardening their stance on the Cold War. The less open attitude may have stemmed from an underlying frustration with the Soviets as they became “the sun around which the foreign policies of other countries seemed to revolve.” Susan Mary Patten feared “the possibility that the Russians might deliberately [choose] Berlin as a pretext for war, and by the end of the 1950s, magazine editors also felt the Soviets were using situations like Berlin “as a distraction used partially…to keep the world’s eyes off other countries,” making Americans more dissatisfied with the Soviet government.

For these and other reasons, editorial opinion about the Soviet Union shifted, as blame for perpetuating the Cold War was placed on Russian leaders, and as writers began to feel that the Soviets in turn disliked the United States. First, resentful of their rejection of Marshall Plan aid, editors proposed that Soviet politicians were envious of the United States’ wealth in the face of their own dire economic situation. As a result, the Soviets used propaganda to convince themselves and their public that affluence was somehow sinful, trying to foster ill will between their own and the American people. Next, the Soviets spoke of peace, but editors felt their actions betrayed a desire for war, particularly

16 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 119, 1 February 1952, p. 205.
17 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 107, 15 April 1946, p. 154.
18 Alsop, To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960, p. 89; Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 133, 1 May 1959 p. 78.
after supporting the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Last, although the United States seemed to its own citizens to be the nation pursuing a peaceful relationship with the Soviets, the Russians blocked American efforts at every turn.\textsuperscript{19} Rebuffs to American peaceful overtures (like the offer for Marshall Plan dollars) stemmed from the Soviet Union’s dawning realization that “Communism failed to rescue the world from disorder…it had brought on new oppression, new insecurity, new deprivation for the workers, and bad faith and a cynicism never known before.”\textsuperscript{20} In response to shifting opinion, \textit{Vogue} staff began warning that the “road to peace would be long, dull, and painful, and needed to stand on the rebuilding of Europe’s political and economic health, peace, and stability,” to provide it and the United States, “the ability to stand up to the Russians.”\textsuperscript{21}

Interestingly, at the same time lines of diplomacy shut down and news from the Soviet Union became scarce, Russia became more mysterious and intriguing to adventurous tourists. Despite the tense diplomatic relationship, travel to the Soviet Union quickly became fashionable after the war, indicating that Americans were eager for “a peer behind the Iron Curtain.”\textsuperscript{22} A “trickles of tourists to Russia” began returning to the United States, “strangely triumphant, bearing ikons as souvenirs,” or sending before their return “surprising…thin, glossy postcards with a view of the Kremlin…with a carefully


\textsuperscript{22} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 131, 15 January 1958, p. 56.
enthusiastic message, usually in purple ink.”

Because “no one interested in seeing the world could ignore the fact that tours to the USSR have been announced (for the first time in 17 years),” with “lots of red tape and sudden cancellations” Americans dribbled into Leningrad, Ukraine, Crimea, and Moscow. Even into the late 1950s, as relations with the Soviet Union further degenerated, “the rush to see Russia had not subsided, in spite of tension and the disappointment of returning travelers who reported high prices, poor service, language barriers, and annoying restrictions on movement.”

“Travelers, it seemed, still wanted to observe with wary fascination the unpredictable, see great art collections, new housing projects, and eat pounds of caviar.”

More importantly, by the end of the 1950s, tourists and the government alike realized travel as a type of informal cultural diplomacy held the potential to attract communist nations to democracy. Toward the end of the decade, the tactic seemed to be working. “The number of Americans” (approximately 12,000 since 1959), “who traveled to the Soviet Union, especially to out of the way places, was beginning to impress Russians with [Americans’] obvious national wealth and liberty.”

Vogue editors even reported that the “Moscow jet set, called the stilyags, or style chasers, imitated some of


24 Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 127, 15 February 1956, p. 61; Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 128, 15 September 1956, pp. 118-20.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.


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the provocative manners of the West,” with the “men wearing narrow trousers, and the
women…all for décolletage.” The American government took advantage of the rush to
see Russia, asking returning travelers to “report observations to Radio Liberation – the
only American non-government organization now broadcasting directly to the Soviet
Union.”

Even if travel opened up, however, the Soviet Union remained secretive, a trait
which may have contributed to continued fascination with life behind the Iron Curtain.
Vogue editors noted, for example, the “re-found enjoyment of radio, with certain special
titillations coming from listening to short wave Moscow, where the news, threatening and
sensational, was announced in English with an American accent.” Women were urged
to donate money to Radio Free Europe to “sponsor a minute of truth for Europe’s captive
people,” and listen to programs that “dealt honestly with life inside and outside the Iron
Curtain to get a better understanding of the horrors of Communism.

London Daily Express reporter John Godley (Lord Kilbracken), provided a tantalizing peek into the
government when he tried in 1958 to interview Khrushchev and infiltrate a parade
through Red Square celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Russian revolution. He
was able to interview Khrushchev when he disguised himself as an American; afterward,
they spoke about the two Sputniks, the British Empire, and the relationship with the


29 Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 129, 1 April 1957, p. 174.

30 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 131, 15 January 1958, p. 56.

United States. For his part, Khrushchev believed that relations with the United States were amicable, and he mentioned that when Eisenhower and Dulles visited, Khrushchev would welcome them as old friends. Khrushchev’s openness stood in stark contrast to Kilbracken’s portrait of an impoverished people so controlled by the secret police they could not step out of line in a parade. Still, Russians proved friendly, generous, and welcoming, especially when Kilbracken let those met know he lived in Ireland, whose 1915 revolt Russians celebrated.32

Outside of travelogues like Kilbracken’s, books about the Soviet Union were bestsellers, and Americans read everything they could about the Soviet Union. John Gunther’s Inside Russia Today, for instance, a particular bestseller, was “a massive book that was friendly without approval, objective without moralizing, and gave more information than probably anyone but Gunther wanted to absorb, all organized more carefully than usual, and most of it intensely important.”33 American readers’ fascination with the minutiae of life in the closed Soviet regime indicated that even if governments could not get along, individual populations might have common ground for promoting a peaceful relationship through mutual understanding.

Because stable relations might be achieved on a more individual level, coverage shifted from fascination with and approval of Soviet leadership and diplomatic partnership to sympathy for its people’s plight. As the Soviet Union turned inward, responding to its own crises like defections into West Germany, a faltering economy, and


33 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 131, 15 May 1958, p. 149.
the pressure of Khrushchev’s more hard line government, editorial focus shifted to discussing how the Soviet government mistreated and controlled its subjects rather than on diplomatic differences. To begin with, Soviet Communist politicians were apparently not as secure as American leaders (notwithstanding Senator Joseph McCarthy), and needed constantly to “stir up cause célèbre,” “create martyrs,” and “showily peek through the Iron Curtain” to ensure the government’s continued rule. Insecurity in turn led to a “rigid, defeating thought control…with everyone spying on everyone,” creating a society of paranoia surprisingly similar to McCarthy-ite America, but which readers compared unfavorably with their own theoretically more open society. Hannah Arendt’s bestseller *The Origins of Totalitarianism* noted this trend, carefully pointing out the Soviet government’s faults without blaming the Russian people for its diplomatic missteps. Arendt supported the prevailing American suspicion of the Soviet government, noting that what was “remarkable in the totalitarian organizations is that they could adopt so many organizational devices of secret societies without ever trying to keep their own goal a secret,” a trait that made life for Russian citizens miserable.

*Vogue* writers noted that the Soviet crackdown on its people made the country unattractive to even the most desperate. To illustrate this, magazine editors ran articles about displaced persons (DP) camps, where internees “refused repatriation into the Russian orbit,” wanting to come into the United States so much that they would rather

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34 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, Volume 126, 15 September 1955, p. 110.


stay in the miserable camps than go into a communist zone. The writer of this article promoted acceptance of the Stratton Bill, which would allow 400,000 DPs into the United States at a rate of 100,000 annually to save them from certain doom if forced to immigrate to a Communist region. In addition, Vogue editors petitioned readers to send money to help internees get clothing, food, and other supplies. Writers asserted that if readers had something invested in the people for whom they sympathized, they might support a better relationship with the Soviet Union’s population, if not the government.

Editors felt another way to bring the two nations toward a more stable (if not friendly) relationship was through shared cultural pursuits like painting or dance, interests upper class women in particular enthusiastically embraced. Women, the new majority in the United States, were instructed to be “vital participants” in helping the nation take a moral stand against international Communism. One way they could follow that directive was through supporting the arts as a common ground between themselves and the Russian people, who used art as a form of political protest. Evelyn Clark Emmett reinforced the idea in her regular column “Washington Letter,” when she argued that the United States, and particularly its women, could help “build up a good view of the Russians,” through political and cultural understanding. Because the Soviet Union banned so many artists and their works, sharing with Russians an interest in the arts could

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37 Staff Editor, “He Lives in a DP Camp,” Vogue, Volume 111, 1 May 1948, pp. 130, 201.

38 Ibid.


have political overtones while highlighting the nation’s universal cultural value. Articles such as “The Russian Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Davies” did not just celebrate the couple’s incomparable art collection, but also implied that the Russians had a different history from Soviet leaders who forced a separate identity and harsh government on its citizens.\footnote{Author Unknown, “The Russian Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Davies,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 106, Part One, (August 1, 1945), pp. 96-99.} The reason editors felt American readers needed to understand the Soviets (at least through culture) was because “with Russia so ominous and strange, it was vital to understand that country, if for nothing else, as a background to the current news,” and readers could do this by exploring Russian cultural achievements.\footnote{Staff Editor, “Refueling your Interests By?,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 129, 15 January 1957, pp. 68-9.}

Following the spirit of cultural exchange, magazine articles indicated that upper class American women were continually curious about painting behind the Iron Curtain. In 1960, the U.S. State Department chose \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} Arts Editor William A. Smith to visit Poland, Yugoslavia, and the Soviet Union to report on the state of art in those nations. His reports signaled that in at least one area, the Soviet government was loosening its grip over public artistic expression. Smith noted that artists in Yugoslavia and Poland were neither politically subservient to the Soviet Union, nor followers of Soviet aesthetic dictates. Artists in those nations were dynamic and diverse even though they relied upon government sponsorship, which did leave them free from economic worry. In the Soviet Union, artists tended to have a more educational function and had to follow the narrow confines of ministry rules, but despite their government’s rigid system, were still experimental and could even apply for support from foreign patrons. According
to reporters, unless the Soviet government loosened up its system, however, the nation ultimately would not be able to continue producing first-rate artists.\footnote{William A. Smith, “Art Behind the Iron Curtain: Poland, Yugoslavia, Russia,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 94, Number 2979, February 1960, pp. 116-119, 156.}

Throughout the Cold War, even when relations between both countries were at their most tense, magazine articles indicated that U.S./Soviet cultural exchange, especially in ballet and painting, did thrive “in spite of the diplomatic stalemate.”\footnote{Travel Editor, “U.S./Soviet Cultural Exchange Thrives,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 93, Number 2973, p. 15; Truman Capote, “Maya Plisetskaya of the Bolshoi,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 93, Number 2974, pp. 182-83.} Americans flocked to see Bolshoi premier ballerina Maya Plisetskaya when she visited the United States in 1959, and when Rudolf Nureyev began dancing with the Kirov Ballet, his tour across Europe made him also a star in the United States. \textit{Vogue’s} gossip columnists noted “the number of agencies taking the Bolshoi Ballet for benefit parties” in New York and Europe, and upper class society remained fascinated with the company for years.\footnote{Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 133, 15 April 1959, pp. 54-55.} Mrs. Hopkins was delighted with her visit to the ballet, and in New York, upper class women like Lee Radziwill, an especial patron, clamored to serve on committees for Soviet ballet benefits. Jacqueline Kennedy even welcomed Bolshoi dancers to the White House, giving them a tour after their 1962 performance at the Washington School of Ballet. Kennedy’s “attentiveness to the 120 members of the Bolshoi Ballet” during a “remarkable cultural exchange” just a month after the Cuban missile crisis promised to, in the words of its producer, “bring back to Moscow a marvelous message of goodwill.”\footnote{Barbara A. Perry, \textit{Jacqueline Kennedy: First Lady of the New Frontier}, (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 2004), p. 141.}
Unfortunately, even though ballet and painting flourished, the theater and writing suffered, and indeed, were in a “state of crisis” in the Soviet Union. In 1956, perhaps in reaction to protest in Poland and Hungary, the Soviet Minister of Culture denounced playwrights for not writing new plays touting the Soviet line. Theater producer Peter Brook wrote for *Vogue* about his experiences in trying to put together a production of *Hamlet* in Moscow and while his Russian troupe was hungry to hear about innovations in theater, the Soviets put a lockdown on any exchange of new ideas. In literature, probably the most popular Russian novels in the West, Boris Pasternak’s Nobel prize winning *Doctor Zhivago* (1957) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), met with censure. *Dr. Zhivago* was banned in the Soviet Union for its anti-Soviet viewpoint, but was a huge hit in the United States not only because of its romantic story, but also because it provided a provocative look at life behind the Iron Curtain. (The novel was made into a blockbuster film in 1965). Solzhenitsyn’s work was sanctioned by Khrushchev’s government, but caused such a sensation that his later novels were banned. Internal reaction to both novels indicated that even though Russian writers were producing some of their best works, the government was still not ready to support artistic political dissent.

American interest in Soviet culture was at its nadir by the late 1950s when it was interrupted by concern over lagging behind the Soviets in scientific research. As the arms

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race heated up, Americans turned their attention to improving education to make up for the deficiency. By “1955, whereas Soviet advanced technical schools turned out 80,000 graduates, the corresponding number in the United States was 37,000,” a fact magazine editors worried about throughout the rest of the decade as “a dangerous deficiency in view of Russia’s growing strength.”⁴⁹ After the Sputnik launch, concern about education increased, and *Vogue* noted that the event had a “revolutionary effect in changing the U.S. mind about the value of scientific training, of basic research, [and] of what gets priority,” and drew “new people on the bandwagon for more education in science.”⁵⁰

Increased emphasis on science and math took time to produce results, so Americans looked at culture as a second means to proving superiority over the Soviets. Culture wars notably played themselves out at the Brussels’ World’s Fair in 1958, and *Harper’s Bazaar* and *Vogue* editors were on hand to report on the competition inside the pavilions. Not surprisingly, the Soviet pavilion came up short of the American effort, and the Soviets were actually blamed for extending the Cold War beyond military and diplomatic spheres. *Harper’s Bazaar*’s travel editor noted that while the Russians spent four times more money on their pavilion, it was simply “a vast, monolithic box that looked like a concentration camp,” filled with “one-upmanship displays.”⁵¹ Reassuring readers that “Americans could hold their heads up,” the editor noted Soviet envy of

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American products, particularly plastics, furniture, and fashion. Finally, even if the Soviets were competitive, the United States, at least according to the travel editor at Harper’s Bazaar, “wisely so,” did not present its own exhibit “in the cutthroat spirit of the Cold War,” but rather in the spirit of international understanding.52

Vogue’s Rosemary Blackmon was slightly more mixed and somewhat less critical of Russian efforts at the fair. Blackmon commented that although the “U.S. pavilion dominated…the place to find an American at the fair was the Russian pavilion,” where the “Russian’s masterstroke was their restaurant – a hit even before the press preview.”53 She still looked down on the Russian pavilion, however, “chalk[ing] one up for the home team.”54 The pavilion was “obviously the rival show,” but its creators’ “idea of architecture, was based on either an automobile assembly plant or a deep freeze factory.”55 The author also looked down upon Soviet art, wryly wishing for “some good avant-garde stuff like a Saturday Evening Post cover,” but noted Russian superiority in science, particularly on seeing a replica of the Sputnik.56 The displays, however, struck her as relatively unimpressive, limited as they were to exhibits of machinery, bronze busts of Soviet leaders, and dull statistical information on the country’s achievements.

52 Travel Editor, “Travel Bazaar: Brussels’ World’s Fair,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 92, Number 2957, April 1958, pp. 70, 72, 212.


54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.
By the Kennedy presidency, culture wars were being played out even at the White House level. Jacqueline Kennedy’s famous redecoration of the White House, for example, was completed with not just historical, but also Cold War, concerns in mind. Kennedy was “clearly aware of the potential strength of its symbolism on the world stage,” and lamented the White House’s disrepair. Not renovated since the Truman administration, the White House needed attention if it was going to stand as representative of the best the United States had to offer the world. Kennedy worried most about its effects on various chiefs of state, “cring[ing] to imagine – all during their visits here, we are telling them that they should choose to go with us instead of the Russians – they have probably just slept in gilded beds and eaten off Ivan the Terrible gold plates in the Kremlin.”57 She knew “it was important how you first affect [foreign leaders] when they reach this country.”58 When Kennedy gave a televised official White House tour on February 14, 1962, it attracted over 75% of the American television viewing audience, and she won an Emmy award for the program. The White House renovation created a place where the best of American culture could be displayed, and this message was effectively broadcast around the world.

By the 1960s, magazine editors focused almost solely on the Soviet people, Russia as a tourist destination, and its culture as possibilities for bringing about understanding between peoples, if none existed between governments. Ultimately, however, even though the Soviet Union had been an American ally during the war, it

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58 Ibid.
swiftly became an enemy by the 1950s. The American diplomatic relationship with China was quite similar, although it dissolved for different reasons. Going into a wartime partnership with the Soviet Union, Americans were already aware of the nature of its government, and the relationship, although cordial on the surface, was rocky at best. China, on the other hand, started off with a pro-American government, but when the Communists took over, many Americans felt betrayed and distrustful of the new regime. Both magazines’ foreign policy writers had to work hard in this environment to promote China as an ally and build up political and economic support for its Nationalist government.

They were not helped by American diplomatic missteps in China. After the war, some of Truman’s advisors recommended cooperation with Mao Tse-tung, seeing that he was swiftly consolidating power and had significant public support. Truman, on the other hand, initially tried to bolster Chiang Kai-Shek’s forces (the Kuomintang or KMT), but by the late 1940s, Mao ultimately won out, roundly defeating the KMT and establishing the Communists as China’s ruling party. Because Truman “lost” China, foreign policy editors had to walk a fine line in covering the country’s political situation. At first, staff at both magazines pushed for Truman’s policy of supporting Kai-Shek’s Nationalist party, urging readers to send their own aid and to push for formal government economic support of his government. After China fell to Communism, and probably because editors had less access to news after Mao’s rise to power, writers backed off extensive coverage, only cautiously writing about China’s politics and culture.
In the immediate postwar period, *Harper’s Bazaar* carried the occasional feature story on China, but coverage of China was significantly more in-depth in *Vogue* Magazine. *Vogue* stationed its own foreign correspondent, Mary Jean Kempner, in China and the Pacific during the war and into the postwar period. Kempner’s coverage strongly favored the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-Shek and pleaded with readers for strong monetary and diplomatic support of his regime. Kempner’s fervent feelings stemmed from her wartime experience writing almost exclusively about the Pacific theatre. She was one of the first women to reach Okinawa and Iwo Jima after the two islands were occupied by U.S. troops. Despite the later realization that Japan would be a necessary U.S. ally, she was initially an advocate of harsher punishment for Japan, partly because of her experiences in China and sympathy for its people.

More importantly, Kempner wrote from China with a strong stance on a prominent U.S. role in the United Nations, and for China’s inclusion in that organization, with equal partnership as a U.S. ally. In her eyes, the Nationalist government was China’s best hope for the future, and according to Kempner, the American press working there agreed. *Vogue*’s reportage was incredibly detailed, and its China correspondent did make significant efforts to present both sides in China’s Civil War, but from 1945 to 1947, Kempner’s support for the Chinese nationalist government increased. Other reporters agreed with Kempner’s view, emphasizing China’s importance to the United States as a potential trading partner and warning readers that China was a necessary Cold War ally. Owen Lattimore, for instance, wrote about China’s politics and diplomatic importance, making sure to focus on Chinese national character so readers could understand more
about the culture. He felt the Japanese had been able so quickly to occupy China during the war because they “understood China better than the U.S. did,” a mistake Americans might correct if they wanted China to remain a solid partner.59

Lattimore also mistakenly predicted that China’s occupation leaders would be democratic, “and therefore, the best kind,” in addition to asserting that the Communists would have a difficult time in China.60 The country’s people, he felt, although “not individualized” like Americans, “were (now) more vocal and knowledgeable about what they wanted” in a government.61 Lattimore believed the Chinese wanted a democratic government under Chiang Kai-Shek, whose true nature he did not comprehend.62 Mary Jean Kempner, reporting from China, believed that democracy would win out for other reasons; mostly because the Communists “were sick of the corruption in North China” and did not want that problem when dealing with so many other issues.63 While she did not paint a very flattering portrait of the Nationalist government, Kempner still insisted that the Communists would not come to power.

Mary Jean Kempner’s report from China in October 1945 predicted an excellent future for Sino-American relations, despite the country’s political troubles. She applauded the formation of the wartime Sino-American Cooperative Organization


60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

(SACO) under Lt. General Tai Li and Rear Admiral Milton E. Miles. The SACO was formed during the Pacific as an intelligence sharing organization in which the United States furnished experts and technical equipment, while China supplied housing and extra manpower. Kempner foresaw potential for the organization to carry on after the war, and if SACO worked as well as it had during the war, then relations would be good.\(^6^4\) Even as late as 1951, other Vogue editors continued in this vein, hoping for a Communist fall, and even reporting that Mao’s government might be nervous about “the big news…about the anti-Communist guerilla attacks, their seriousness underlined by Peking’s reprisal edicts.”\(^6^5\)

In the years before China fell to Communism, staff at both magazines increased petitions for U.S. economic aid to China, especially after it became apparent the nationalist government was failing. With this in mind, Vogue’s China correspondent, Mary Jean Kempner, began, in articles similar to those written about the Soviet Union, delineating the Chinese people and their culture from the Communist government imposed upon them. Kempner later went so far as to argue for a compromise between the Nationalist and Maoist governments, departing from her earlier, hard-line views in hopes that the U.S. could maintain the country as a buffer zone against the Soviet Union. Later, instead of viewing China as a part of the Cold War, Kempner’s Vogue articles began urging the U.S. government to educate itself and its citizens on the civil war in China as a function of internal rather than international strife, viewing the problems in China more


\(^6^5\) Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 117, 1 April 1951, p. 140.
as an issue of nationalism rather than as a battle over communism. Kempner thought that if the public understood that idea, Americans might be more supportive of economic aid to prop up the Nationalist regime and, like in France and Great Britain, help relieve wartime deprivations.  

When the Korean War began in 1950, magazine staff sharply curtailed almost all coverage of the political situation in China, most likely because reporters were rarely admitted into the nation. Any further reports coming from China typically originated in Hong Kong. Korean War coverage was also severely limited, focusing mostly on requests for magazines and letters for soldiers or aid to orphaned Korean children, but never on China’s possible role in the conflict. *Vogue* writers continued sporadically to support Chiang Kai-Shek and his wife, and occasionally inserted small reports on their social life into the magazine. In 1956, for instance, the magazine’s travel editor urged readers to travel to Formosa on a “garden tour through the Orient,” where Kai-Shek and his wife opened their Formosa gardens to visitors. Perhaps when it became evident that China for the moment was not a threat, or possibly because the Cold War with the Soviet Union moved to the forefront of the American consciousness, almost all coverage of China ended there, with the exception of small bits of fashion news, such as reports on Chinese-inspired fashions or decorating trends.

Editorial coverage of the American relationship with the Soviet Union and China was shaped by the fact that both nations were former allies that transformed into Cold

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67 Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” *Vogue*, Volume 128, 1 August 1956, p. 162.
War enemies. Although initially each magazine’s foreign policy correspondents and contributors remained hopeful that partnerships could be built between the United States and the other two nations, diplomatic events made continued friendly relationships unrealistic. In light of a looming face off between the United States and the Soviet Union and China, reports that during the immediate postwar period focused on how international cooperation could lead to a peaceful co-existence between democracy and Communism soon turned to appeals for international understanding based on bonds of gender and culture, or sympathy for the plight of thousands living under Communist rule.

In reporting about the Soviet Union and China, magazine editors at first attempted to champion wartime partnerships, and when that failed, they began building support for populations as separate from their governments. The tactic may have been successful, because even as the Cold War progressed, the public seemed to develop a keen interest in Russian and Chinese culture that played itself out in increased tourism, a fascination with artists like the Bolshoi Ballet dancers, or even more superficial elements of the culture like fashion. Writers still, however, focused the majority of their energy encouraging relationships with France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Italy, nations that became key bulwarks against Communism in Europe and Asia.
Chapter III

Balance of Power:
Keeping Friends Close and Enemies Closer

When Albert Camus warned in his essay “The Crisis of Man” that “inertia is the strongest temptation,” he placed an appeal for readers to take an active and informed part in creating a better postwar world.¹ That his message was heartfelt and eloquently presented is important, but perhaps more significant is the audience to whom he addressed his work. Camus’ piece is intriguing because it did not appear in traditional literary publications like Harper’s, The Atlantic, or Collier’s, but rather, was published in the July 1946 issue of Vogue magazine. Generally thought of as rather frivolous, albeit highbrow, fashion magazines, Vogue and its rival publication Harper’s Bazaar in fact paid close attention to international political and diplomatic developments throughout the Cold War. Both publications’ editors-in-chief (Edna Woolman Chase and Carmel Snow, respectively), believed fashion affected more than just clothing. Rather, fashion encompassed and in turn was driven by advancements in art, philosophy, and music, and by key world events.

Articles in magazines like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar, therefore, reported on more than clothing trends, and both magazines reached an educated and cultured

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audience Carmel Snow characterized as “well dressed women with well dressed minds” deeply interested in international affairs. To keep readers’ attention and continue expanding circulations, Vogue and Harpers’ Bazaar sought out contributions from serious writers like Albert Camus, sent reporters into the heart of warzones for stories, and solicited government officials for inside opinions on domestic politics. The magazines’ strategy was effective, and between 1945 and 1962, both magazines were consistent national top sellers in subscriptions and advertisements. Each year during this time period, the pair ranked within the top fifty periodicals in the nation, a group that included more traditional newsmagazines like Time or Newsweek. Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar were two of the most popular magazines in their category, capturing considerable shares of an audience that could choose from dozens of other titles that solely covered the news. High subscription and advertising sales, however, provided both magazines with the budget and clout to attract influential, cutting-edge contributors, setting them apart from other, more mass-market news publications. Upper class women consequently turned to Vogue and Harpers Bazaar for fashion news, but more importantly, for unique perspectives on world events they could not get from other periodicals.

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3 Association of National Advertisers, Inc., Magazine Circulation and Rate Trends: 1940-1963, (Association of National Advertisers Committee: New York, 1964), pp. 2-3, also Email, Sandy Jimenez to Susan Dawson, “Magazine Publishing Rates,” 12 February 2009. The Association of National Advertisers (ANA) was a non-profit organization that tracked advertising and subscription rates for the top fifty-nine magazines in the United States. There does not exist a complete listing of all the magazines published in the United States at this time, but the Magazine Publishers of America indicated the number was probably more than one hundred. Sandy Jimenez, of the Magazine Publishers of America, indicated in an email on 12 February 2009, that she could not “find a number of total magazines for that period that anyone would stand behind,” but she did tell me this document listed the top 59, and gave an estimate of how many magazines she thought were published from 1945-1962.

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Diplomatic features in both *Vogue* and *Harper's Bazaar* provide valuable insight into political thought among upper class women in the late 1940s and early 1950s. From their founding, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue* magazines made a tradition of carrying in-depth current news stories, although coverage of American foreign policy was especially intense during and immediately after the Second World War, diminishing but not disappearing toward the end of the 1950s. During the war, both magazines sent reporters into war zones; Lee Miller, for example, was one of the first American photographers to photograph the Buchenwald concentration camp immediately after its liberation and her work was published in *Vogue* and elsewhere, while *Vogue*’s Mary Jean Kempner began the war reporting from China, later following the American military on its Pacific Island hopping campaign. Both reporters (among others) continued as foreign correspondents after the war, reporting from Europe or trouble zones like Korea. Editors’ high-quality writing and investigation, international prestige, and markedly global perspectives infused reports with a sophisticated and cosmopolitan slant. Although there is no evidence that the government officially “fed” stories to magazine editors, magazine staff typically endorsed official government foreign policy doctrine. That foreign policy articles existed at all points to readership demand for better information about foreign affairs, although the women reading them probably had little control over content, unless they were themselves writing an article (and many did work for both titles). Magazine editors, however, generally inclined toward a Rooseveltian, New Deal-type Democratic viewpoint, emphasizing increased social programs and civil rights at home, but more importantly, an internationalist perspective abroad.
Because of their positions as prominent hostesses and social figures often married to high-ranking government officials, women reading these two magazines needed to understand every facet of important issues. The sheer number of articles devoted to foreign policy indicates that readers most likely wanted to acquire an extensive knowledge of the wartime history and Cold War diplomatic standing of each nation with whom the U.S. dealt. Coverage in the immediate postwar period, from 1945 to 1947, generally focused on three main concerns: postwar relationships with other Allied powers (particularly Great Britain and France, as well as smaller nations), the developing Cold War with the Soviet Union, and the diplomatic crisis being played out in Asia. Not surprisingly, news stories primarily included United Nations Security Council Members – France, England, Russia, and China. Germany, Japan and Italy also merited special coverage.

The United States faced an interesting diplomatic dilemma in the immediate postwar era when former allies and enemies switched places in the new Cold War order. France and Britain still maintained cordial relationships with the United States, but those alliances could be fraught with complications, especially as American Cold War interests drove the nation into uncharted diplomatic waters. The United States wanted to move into Great Britain’s former role as an international power, while Britain sought to maintain its past imperial supremacy and France to regain its eminence after an especially complicated wartime role. Next, the oncoming Cold War necessitated creating allies out of former Axis enemies, a thorny task made especially tricky because of Nazi and Japanese wartime atrocities. With an eye toward rehabilitating German and Japanese
economies and building new, friendly governments, the United States set about transforming each nation’s image so Americans could accept former wartime enemies as suitable postwar allies. To win the Cold War and gain a stronghold as a world leader, the United States needed to strengthen relationships with existing allies and create new friends from former enemies without alienating domestic or international populations.

Using the popular media to build positive images in an ongoing effort to keep a power rival in check was one effective way to improve friendly relationships with allies and begin the campaign of transforming enemies into friends. While there is no evidence of explicit government involvement in editorial content, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* understood American postwar issues and actively promoted the government’s postwar agenda. Staff at both magazines were often at the forefront of wartime reportage, and after the war, covered the international situation in just as much depth. Editors informed readers with on-the-spot coverage of Allied nations’ dire economic and political situations. France and Britain were almost always favorably represented, with special attention paid to rehabilitating their economies, especially promoting the fashion and luxury goods industries. The French and the British were consistently presented as strong fighters who nobly suffered through war and occupation and needed U.S. help, depictions lasting throughout the Cold War. Editors too, drew comparisons between women in both these countries and in women across the Atlantic, a tactic ostensibly used to build support for government policies favoring the two nations. Later, using strategies similar to those used for Allies in the immediate postwar years, magazine articles helped fulfill curiosity about the nature of life in postwar Germany, Japan, and Italy while rehabilitating their
national images. A slow process, all these goals were manifest throughout coverage geared towards supporting the U.S. government’s agenda of keeping friends close and drawing former enemies closer.

While writers at both magazines at first regarded former Axis powers suspiciously, they gradually switched to presenting them in a more favorable light, especially encouraging travel and spending in all three nations. Germans, at first and more than any other former Axis power, were regarded with suspicion and little compassion, particularly where women were concerned. Not long after the Cold War, the attitude toward Germany shifted to sympathy, especially as the Soviets tightened their grip on central Europe. From then on, Nazism was regarded as a disease from which the population had to be cured rather than as an ideology it brought to fruition. Editors approached Japan and Italy in the same fashion, first regarding both nations with little pity, and later changing that view to excuse Japanese wartime atrocities and Italian fascism. By the early 1950s, all three became suitable Cold War allies. By the mid Sixties, Japan’s popularity as a tourist spot combined with Italy’s popularity in films, fashion, and as a popular travel destination pointed to an astonishing transformation in opinion about the two nations.

The sheer number of articles covering diplomatic issues attests to an audience deeply interested in foreign policy. Additionally, these articles were prominently placed at the front of the magazines, so that after advertisements (always at the front of magazines), foreign policy pieces were the first stories viewed and, presumably, read. Furthermore, the prestige of the writers included in magazines indicates that readers
placed a high priority on understanding and being informed about foreign relations from the best possible sources. CBS correspondent Eric Sevareid, for example, frequently contributed articles on his perspective of U.S./Soviet postwar affairs to both publications, while Senator J.W. Fulbright composed foreign policy articles for *Vogue*. As for female contributors, Mrs. Louise Hopkins, wife of New Deal government official and Lend-Lease Administrator Harry Hopkins, periodically wrote for *Harper’s Bazaar*. Other occasional writers for both publications included Simone de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Ernest Hemingway, to name a few. Furthermore, readers themselves, like Jacqueline Kennedy and her sister Lee Radziwill, or Susan Mary Alsop and Marietta Tree, occasionally wrote, edited, or even modeled for each magazine.

An analysis of foreign policy articles in *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* suggests that upper class women had clear-cut, multi-faceted, and complex roles in the postwar world. Just as for their male counterparts, being educated and well-informed about domestic and international issues seemed to be class duties. Upper class women engaged in considerable amounts of political work, not only as well informed voters, but also as workers for socially appropriate volunteer organizations or political candidates. Marietta Tree, for example, volunteered as a campaign aide in both of Adlai Stevenson’s presidential bids, and was one of the founding members of the Syndenham hospital, the first interracial voluntary hospital in the United States. She also served on the New York City Commission on Intergroup Relations and the Franklin D. Roosevelt Four Freedoms Foundation (now the Franklin D. Roosevelt Foundation).
Women like Tree might act as role models to middle class women looking to them for signals on how to behave or what causes to support at home and, if those middle class women were lucky enough to travel, overseas. When visiting other nations, upper class women could be well-educated exemplars of American society, acting in a dignified manner that would reflect well upon the country. Both these roles first required a strong foundation in current international foreign policy issues. Since *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* both represented and potentially helped influence their audiences’ beliefs, understanding how each portrayed France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, and Italy illuminates what readers might in turn have thought about each of these nations. Through coverage of American allies and enemies, magazines also proved valuable informal cultural diplomats themselves, helping build or destroy support for postwar friends or foes.

*Keeping Friends Close*

To understand an emerging world order with the United States and the Soviet Union replacing Great Britain and France as the world’s two major powers first required a working knowledge of the organization charged with keeping postwar peace. During the last two years of the war, *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar’s* intensive coverage of the United Nations’ (UN) founding indicated editorial boards at both magazines heartily supported the new international organization. Writers at both magazines praised it as a powerful tool for promoting a lasting postwar peace, focusing considerable attention on the four major nations other than the United States making up its Security Council. Since the “world was one world,” the United States had to work with other nations to achieve
the common goal of peace. Additionally, because the war would not have been won without Great Britain and the Soviet Union as allies, those nations had to be accepted as equal partners in the UN (along with France, and later, China). In 1945, Senator J.W. Fulbright explained the purposes of the United Nations and why it needed readers’ urgent and unwavering support. “The policy which I believe offers the best hope for success, is that of collective security. It is the only possible foreign policy which is consistent with our political and moral standards of conduct.”

Short story author and Army Lieutenant Robert McLaughlin argued for the United Nations in a more direct manner by writing, “The issue is very clear. We must lick the world or join it…we become one world or we become none.”

Given such strong language, *Vogue* (and *Harper’s Bazaar*) readers, then, might be more in favor of belonging to the United Nations than in betting on a peace without some sort of international leadership organization. To counteract a historical aversion to what many Americans might think of as a world government, *Vogue* writer Gertrude Samuels went to great lengths to clarify exactly what the UN was, and why readers might be in favor of belonging. She explained, “it is not world government…it is the coming together of nations and all their nationalisms to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.” Her article went on to detail the nature, workings, and procedures of the new UN

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and its ruling body, the Security Council. By 1950, *Vogue* writers favorably evaluated the UN’s progress, noting that it “kept conflict between the major power within peaceful bounds,” “broke the Berlin deadlock,” “prevented or ended wars in Kashmir, Indonesia, and Palestine,” “promoted economic assistance to underdeveloped nations,” and “proclaimed the first Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” among other achievements that made it “stand for hope as a monument in America.”

If readers consistently followed coverage of the United Nations, they would not only come away with a favorable impression of the organization, but also an intimate understanding of its official workings. Certainly upper class women like Marietta Tree were tireless United Nations advocates; she was ultimately rewarded in 1961 for decades of work on its behalf with a post to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. Three years later, Tree began serving as U.S. Representative to the UN Trusteeship Council, with the rank of ambassador.

Next, knowing the daily life stories of various UN members (many of whom were drawn from the ranks of the American upper class) could help readers understand the organization on a more personal level. “United Nations Sundays,” a feature photo spread on UN members and their wives at after-hours social gatherings, placed UN supporters in the same circles as those reading *Vogue* or *Harper’s Bazaar*. Drawing parallels between

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8 Staff Editor, “*Vogue’s* Eye View of the UN, Monumental, Unfinished, Working,” *Vogue*, Volume 115, 1 February 1950, p. 123.


individual UN members and readers was a clever way to educate them about the UN’s function and about the people within the organization. Both magazines also carried favorable coverage of other establishments like the World Bank and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association (UNRRA). Stories about the UN, however, were by far the most prominent and complete.

Once readers had a basic grasp of the UN’s purpose, structure, and why it needed American support, editors turned to clarifying the new international roles of each Security Council member nation. Since the French liberation and reemergence onto the world scene was probably a bigger story than the British recovery, and because the United States and Great Britain presumably had a stronger relationship, Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar almost immediately began exploring France’s postwar government, its new power players, and its acceptability as a postwar ally. France, as the home of the fashion and luxury goods trades, also historically received far more attention in fashion magazines than did other nations. For this reason, reports about the postwar political, economic, cultural, and social situation were not only more extensive, but also illuminate consistent editorial trends used with other diplomatically vital nations throughout the early Cold War. First, reporters at both magazines profiled rising French politicians, underscoring their unique position as a new generation of leaders markedly different from their predecessors in the Vichy regime. Every member of the government featured in Vogue’s “Primer on French Politics,” for example, had either served in the Resistance or

spent the war in a prison camp. This does not mean the Vichy government escaped blame for collaboration with the Nazis, but articles emphasized that the new postwar government was nothing like the wartime collaborationist regime.

Next, editors tried to make clear how the new republic differed from its predecessors. Probably the biggest change in France was that women began taking more powerful positions in the postwar world where they could theoretically contribute to governmental change. In Colette de Jouvenel’s reports on France, for example, “women have seized this post-war period – a period that gives men no grounds for complacency – to change the arrangements that have hitherto resulted in wars.” As social (and sometimes political) leaders, upper class American women who worked during and after the war in positions not previously open to them might identify with French women’s desire to take control of a new postwar world. French women could be a force for peace, preventing the new government from making the same mistakes that led to the previous world wars. Like Colette de Jouvenel, Susan Mary Patten thought French women ideally suited to the task of reform in France. Commenting that what “struck [her] most was how strong the women were and how tired the men; all the women looked as if they could do it again, the men didn’t,” Patten implied that French men were too tired from the war to rebuild the nation and should step aside to let women handle the task.

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13 Colette de Jouvenel, “The Judgment of Paris,” *Vogue*, Volume 107, 15 January 1946, p. 83. Collete de Jouvenel was the French novelist Collette’s daughter, and was herself a member of the Resistance.

Possibly in light of U.S. need for a postwar French alliance, editors made clear that the nation was in responsible (not socialist or communist) hands. With this idea in mind, coverage after the war focused on important members of the new Republic, elaborating on their political platforms and commitment to an anti-Communist agenda.\textsuperscript{15} Even before the American government recognized it, writers at both publications deeply respected the provisional de Gaulle régime, portraying its leader as a “symbol of restored French pride.”\textsuperscript{16} After the provisional government was better established, \textit{Vogue}’s “Primer on French Politics” explained “la politique française to an American lady in a maze,” clarifying the bureaucracy’s myriad levels and its officers’ roles and political leanings.\textsuperscript{17} Possibly worried about the effects of growing American concern over Communism in Europe, Author Pierre De Lanux made clear that while Americans “might use the words socialist, radical, and communist to mean vaguely the same thing,” in France, the words had different interpretations, and the government was not dominated by any of these factions.\textsuperscript{18} Other public figures associated with the government earned editorial accolades, such as Madame Henri Bonnet (and by extension, her husband), the wife of the Ambassador from the French provisional government to the United States. Her husband, naturally, participated in the Resistance, as did she, delivering clandestine messages between Resistance members on her bicycle. Madame Bonnet reappeared in


\textsuperscript{17} Pierre de Lanux, “Primer on French Politics,” pp. 97, 154-58.

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Ibid}.
Vogue a number of times throughout the 1950s, and she was noted for her style, home management skills, and beauty.\(^\text{19}\) Overall, with de Gaulle and his trusted aides in power, the French government might prove a stable, anti-Communist, and close friend in the new postwar world order.

Of course, any government was only as good as the people it ruled, so changing the national image was the next task in shaping France into a strong postwar ally. Although they respected the resistance movement, many Americans still distrusted the French, questioning their loyalty to democracy in light of collaboration with the Nazis. Perhaps because of this feeling, reporters at both magazines were quick to paint French wartime activities in a flattering light when tackling the issue of collaboration. Like their politicians, the French populace was not held responsible for the Vichy régime’s alliance with Germany. French writer François Mauriac, for instance, explained away Vichy as a reaction to fear of Bolshevism, rather than as an act of support for the Nazis. At the beginning of the war, in the author’s opinion, the French were less afraid of the Nazis, assuming that they could be beaten, than they were of a Bolshevist attack, only allying with Vichy as a last resort to save their nation.\(^\text{20}\) Contributors to Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar both clearly agreed with de Gaulle’s sweeping declaration that all of France participated in the Resistance.

French people themselves were consistently upheld as paragons of bravery who almost universally participated in the Resistance and possessed a stoic nature in the trying

\(^{19}\) Staff Editor, “Madame Henri Bonnet,” Vogue, 15 February 1945, Volume 105, pp. 100-101.

postwar era. In 1945, for example, the *Harper’s Bazaar*’s article “They Waited Long for Victory,” discussed Occupation hardships, praising the population for its unswerving commitment to the Resistance and to the victory of freedom over tyrannical Nazi forces. In *Vogue* articles, almost every French person, “man and woman, old and young,” was an “underground hero of the French Resistance,” and came out of the war with an admirable “strength to judge (non-Resisters) without hatred or pity.” After the war, France’s resistance fighters heroically faced the horrors of their occupation past and the critical economic situation afterward.

The nation’s heroic image was only bolstered by the postwar world of hunger, need, and economic crisis. Probably the most immediate issue was that France desperately needed material aid, and because its status as a world power had been irrevocably altered by the war, it could not access colonial natural resources. Economic help not only addressed this situation but might also build good postwar relations, strengthening Franco-American diplomatic bonds. Writers at both magazines did not simply urge support for government aid to France, but also felt that an effective way to help the French economy was through a swift increase in trade with that nation. This is not surprising given that many readers counted on commerce with France for luxury goods like *haute couture* clothing, wine, and delicacies. But trade took time to help rebuild the economy, so articles swiftly appeared on the immediately grim financial situation in France to encourage private and government aid to France. “Privations of

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Paris,” in the March 1945 issue of Harper’s Bazaar, made clear that the French economy was in dire straits and many in the populace were in imminent danger of food, clothing, or housing shortages, which might lead to Communist agitation.\textsuperscript{23} Still, despite the danger of a grave economic situation, editors guaranteed that there was “no chance of Paris [and France] going with the East,” as long as the nation received aid.\textsuperscript{24}

In response to the crisis, editors pleaded with their readers to send clothing, money, and food to lighten the French burden, particularly as the winter of 1945 approached. In the photo essay “These are the People of Europe Last Winter, These are the People of Europe Next Winter,” Harper’s Bazaar photographers showed powerful depictions of Paris’ destruction and how its residents survived in difficult circumstances. The accompanying article helpfully provided a list of agencies to which readers could contribute, including the National War Fund, the American National Red Cross, the American Friends’ Service Committee, and the United Nations Relief Agency, an agency both magazines would heavily promote throughout the Cold War. A Vogue contributor stated his case more bluntly in “Paris – Summer 1945,” when “an American designer of fashions in the ‘middle bracket’ declared that “France must be helped. She will be helped.”\textsuperscript{25}

If economic aid built better relationships, diplomatic need necessitated them.

Politically, editors and contributors made clear that France was a valuable postwar ally


necessary to winning the U.S./Soviet Cold War. As late as 1948, editors reminded readers that the situation was critical because the French, although “beleaguered,” were in “a valiant struggle to carry on and not be strangled” by a potential Communist ministry. \(^\text{27}\)

*Vogue’s* gossip editor even assured readers that France was an important ally, explaining that Paris was “a listening post and world junction,” which could prove critical in the “prolonged agony of the East-West crisis.” During the early 1950s, a *Harper’s Bazaar* editor explained in a profile of American Ambassador to France Mr. Douglas C. Dillon, and his wife Mrs. Dillon, that “these days, the American Embassy in Paris is just as critical a post as it was a hundred and seventy years ago when Ambassadors Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson were hailed by French admirers of our infant republic.” \(^\text{29}\)

In order to take advantage of that post, the United States and France had to construct an equitable postwar partnership, a task made more difficult by the nations’ somewhat divergent policy goals. The relationship initially stalled when, as Susan Mary Patten lamented, “Paris was clouded and confused by our government’s delay in recognizing de Gaulle and his ministers as the French government,” something she (and magazine editors) immediately advocated. \(^\text{30}\)

Even with the bad start, and although throughout the Cold War the Franco-American relationship was intermittently rocky,

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\(^{27}\)Staff Editor, “Paris at Year’s End,” *Vogue*, Volume 111, 1 January 1948, p. 138.


\(^{29}\)Staff Editor, “Mr. and Mrs. Douglas C. Dillon,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, Volume 87, Number 2898, May 1953, p. 123.

both magazines still saw room for optimism, especially when the French government humbled itself before the United States’ superior power. Exhibiting a modesty that might encourage American readers to advocate comparable cooperativeness, French leaders like Georges Bidault understood as early as 1949 that his nation “must give up some sovereignty to have a unified West.”

In the mid-1950s, new Premier Mendés-France was praised for his “good ability to negotiate, even from a weak place,” particularly after the French disaster at Dien Bien Phu, and to speak frankly, without “double-talk,” character traits forecasting a positive future for the Franco-American alliance. Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Maurice Petsche, “took to the radio and actually thanked the United States for the coal and cotton and the wheat that had kept France going” especially during the siege in Indochina. According to Susan Mary Patten, “editorialists [in Paris] wrote that France had turned the corner and that the lucky French owed this to the generosity of the United States.”

During the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Franco-American relations hit an especially rough patch, although the French war in Indochina did bring the United States and Great Britain closer. According to Susan Mary Patten, “the French turned sharply against Eisenhower after his harsh remarks about their (colonial) decadence,” and were before he even took office “worried about John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State as he

34 Ibid.
had the reputation here…of being bellicose and anti-colonialist.”

The French already felt Americans were “clumsy and might well plunge France in another world war,” as well as “moralistic about anti-colonialism and, having hurt the English and the Dutch by encouraging the loss of their empires, were now hoping that the French would lose their vital…possessions.”

As early as 1952, Susan Mary Patten worried about American involvement in Indochina, wondering “if we (the United States) were going to run the risk of becoming involved,” especially since the “Indochinese situation was far worse than the public knows.”

While her French contacts informed her they did not want American aid, at the same time, they were confusingly resentful that the United States did not come more quickly to France’s side.

Luckily, Dien Bien Phu had one good side effect in that it did bring the British and the United States closer together when Anthony Eden announced a British policy of non-intervention. Although U.S. Secretary of State Dulles and British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden disliked each other, the two governments at least, were united on the non-intervention point. According to Susan Mary Patten, the British announcement also gave President Eisenhower someone to blame when Dien Bien Phu fell, a favor for which he was grateful. Furthermore, when the French disliked the United States, they also tended


to dislike the British, who were at times, Susan Mary Patten pointed out, “just as unpopular as we are,” something that helped smooth Anglo-American relations.\footnote{Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 310, 311. At times, Alsop reported that the “President (Eisenhower) was hissed every time there was a picture of him on the screen of a movie house, as was the Queen of England.”}

When Pierre Mendès-France came to power in 1954, his dynamism and work on the Geneva Accords went far toward repairing Franco-American relations damaged by Indochina, although their success continued to ebb and flow with French political fortunes and depended at times upon French leaders’ international popularity. Mendès-France was quite popular in the United States, even though he was “still as unknown and as fascinating a quantity” as before his election.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 260.} Later in the decade, Vogue editors heralded General de Gaulle’s return to politics, describing him as “tall, imperious, and grappling [well] with the problems of the premiership” in 1958, especially “the near serpent, the deadly North African trouble,” an issue for which Susan Mary Patten and her husband “had great sympathy (not for the die-hard colons or the generals but for the reformers who are the majority of the people we see).”\footnote{Social Editor, “People Are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 132, July 1958, pp. 44-45; Susan Mary Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 271.} The Sputnik launch, according to Patten, improved relations once again, and French papers were “full of surprisingly pro-American articles pointing out that the Russian lead could be overtaken by our intelligent, industrial people,” and that this was “the time to draw closer to the United States and help in every way possible.”\footnote{Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 308.} By the early 1960s, diplomat and economist
Jean Monnet continued working toward better Franco-American relations, insisting to a Vogue staff editor (in reference to American worries about the revived nuclear program and to the nascent war in Indochina) that “when it becomes obvious to all that a united Europe and America cannot be dissociated…problems that today seem insoluble may be settled.”

When Kennedy took office, if the Franco-American relationship was not idyllic, it was at least stable because the French adored his wife and their government seemed to be in good, anti-Communist and ostensibly friendly hands.

In an equitable partnership, if the French bowed to U.S. political supremacy, Americans followed France’s cultural lead. France, as a “capital of pre-history,” was the acknowledged birthplace of all world culture. Certainly, by 1962, Jacqueline Kennedy recognized French cultural superiority and embraced it as a way to charm leaders during her husband’s presidency. She was even able to turn the “unprecedented, perilous 1962 loan of da Vinci’s masterpiece [the Mona Lisa, from the Louvre] into a powerful Cold War symbol of Western ideals” and Franco-American solidarity at a time when events like the Cuban missile crisis made friends in Europe more important than ever.

Kennedy wanted to “make the White House a showcase for great art and artists,” and when beginning her plans, turned to the French for loans of great artworks, in the process acknowledging their cultural preeminence.

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42 Staff Editor, “Jean Monnet,” Vogue, Volume 140, 15 August 1962, pp. 100-103.


45 Ibid., 224.
André Malraux while forging strong cultural bonds helped the United States and France present a unified front on at least one level.

Kennedy’s admiration of France was well-known, and indeed, was a characteristic common to many upper class women throughout the early Cold War. In asserting that “one need not be French to be a Parisian,” for example, Harper’s Bazaar editors insinuated that readers wanted to emulate the capital’s chic and cultured residents. French designers dictated fashion trends around the world, and American women followed their standards, changing hemlines, sleeve lengths, or even hairstyles to meet couturiers’ whims. Just as France dominated the artistic world, its thinkers led the revolutionary postwar Existentialist movement in philosophy. In the music world, singer Edith Piaf rose to international fame singing nostalgic French ballads, providing a sort of soundtrack for France’s influential postwar café society. That society was dominated by thinkers like Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, and Jean-Paul Sartre, all, at various times, contributing writers for Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar. Susan Mary Patten remembered the postwar period in France as “a time of high aspiration, of high intellectual energy,” which helped re-establish French cultural dominance. Artistic and philosophical achievements helped France carve out a space for itself in the world and in the Franco-American partnership.


Throughout the 1950s, magazine editors had plenty of high profile opportunities to celebrate French contributions to civilization while underscoring America’s cultural debt to the nation. Referencing French culture’s contribution to art, Vogue’s photo essay “Two Great French Masters Paint Great Paintings During War and Deprivation,” featured the first postwar canvasses by Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard, and drew attention both to the artists’ bravery and to the dire postwar situation while nicely pointing out France’s cultural contributions to the world.\(^{48}\) Paris took the spotlight in 1951 when it celebrated its 2000\(^{th}\) birthday, which editors marked with laudatory fashion spreads, profiles, and travel columns. In 1955, New York City’s government organized a “Salute to France,” a weeklong celebration that introduced French dignitaries to American culture. Vogue’s social editor recorded French visitors’ mixed reactions to evenings at the theater, noting that they “love the gaiety of Oklahoma!, but thought it dated; admired the brilliant acting of Helen Hayes and the dazzling wit of Mary Martin in The Skin of our Teeth; but preferred their own way of acting Medea to that of Judith Anderson, whom they respected more than enjoyed.”\(^{49}\) The comparisons seemed to indicate that while American culture might be filled with a certain amount of gaiety, it lacked sophistication when compared to French artistic accomplishments. Two years later, Vogue noted another milestone with the 1957 “re-opening of the Theater of King Louis XV at

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\(^{48}\) Editorial Staff, “Two Great French Masters Paint Great Paintings During War and Deprivation,” Vogue, Volume 105, 1 January 1945, pp. 50-51.

\(^{49}\) Social Editor, “People Are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 126, 1 August 1955, p. 111.
Versailles,” closed since the French Revolution, and whose opening signified a cultural resurgence.  

French film underwent a tremendous revival in the postwar era, and was another cultural achievement that could help Americans understand the people, and in turn, possibly support partnership with the French. Films like *Les Enfants Du Paradis* (Children of the Gods, 1945), directed by Marcel Carné, *The Red Balloon* (1956) by Albert Lamorisse, Jean Luc Godard’s *The 400 Blows* (1959), and *Breathless* (1960), and *Jules et Jim* (1962) directed by François Truffaut, ushered in the popular, influential “New Wave” movement in cinema. The “New Wave” combined French existentialist themes with novel editing techniques to create films that directly confronted France’s role in the Second World War, its colonial struggles, and fall from international power.

French film critic André Maurois wrote that “movies can and should help all nations of the world understand each other,” and believed French films revealed their makers to be “poetic, clear and forthright, and with a love of both perfection and Paris.”  

Even if some of these qualities might be stereotypical, they also went far, in his opinion, toward endearing the French to Americans. Examples like these indicated that even if the United States was the most powerful nation in the world, it still looked to France for cultural leadership. Despite that position’s condescending undertones, American readers might respect this idea if they did not always support the French government.

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Economic hardship, political necessity, and cultural eminence were grounds for creating a good postwar relationship, although sometimes that relationship faltered. During tense times, editors proposed that female readers could, by identifying with their French counterparts, help bolster the Franco-American friendship, especially if other methods for keeping the relationship stable were ineffectual. After the war, writers at *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* played upon readers’ sympathies through stories about women like them placed in and ably coping with desperate situations. *Harper’s Bazaar* ran articles on heroic everyday French women in articles like “Paris Working Girl, 1946,” whose subject worked as a model in the reemerging fashion industry among thousands of dollars worth of luxury goods, but went home to a cold water flat and no food.\(^{52}\) Hardworking women like the model had to contend with malnutrition, lack of housing or other problems, and her postwar trials seemed unfair in light of French women’s contributions to the war.\(^{53}\)

While facing postwar tribulations, and in keeping with the already established image of the French as noble Resistance warriors, magazine editors made sure readers also knew that women were reconstructing the core of their nation’s dignity during its restoration. “France Under the Surface,” in *Vogue* highlighted women’s accomplishments in the war, asserting that they were to be commended because “under the surface” of more visible battles, French women were the unrecognized glue that kept the nation


together while the men were fighting.\textsuperscript{54} Susan Mary Patten noted French women’s strength in her letters and observed that even if American women did not have to contend with similar struggles, because of their own domestic contributions, they could identify with French women as the backbone of a wartime society.\textsuperscript{55}

Of course, if they had nothing else in common, American women and their French counterparts did have a mutual interest in fashion that could, if necessary, be used as a starting point toward engendering shared sympathies. Some writers went so far as to declare French wartime fashions a form of resistance in themselves because, in “looking back at Paris fashions,” editors found their flamboyance as a sort of snub to German staidness and propriety, and of course, a way to keep fabric and other dry goods out of Nazi hands.\textsuperscript{56} Historian Dominique Veillon tracks this trend, supporting the fashion as protest theme in her research on the industry during the occupation.\textsuperscript{57} Using fashion as a starting point, French women resisted Germans during the war in small ways, like wearing showy clothes similar to those described in the \textit{Vogue} “Paris Fashions” article. American readers might have admired this novel act of resistance, and possibly were more eager to be able again to purchase French fashion after knowing how much their purchases helped the economy.


\textsuperscript{55} Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 89.


Another way in which American readers might relate to French women was on the basis of class. French nobility were just as established as those in Britain and American upper class women in particular looked to that class in France for cultural and style guidance. Eric Sevareid even noted “that the relationship everywhere in Europe [was] a little better with the power classes, probably because they have less property to fight over, because muddy hats and grammatical lapses do not bother them, and, well, just because the mass of fighting men are poor themselves and their values are the same.”58 In his opinion, because the upper classes within Europe got along, the upper classes in Europe and the United States should also relate well to one another, particularly since they held similar values. Upper class women in the United States had social contacts in France and were concerned about their friends’ lives in the postwar world. When information about France was difficult to obtain during and immediately after the war, especially in light of the chaotic postwar political and economic situation, upper class women may have looked to fashion magazines for news about Franco-American political, economic, and personal relations.

Such was also the case with Great Britain. Although not occupied during the war, the British faced a new government, which both needed to establish its own relationship with the United States and rebuild a seriously damaged economic infrastructure. Susan Mary Patten noted Britain’s bad luck after the war, when it experienced “the coldest winter in years and the fuel crisis was critical…it seems the worst of luck that the British

should be taking the most blows this awful winter.”59 Patten reported that even two years after the war, there was “no production of fuel and electric power…industry had practically ground to a stop, monetary reserves were frighteningly low…and the people were tired, tired, tired.”60 Because their political and economic situations were alike, reporters in many ways treated Great Britain and France similarly during and after the war. When Clement Atlee replaced Churchill, readers were concerned about a newly left-leaning government, particularly in the face of an economic situation that could potentially inspire Communist agitators. As Walter LaFeber pointed out, “Western Europe and Great Britain…turned sharply left in an effort to find the resources needed for massive rebuilding” and “Communists flourished,” something which may have made American readers worry about the Grand Alliance.61

In return, the British felt the United States was mishandling its new found power while Americans felt the British only grudgingly submitted to American superiority. When the conservative party was voted out of power and “the most important partners of the United States…were moving left and away from capitalist models just as Americans wanted more open markets and less government involvement,” keeping the future partnership strong moved to the forefront of the American diplomatic agenda.62 To help maintain the U.S./British special relationship, magazines ran stories similar to those about


60 Ibid.


62 Ibid.
the French, focusing on Britain’s new leadership and changed political importance, the population’s bravery, and its socio-cultural significance in the world. In this spirit, Senator J.W. Fulbright recommended Americans make mental adjustments toward a system of mutual security that included Great Britain, and that they re-examine and discard any lingering anti-British attitudes for the partnership to work.63

Because the postwar government was no longer run by Churchill and the Conservatives, the new set of British leaders were especially well covered, appearing regularly in the social and world news sections of both magazines. Prominent writer Vita Sackville-West’s “England: The Same but Not the Same,” chronicled not just Great Britain’s political desires in the postwar world, but also changes in the British socio-political leadership structure.64 The British, justifiably, Sackville-West asserted, wanted a stable world partnership, economic aid, and to construct a more equitable, less class-based society. In another issue immediately after Churchill’s electoral defeat, *Vogue* published a guidebook to Britain’s leaders similar to the French Primer on Politics. It compared Winston Churchill and Clement Atlee, and featured a variety of “younger British politicos.”65 Atlee came off favorable although Churchill was the noticeably more admired of the two.

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64 Vita Sackville-West, “England: The Same but Not the Same,” *Vogue*, Volume 106, Part 2, September 1, 1945, pp. 139-137.

Not to be left behind, *Harper’s Bazaar* presented regular coverage of individual members of Britain’s Parliament in stories like “Four New Members of British Parliament” and “England.”\(^{66}\) Those profiled included Ellen Wilkinson, the Labor Minister of Education; the Honorable Michael Astor III, Conservative MP; J.C. Maude, Conservative Member for Exeter; and Lt. General Sir Frank Mason-McFarlane, Labour member for North Paddington. All were not just featured because of their excellent resumes, they were also new to the political scene, war heroes, and members of the same social class as most readers. Overall, both magazines approved of England’s new leadership because it advocated a strong relationship with the United States as well as domestic socio-economic changes that would even out some of the class system’s rigidity, giving more opportunity to the middle class. Great Britain seemed to be shaping a social structure modeled on the United States’ own middle-class dominated, theoretically more equal, system.

Just as the two countries faced changes in leadership, Great Britain and France confronted many of the same postwar political and economic crises, and both had similar reactions. Like France, Great Britain was slowly having to surrender its colonial possessions and by 1947, its ability to back Greece precipitously declined, requiring American aid. Susan Mary Patten “prayed that the President will pull off the Greek-Turkey commitment,” because it meant not only a stronger partnership, but also a more

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stable Europe. The same year, India became such a sensitive topic in Great Britain that it became “a subject for foreigners to avoid, especially Americans,” so the colonial subject was a delicate one at best and had the potential negatively to affect Anglo-American relations.

In addition to relinquishing colonial interests, the government turned to the left, embracing programs like nationalized healthcare that, because of their socialist nature, made Americans somewhat uncomfortable. Because of this, throughout the immediate postwar years, magazine writers made sure to remind readers that even though the Labour Party was in power and making significant changes to the socio-economic infrastructure, the British were a long way from being Communist. Even convincing the British themselves that their government was not Communist could at times be a difficult task, as Marietta Tree found out when having a conversation with the Duke of Windsor. When she began asking him questions about the British government, she not only found him uninformed, “stupid, anti-Semitic, and generally prejudiced,” he also apparently did not understand that Socialists and Communists were not the same. Exclaiming at the end of the war that “if the Socialists win, that is the end of democracy in Britain,” he went on to explain, to her astonishment, that the “Socialists are the same thing as Communists, and

the Communists in power will do away with British democracy,” something many Americans also believed.\(^{70}\)

Editors at both magazines went to great lengths to make differences between socialism and communism clear, possibly in an effort to appeal to left-leaning readerships. Susan Mary Patten and Marietta Tree “abandoned Hoover in favor of Roosevelt’s liberalism” early in their youth, later finding “a home with the politics of the leftist journalists and writers…in New York.”\(^{71}\) Of course, Jacqueline Kennedy and her sister Lee Radziwill had been lifelong Democrats (although more passionately committed when Jacqueline and John Kennedy wed in 1953). Aneurin Bevan, the British Minister of Health, therefore met a potentially receptive audience when tried to “clarify that British healthcare,” for example, was not Communist, and indeed, “to some, the new full medical service [was even] a roadblock against British Communism…people with free glasses could see where their benefits came from and they saw the anti-Communist” nature of the system clearly.\(^{72}\)

Later, writer Judith Listowel described a “new” England, where there was still a class norm, “tempered by mutual affection and respect,” but also a new sense of equality, with the middle and lower classes “rubbing shoulders with the upper classes.”\(^{73}\) Listowel loved the new England of full employment and healthcare, where she happily traded losses to her class for “thrilling new lives for millions of individuals” who now had

\(^{70}\) Sebohm, No Regrets: The Life of Marietta Tree, p. 123.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., p. 171.


access to education, culture, and even the same clothing as did the upper classes. What was more, “the British welfare state has delivered the goods the Communists are shouting about, and it was done without terror or hatred, by compromise and statesmanship. Whatever my class may have lost, I am now convinced, has been worth it because of what millions of Britons have gained.” Moreover, the British did this without “crippling taxes” or cutting upper class traditions like “presentations at Buckingham Palace.” These were all the same types of left-leaning changes many upper class women supported and worked toward at home.

When Winston Churchill came back into power in 1951, magazine editors were thrilled because they so admired his leadership and oratory. When he retired in 1955, however, Vogue writers remained pleased with the switch back to the Conservative Party because it was so similar to the government that existed during the war. Editors were happy with “the deliberate and healthy promotion of Anthony Eden by the Conservative Party in Britain, to ease the international shock when Winston Churchill steps down.” Eden’s popularity, initially bolstered by his anti-Communist stance, diminished the next year during the Suez Crisis, but Churchill (despite his Conservative affiliation) remained widely popular in the United States throughout the 1950s. The Hallmark Card Company and the Metropolitan Museum, for example, arranged a “fascinating exhibition of thirty-five Winston Churchill paintings, on tour in [the United States] with a stop at the


75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 119, January 1952, pp. 102-3.
Metropolitan Museum, which will open the show with a benefit for the English Speaking Union.”78 When the exhibition opened in Kansas City later that year, it attracted over five thousand opening day visitors, attesting to his continued popularity throughout the Cold War.79

American readers might admire politicians in the postwar Labour Party or leaders like Winston Churchill, but Queen Elizabeth’s 1953 coronation marked a high point in American fondness for the British government. The coronation was especially important at a time when the United States and Great Britain needed to present a united front to France, because neither wanted to aid the French in Indochina, and the coronation was a way to do that without offending the French in the process. Elizabeth II was, from the time of her Uncle Edward VII’s 1936 abdication, immensely popular in the United States. She and her sister Princess Margaret were admired for their beauty, elegance, wartime volunteer work, and courage to remain in London during the bombings. If Americans held a traditional distrust of the monarchy, the charming young queen helped erase any such public misgivings. Even before she ascended to power, editors had begun promoting the monarchy as “essential to the democratic machinery of government” in Great Britain, reassuring readers who might be uneasy about supporting a nation ruled by a hereditary power.80 Before Elizabeth was crowned, the monarchy was also presented as “more popular than ever,” and “adapted to the needs of today, outdistancing rivals in political

78 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 131, 1 March 1958, p. 145.


progress.” It “provided the cohesion needed in the upheavals of the past forty years while providing peace and stability.” For the British, who might have “looked enviously at American and Russian space exploits or long nostalgically for the past, the monarchy provided a consoling image of continuity.”

The coronation was not just important because it “cheered people up when rations were low and the weather was poor,” it also helped the British economy by bringing travel and trade, and putting England back into the spotlight, emphasizing its still powerful role in the world. The British and the Americans had “coronation fever,” and the event helped foster good feelings, at least culturally, between the two nations. Vogue’s British Editor-in-Chief, Audrey Withers, who received the Order of the British Empire for her role in chairing the Coronation Souvenirs Committee, helped American editors take advantage of the event by publishing a special issue devoted to the coronation available in Great Britain and the United States. The coronation inspired everything from new car models, like the Coronation Imperial Chrysler in purple and

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82 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
gold to girdles “fit for a queen,” but it was also important because it stood for “security and continuity” in a swiftly changing and somewhat scary world.  

Editors at both magazines profiled prominent Americans attending the celebration, like American Ambassador to the Court of St. James, Mr. Winthrop Aldrich. Ambassador Aldrich was formerly president of the British War Relief Society and, along with his wife, attended the coronation ceremony, their presence drawing attention to the fact that the British post was “one of the most sensitive…in the free alliance.”

Carmel Snow devoted an entire issue of Harper’s Bazaar to the coronation, which she and her editors regarded as “a true symbol, the moment of awesome dedication that has moved the affections of people everywhere, made England’s kings and queens, with their talent for human simplicity, the kings and queens in the 20th century world.”

Harper’s Bazaar contributing editor Sacheverell Sitwill reminded readers of the importance of a strong British/U.S. alliance when he wrote that “one is perhaps conscious, too, of the wish of everyone to help her, which in the aggregate, amounted to even more than that, because in her person she is the wish fulfillment of so many millions who in a drab world find their thoughts turning to her and think with affection, but are not jealous of her.”

Indeed, Sitwell believed that Americans owed a debt of gratitude to the British for

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90 Ibid.
providing the philosophical basis for their own democratic government. He drew attention to cultural similarities, asserting that “there was no spectacle to match a coronation, because it was no seizing of power and depended on no changing vote, but was the wish and acclamation of all her peoples,” much like an American presidential election. Like its rival, Vogue sent special reporters along with respected photographer Cecil Beaton to cover the coronation, which inspired “an enormous channel of expectation,” charming readers because the “whole thing was so English in its flavour and tradition.”

The year after her coronation, when Queen Elizabeth II and the Queen Mother visited New York to accept a gift of fellowships for British students in America from the English Speaking Union, Vogue’s social editor reported that New Yorkers were disappointed she was only to stop in the United States for forty-eight hours, because socialites wanted to give a series of dinners to celebrate the trip. Later, Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip’s 16-21 October 1957 visit to the United States, which “gave autumn a special sparkle and gala air” reiterated the two countries’ common heritage. Harper’s Bazaar social editors covered the visit, during which the Queen inspired a “solid, ungrudging respect,” unique for “a woman barely out of her twenties,” because she “performed an enormously complicated and taxing job with courage and sensitivity,

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93 Social Editor, “Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, Now Visiting the United States and Canada,” Vogue, Volume 124, 1 November 1954, pp.104-5.
industry and intelligence.” Prince Philip inspired popularity in his own right because “apart from his royal good looks,” he was also “an extraordinary, magnetic personality.”

When Princess Margaret was engaged to Mr. Anthony-Armstrong Jones, a “hard-working, handsome photographer” sometimes employed at Vogue, on 26 February 1960, Americans were thrilled at the prospect of another royal wedding, especially to a half-American commoner (a first). (He was created the Earl of Snowden, so that Margaret could continue being referred to as Her Royal Highness). The couple’s heavily covered ceremony on 6 May 1960, at which “one sensed in the principal actors of this great public ceremony a deep sincerity, an insistence on the real rather than the sham, a true love, a private peace,” reinvigorated American fondness for the British monarchy. American fondness was especially important after Princess Margaret’s marriage, when her neglect of royal duties created a crisis situation contributing to the monarchy’s decline in popularity within its own country. “Public criticism [in Britain] of Princess Margaret and her husband reached perilously close to the Queen herself,” but American affection for the royal family typically transcended any disapproval, providing at least one stable


95 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 130, 15 September 1957, p. 127.


and mutually beneficial relationship during troubled times.\textsuperscript{98} American fondness for the monarchy also helped smooth discord during difficulties like Suez or the failure of a Franco-British union.

If the monarchy’s popularity was on the upswing, politically and economically England’s position as a world power was on the decline, necessitating American monetary aid. Great Britain could not be the power it was before the war, but its resurgence became crucial to maintaining the British/American special relationship in the Cold War. If Americans did not help out, there was a perceived danger the British could turn towards Communism. Magazine editors supported increased aid, and at both magazines painted a portrait of the British in a similar light to the French. Great Britain’s reputation was not sullied by any sort of wartime collaboration, but reminding Americans of British bravery might help keep up the momentum of postwar goodwill. In the 15 August 1945 issue of \textit{Vogue}, for instance, Vita Sackville-West reported on the population’s stressful wartime experiences as well as the nation’s strength in dealing with postwar deprivations. In Sackville-West’s eyes, the British emerged from the war with a renewed sense of vigor, but also with a melancholy realization that the nation was not the empire it once was. After returning from his job as a combat photographer, Cecil Beaton reported on “London life in the path of war,” with what he called an “un-British” decision not to “minimize the suffering of people at home.”\textsuperscript{99} Beaton was shocked by the “poignant devastation” he saw in London, and explained that while Londoners might

\textsuperscript{98} Jack Winocour, “Queen Elizabeth Under Fire?,” \textit{Look} Magazine, 24 April 1962, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{99} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 111, 15 February 1948, p. 94.
make light of their situation, he would not, and was even angry about the problems they had to endure without complaint.

But even the British, despite their traditional “stiff upper lip,” were not immune to the rigors of war, and *Vogue* writer Barbara Ward made the populace seem more human when she remarked that “the British people were impatient with [wartime] controls” and that because of overwork, they were “falling off of their usual courtesy.” American readers might sympathize with this because the British had had to endure so much more than they did during the war, and bore their problems with such good grace. *Vogue* reporters did not let readers forget about British hardships, especially during the severe winter of 1947, when the country underwent a food and fuel crisis, and when the British were about to pull out of Greece. Editors continually reminded readers of the danger of England falling to communism or worse, remarking in one instance that people were “talking about the nattering undercurrent of Oswald Moseley’s renewed fascist activities in London – not yet perceived by the public, but still in the headlines.”

In “London’s Food Democracy,” *Vogue* reporter Bettina Wilson continued elaborating on the desperate British situation, explaining their need for American monetary and material aid despite the fact that the war was won. Like France, Great Britain’s power reversal made paramount building a strong (and preferably) equal relationship to manage postwar issues. Goodwill measures like sending food or supplies

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102 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, Volume 111, 15 February 1948, p. 94.
to England would, in her opinion, go far toward helping this happen.\textsuperscript{103} Vogue’s political and foreign policy writers particularly championed the Marshall Plan as the best way to aid longsuffering allied nations like Great Britain, repeatedly discussing its purpose, benefits, and successes. They insisted the Marshall Plan was “not just more relief…but helped international development and self-sufficiency,” in addition to “strengthening modern diplomatic forces in Europe.”\textsuperscript{104} The Marshall Plan worked, albeit “slowly, but very slowly,” helping London be “cheered with a lick of paint and a box of geraniums,” (among other rebuilding efforts).\textsuperscript{105} Susan Mary Patten was “thrilled” by and deeply proud of the Marshall Plan, closely following the progress of its planners during the hot Paris August of 1947.\textsuperscript{106} American aid through government and volunteer efforts was inspired by sympathy for the British postwar plight, and potentially built stronger political relations because Americans would have a vested interest in Great Britain’s resurgence.

Of course, as the Cold War progressed, British friendship grew more important, especially because the country could no longer support its empire and former colonies might fall to Communism if not protected from Soviet inroads. If former British protectorates like Greece went to the Communists, or India erupted into civil war, the delicate U.S./Soviet balance of power might shift. Prominent writer Vita Sackville-West


\textsuperscript{106}Alsop, To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960, p. 115.
addressed Great Britain’s colonial decline in her article “England: The Same but not the Same.” Sackville-West wanted to make clear that a prime political issue in the postwar world was dealing with waning English power, and making sure that British-American relations remained stable within a different relationship to ward off any Soviet advances. The British were, in her mind, the same, in that their social structure, government, and desire to remain a world power was unchanged, but the nation’s status was irrevocably altered as a result of two world wars and the loss of its colonial empire. In other words, Great Britain might want to remain a world power, but it would not regain its empire, so the best way to maintain status was to become a strong United States ally. Writer I.A.R. Wylie echoed the sentiment with a more positive spin, discussing “the much vaunted death of the British Empire,” asserting that British “national pride was not offended by the fact that England had to take charity or that it no longer ruled the world.” Actually, Wylie insisted the British felt gratitude because their national character was still intact, and they could help in the Cold War against the Soviet Union, which was what mattered above all.

Helping bolster national character in the face of political decline was Great Britain’s superiority as a cultural leader. As with the French, Americans often looked to the British for cultural guidance, feeling they were more culturally advanced in many areas, which provided good reason for American visits. When travel resumed after the war, Americans flocked to England because of low air and lodging fares, particularly

107 Sackville-West, “England: The Same but not the Same,” pp. 142-143.

when the British aristocracy began opening private homes as hotels. The Duke of Bedford, for example, owner of the ninety room Woburn Abbey (built in 1626), turned his home into a lodge and began offering luncheons and tours at thirty-five cents per person in order to help pay his $14,000 annual taxes and $12,300 annual maintenance fees. 109 Travel agents organized specialized tours for American visitors, complete with “nannies, deer stalking, and castle house parties,” and year round access at twenty-five dollars annually. 110 Staying at places like this could help keep the traditional aristocratic classes in power and in their ancestral homes, while sharing cultural interests might build a strong postwar alliance. In this mutually beneficial arrangement, Americans got a taste of traditional aristocratic life, while the British received a much-needed influx of American cash in return.

When visiting Great Britain, Americans could also enjoy the reviving British theater, ballet, and cinema, all areas where the British surpassed pre-war achievements. Although the theater took four years return to its prewar prominence in Great Britain, Harper's Bazaar arts writers admired the persistence of “British artists, musicians, choreographers and dancers [who] kept a dream alive” during the war.” 111 In the dance world, prima ballerina Margot Fonteyn’s 1949 American debut with the Royal Ballet made her an instant celebrity, and her membership in the Sadler Wells Ballet Company

109 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 132, 1 November 1958, p. 62.

110 Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 134, 1 October 1959, p. 172.

helped make it one of the “most brilliant…in the Western World.” The British Arts Council received high approval for its good management of the entertainment tax, but this was not enough to fund the opera and the theatre, two institutions critical to British social life. Because the “day of the private patron was over,” Vogue’s travel editors in particular urged readers to help support British arts because this would bring money to the economy with the added benefit that the government would not have to “meddle” with the Arts Council’s good work.

Just as with the French, Americans also admired the resurgent British film industry. Many of its actors and directors went on to successful Hollywood careers. Great Britain’s biggest cinema export was Sir Laurence Olivier (Henry V, 1944 and Hamlet, 1948). His wife Vivien Leigh (Gone with the Wind, 1939 and A Streetcar Named Desire, 1951) made her name in both British and American films. Transplants like Cary Grant, who became one of the most successful leading men of all time for bringing his British sophistication to American films, and director Alfred Hitchcock (North by Northwest, 1959, plus dozens more films), worked in both countries, drawing audiences in the states to British and American films.

Part of American cultural fascination with British theatre, ballet, and film was its perceived aura of sophistication. Even among the American upper classes, the British were considered inherently more sophisticated and cultured than Americans, and women

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in particular looked to them for guidance in manners and protocol, among other areas. Also, even if Americans may have somewhat disliked the British class structure, seeing their own as more democratic, upper class women in particular still “had a fondness for titles, especially lavish and…ever more elaborate” titles.\textsuperscript{114} The British upper class residents American tourists were likely to encounter were comfortingly aristocratic citizens of the “two classes in good society in England: the equestrian classes and the neurotic classes,” so readers would still find themselves among counterparts they would recognize and might emulate.\textsuperscript{115} Helping readers get to know their upper class neighbors in Great Britain could build good relations between the two nations because they had a shared interest in heritage and status. If other Americans were nervous about encountering traditional British reserve, they could rest assured that “anywhere in England…there were natural, wholesome, contented, and really nice English people.”\textsuperscript{116} And even though “well-to-do London wasn’t neighbourly, never had been, ah!, but its intentions, at least, [were] flexible.”\textsuperscript{117}

Aside from status, editors felt upper class American women might also identify with British counterparts because they had similar daily problems unique to their gender. If French women were to be looked up to as international arbiters of style and culture, Americans might more easily relate to British women for their shared domestic concerns.


\textsuperscript{115} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 134, December 1959, p. 108.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Ibid}.

Vogue’s social editor noted “the despair of lonely, young English wives, all of whom had once worked in offices but were now housebound, child-bound, who wrote the London Observer detailing the miseries of marriage, their complaints ranging from boredom to the everlasting trivia of household tasks…” Finding help too, was difficult, and although “maids still existed in England…you had to pay them something like the salary of an Assistant Principal in the Civil Service to make them dress up for you.”

Upper class American women went through the same tribulations and in editors’ opinions, could empathize with British women who not only had to deal with similar problems but also had to worry about impending poverty and hardship.

With the collapsing British economy and resulting postwar political instability always in mind, magazine editors throughout the early Cold War urged maintaining and strengthening the Anglo-American special relationship. Acknowledging that the United States had become the world’s preeminent power, eclipsing the once mighty British Empire, magazine writers reminded readers to pay attention to how a shared heritage and culture could bring the two nations together for a larger good. Great Britain desperately needed U.S. monetary support and political partnership in the postwar world, and the United States only benefitted from a strong Europe to balance Soviet power in Europe. The United States needed Great Britain (and France) to participate in the United Nations, the Marshall Plan and later, in NATO. Therefore, in magazine coverage, it seems

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120 Sackville-West, “England: The Same but not the Same,” pp. 142-143.
important that both England and France were portrayed in a strong manner, at least socially and politically. Playing up their proud histories and wartime roles could potentially encourage Americans to support a strong relationship and resist retreating into isolationism as the country did after World War One. If that relationship could be based in a somewhat equal exchange of culture for political goodwill, so much the better for international accord.

**From Enemies to Allies: Germany, Japan, and Italy**

At the same time both magazines familiarized readers with the French and British socio-political situation in their efforts to strengthen existing alliances, former Axis nations Germany, Japan, and Italy needed rehabilitation to make them appropriate postwar partners. As the Cold War intensified, the United States began consolidating its power base and soon recognized that it needed these former enemies to become friends with stable, democratic governments. Susan Mary Patten appreciated these countries’ importance when she wrote to Marietta Tree about her belief that binding Germany, Japan, and Italy to the United States as strong allies would be critical in light of the fact that the U.S. “alone could not contain Russia, so it was all-important to have a strong Europe” and Asian allies.\(^{121}\) Echoing Patten’s sentiments, magazine writers urged upper class readers to remember that the United States “needed international cooperation,” and


The seriousness of German and Japanese war crimes in addition to unfamiliarity with Japanese culture prior to the war complicated the task of turning those countries into friends. Italy, with which more upper class women would be familiar, was not as tough to sell as a postwar ally. Tainted past aside, editors at both magazines tended to support the U.S. government’s viewpoint that fostering democratic governments within former Axis nations to protect them from future Communist incursions and to keep the rest of Europe stable was a critical postwar task. In all three nations, the United States met that goal by promoting direct government intervention into domestic affairs and by using the media to create mutual goodwill between Americans and former Axis peoples.

Reports in both magazines reflected the State Department’s growing emphasis on cultural understanding as a way to cement relations among former enemies and dispel tension in world affairs by reshaping enemies into allies. Understanding the need to recognize former Axis powers as future Cold War allies, magazine editors began downplaying Germany, Japan, and Italy’s respective wartime histories. The task was not easy, and in the first two postwar years, few editors held much sympathy for wartime foes, particularly Germany and Japan. Italy escaped relatively unscathed because it switched sides in 1943 and had a strong anti-fascist movement. During the 1950s, Italian culture in the form of movies, opera, and fashion also underwent a riveting resurgence.
that swept the American imagination. That this trend happened after that country’s 1948
elections established a democratic government was probably no coincidence.

Regarding Germany, magazine editors eventually took a path similar to that
employed when depicting the French. At first, postwar coverage of Germany and Japan
was, to say the least, unfavorable, particularly because during the first part of 1945, the
war in Japan was not yet over, and because German atrocities were only just coming to
public consciousness. Harper’s Bazaar editor-in-chief Carmel Snow made her position
on Japan clear on the cover of the magazine’s first post-VE day issue. Snow positioned
“A Message to Americans: From the Leaders of Our Army, Navy and Air Forces,” front
and center, warning women that the war was not yet over, and that they held a
responsibility to “press forward in the final drive against Japan,” which would be bloody,
long, and morally draining.123 “The enormous challenge” women faced after V-E day was
the “responsibility on Americans to win the war after President Roosevelt’s death.”124
Not only did women have to help defeat Japan, they were supposed to do so
“wholeheartedly, unequivocally, and quickly,” and “win the war so there are no more
wars in the foreseeable future.”125 With these kinds of responsibilities, immediately
rehabilitating former enemies’ reputations was a difficult, but not impossible, task.

Initially, editors wrote with particular venom about German pride in the face of
defeat and wartime atrocities. Vogue photographer and writer Lee Miller, for example,

123 Army, Navy, Air Forces Public Relations, “A Message to Americans from the Leaders of the Army,

124 Ibid.

125 Ruth Portugal, “The Enormous Challenge,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 79, Number 2802, June 1945,
p. 34.
held a special dislike for Germans because she was embedded with American troops in that theater during the war, and was one of the first reporters to publish graphic photographs of the Buchenwald concentration camp. In “Germans are Like This,” Miller used photographs contrasting postwar Germans, who were “healthy and well-fed,” but still proud and lamenting their loss, with the skeletal people they imprisoned to make sure readers knew the extent of the nation’s war crimes. Miller disparaged Germans who conveniently “forgot they were Nazis” and that “they [were] our enemies,” even though they had committed atrocities like imprisoning Jews at Buchenwald, whose remains were also graphically depicted in photo essays. Miller’s colleague Allene Talmey pointed out that the Germans “acted as if they had survived an earthquake, not lost a war,” and that they “didn’t learn anything” from their loss. According to a “Berlin Letter,” the Germans still held parties among their wartime ruins, as if there was something to celebrate rather than mourn. Stories like these suggested that American readers should ensure Germany did not go unpunished after the war.

When Germany became a focal point in the Cold War, however, editors quickly changed tactics, de-emphasizing Nazism’s wartime popularity perhaps as a way to rehabilitate the nation’s image. Editors instead focused on the nation’s merits, like its contributions to world culture. Articles such as “Frankfurt Scenes” pointed out

126 Lee Miller, “Germans are Like This,” and “Believe It,” Vogue, Volume 105, June 1945, pp. 102, 192-93, and pp. 104-5. Miller’s photographs of Buchenwald were some of the first and remain the most well-known, inside glimpses into concentration camps, and they are still used in textbooks and films today.

127 Ibid.


Germany’s history as a progenitor of philosophers like Nietzsche, great musicians like the opera composer Richard Wagner, or scientists like Albert Einstein. Next, since the biggest issue with Germany was erasing an image of universal Germans membership in the Nazi party, Vogue’s Evelyn Clark Emmet urged readers in her “Notes from Nurnberg” to understand Nazism as a function of the influence of prominent Germans rather than as a reflection of the nation’s general population. Croix de Guerre and Legion d’Honneur recipient French Captain Louise de Mont-Reynaud voiced her opinion that “German youth must be reeducated,” but did not directly blame the German populace for embracing Nazism. Rather, she felt the public was victim to a maniacal but persuasive leader preying on his people’s Depression-era anxieties and desire for glory after a humiliating wartime loss. Countess Bernadette of Sweden similarly chimed in, believing “passionately that the young may be indoctrinated for peace as successfully as they [were] indoctrinated for war in totalitarian countries.” By 1950, Harper’s Bazaar ran a photo essay about recovering Warsaw Jewish ghettos beginning with dramatic depictions of their wartime destruction and moving through their slow postwar reconstruction. Neither the writer nor the photographer, however, mentioned the role Germans played in the destruction of the ghettos, simply hailing the human spirit that led to their reconstruction.

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Next, magazine correspondents explained how the Nazi party gained and maintained popular support without actually blaming party adherents for its rise. *Harper’s Bazaar* editors, with the help of “qualified psychoanalysts and doctors, and with the help of England’s *Picture Post,*” answered questions about Germany that “the whole world [was] asking” to get a better portrait of the new potential ally’s mentality.\(^{134}\) First, experts made clear that cruelty was not a German racial characteristic, rather, it was a function of a sort of national “split personality” that emerged because of political crises.\(^{135}\) Although the general public knew about and participated in brutalities, they accepted Nazi methods because they felt the end, becoming the world’s savior, justified the means. Furthermore, the German public actually feared the Gestapo and many times acted out of desperation, not knowing how to stop the government it had put into power. On the other hand, Germans also possessed personality traits like apathy, sadism, and a naïve belief in their government’s propaganda that allowed them to turn a blind eye on the final solution. They were able easily to accept the doctrine of Jews as an inferior race because that removed social inhibitions against murder. Following that train of thought in a review of German films, critic André Maurois explained that Germans suffered from serious guilt and experienced a painful collective mental struggle between good and evil. Germans were “formal, and almost mechanistic,” qualities that explained why they had been so susceptible to Nazi propaganda.\(^{136}\) In Maurois’ opinion, all these characteristics


\(^{135}\) Ibid.

explained German wartime behavior, but Germans’ guilt and the seriousness with which they approached postwar self-examination over the Nazi regime somewhat made up for the flaw. Ultimately, the German populace needed punishment, but they also deserved re-education to give them something to hope for in the postwar world.\(^\text{137}\)

_Vogue_ contributing editor Christopher Isherwood echoed Maurois’ sentiments when he wrote about his first visit to Berlin since the war. Isherwood was initially worried about what the war had done to old friends, especially those stuck in the Russian zone of Berlin. He visited despite his misgivings over an inability to help his friends’ poverty, and found that although they were “always in a state of psychological siege” about Nazi crimes, the “spirit of the people was better even than before the war.”\(^\text{138}\) Isherwood felt that Germans were “perhaps best when everything has gone wrong,” and that the war acted as a sort of purifying force on the national psyche.\(^\text{139}\) Even the buildings in Germany were “more beautiful with the bombings,” adding to the nation’s charm and spirit.\(^\text{140}\) He did not discuss blame for German war crimes, rather, Isherwood saw the war as an event that purified the populace, in effect, sweeping clean past sins and bringing more admirable characteristics to the forefront.

In the same spirit, _Vogue’s_ editors promoted German author Lali Horstmann’s book, _We Chose to Stay_, which might have engendered a sympathy in readers similar to

\(^{137}\) André Maurois, “The Tell-Tale Screen,” _Vogue_, Volume 118, 1 August 1951, pp. 93, 132-33.


\(^{139}\) Ibid.

\(^{140}\) Ibid.
Isherwood’s own, although through different tactics. Much like the myth of French universal participation in the Resistance, Horstmann implied in her memoir that most Germans disliked the Nazi government and actively tried to resist its rise. Horstmann’s “painful, intensely personal account of the war in Germany and the occupation of the Soviets detailed the total collapse of the author’s own rich, thoroughly civilized life, the equal collapse of the German middle class, and the impossibility of honest relations with either Nazis or Soviets.” Horstmann’s “thoroughly civilized” family was caught up in the sweep of the Nazi regime, rather than active participants in its rise. They, like many other Germans, were not individually guilty of supporting the Nazis, but instead, were powerless to resist the government’s overwhelming power.

In another article, Vogue writer Evelyn Clark Emmett told readers that if they did not sympathize with the (“predominantly male”) Germans who contributed to the Second World War, they should instead forge bonds with German women. German women, like women in the United States, were concerned with similar issues; important problems like rebuilding and providing for their families, or even trivial matters like fashion and cosmetics. At first somewhat hostile to American occupying forces, German women in particular “became better after realizing Americans wouldn’t rape and kill them.”

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141 Arts Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 123, 15 April 1953, p. 111.


143 Evelyn Clark Emmett, “And the German Women? Like Their Buildings, They’re Badly in Need of Repairs,” Vogue Magazine, p. 148. The idea of appealing to readers on the basis of gender concerns (like the bonds of motherhood) is one that frequently appears in articles in both magazines, and will need to be explored in another paper.

Even when the German reputation was at its worst, *New York Times* correspondent Anne O’Hare McCormick made a touching case for mutual sympathy for German women as victims in her article “The Woman with the Broom.” McCormick noted that while “men sow[ed] wars and reap[ed] death,” the women cleaned “up the debris made by the sons they have born,” and out of “this hopeless rubble [women] – English, French, Dutch, Belgian, Russian, Chinese, Italian, even German and Japanese, were trying to rebuild a recognizable world.”\(^\text{146}\) Along this same vein, she asserted that the Nazi régime actually came into power because it “shamelessly abused women’s votes,” and as a result, they were now “reluctant to re-enter politics” as a positive force in the upcoming constitutional elections.\(^\text{147}\) Evelyn Clark Emmett later pleaded for compassion for German women in her article “And the German Women? Like Their Buildings, They are Badly in Need of Repairs.”\(^\text{148}\) She acknowledged that women in Germany perpetuated the war on the home front, but also portrayed women as victims of the Nazi desire for glory. As victims, German women needed American political empathy and economic aid.\(^\text{149}\) Dr. Gabrielle Strecher, the Women’s Program Director of the Frankfurt Broadcasting Station, argued that occupying forces’ poor treatment of German women and children could lead to future problems for U.S./German relations if not

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\(^{147}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{148}\) Emmett, “And the German Women? Like Their Buildings, They’re Badly in Need of Repairs,” pp. 148, 199.

\(^{149}\) *Ibid.*
properly addressed. Warning that women and children would build the German future, she called for more cultural exchange and better re-education for the nation’s children.

By 1947, “German women were at a crossroads,” because as the majority of the population, they and their children controlled the country’s destiny, even if Germany was “still a man’s country.” As a result, writers felt they needed American aid and sympathy more than ever if Germany was to become a valuable postwar ally.

A profile of Mrs. John J. McCloy, the wife of the U.S. High Commissioner in West Germany, and “one of the most important non-Germans” in the American zone, implied that by the early 1950s, kinship with women was a perfectly acceptable way for reporters to encourage West Germany’s return to the world stage as an ally. Mrs. McCloy made a very good impression on the Germans, “earning the affectionate title of ‘unser’ (our) Mrs. McCloy,” for deeds like opening up the bathroom in her home to a destitute German family. She was at times “criticized as too pro-German,” but Harper’s Bazaar editors declared she was actually “pro-human,” with her policy of making friends among the local population and urging other diplomatic wives to do the same. Mrs. McCloy stated that Americans “couldn’t hope to convince the German people of [their] own democracy by undemocratic behavior,” instead asserting that the best way for women to befriend Germans was with an attitude that spoke of “we women,” instead of ‘you

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German women.” Later on, McCloy commented to Mary Jean Kempner that “women were the new force” in Germany, combating men’s “apathy” and “surging ahead” toward rebuilding the nation. Women kept their “poor, but not hungry or shabby” families together, and helped to relax the “bitterness over bombing,” even appreciating the Occupation forces as the only protection from the Soviets. While men were “unimpressed by Americans and the democratic ideal,” women and “younger people” admired democracy as a force for security.

German admiration for democracy and in turn, American support for European aid became critical as the country’s diplomatic importance grew. Eisenhower, immediately after the war, believed that “Berlin…was an experimental laboratory for the development of international accord,” but by 1948, the Berlin Blockade made the city “a besieged island in the Russian mass.” Susan Mary Patten described a situation where “the European Recovery Program, child of the Marshall Plan, was [just] beginning to succeed…and abandonment of Berlin was out of the question,” especially since the United States “had to face the possibility that the Russians might deliberately have chosen Berlin as a pretext of war.” After the airlift’s success, but still during the “very,  

155 Ibid.  
156 Ibid.  
very dicey time,” before the Berlin Wall was erected, editors tried to capture readers’ attentions and sympathies with sympathetic profiles of East German escapees like “one man from East Germany who arrived at an International Rescue Committee shelter barefoot and in a nightshirt.”\textsuperscript{159} This type of story, mixed with other “intricacies of the German situation” and the fact that West Germany was “growing in importance as banker and builder all over the world,” made the city (and the nation) a focal point for the “prolonged agony of the East-West crisis” thus building up Germany as an ally grew ever more important.\textsuperscript{160}

Eventually, American aid helped rebuild the nation’s government and economy and after the 1948 blockade, its culture. Germany underwent a cultural revival after the blockade lifted, partly because of government subsidized theater in the Western zone and also because of cultural exchange programs, all designed to build amity between it and the United States. Cultural exchange plans included Allied financial aid programs, which organized an annual Berlin theater festival that brought American plays by playwrights like Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller to Berlin and Bonn. Germans embraced French existentialism, while suppressed artists “came out of the woodwork” to create “operas, plays, and ballets…strengthened by contact between [Germany’s major cities] and the West.”\textsuperscript{161}


Just as in other European nations, the strengthened dollar helped encourage tourism, and travel articles stressed that while “war rubble was still visible, the principal cities in the American zone, Munich and Frankfurt were relatively untouched” and that the country, like France and Great Britain, welcomed American travel dollars. When the “unification of Germany, that $64 billion dollar international question” began to pop up again in the 1950s, West Germany became a fashionable tourist destination. Taking a cue from owners of ancestral manors in Great Britain, former German aristocracy turned their castles, or schlosses, into hotels, organizing tours in which visitors could “castle-hop” to get a taste of German history. Especially popular were trips that combined “castle-hopping” on “crack trains with cabaret dancers” with pursuits like wine tastings or musical education tours. Americans could also visit the annual Oktoberfest, the “cheerful fortnight with horse races, seven million gallons of beer, and a sobering up tent,” or take German airline Lufthansa’s special tours beginning in the Daimler-Benz factory in Stuttgart, where travelers selected for purchase a new Mercedes-Benz, which would subsequently be shipped to them after their tour. Traveling to West Germany was made more enticing by “the single most exciting fact that Berlin,” was “the outpost


163 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 126, 15 August 1955, p. 87.

164 Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 128, 1 September 1956, p. 240.

165 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 136, 1 October 1960, p. 151.
of the Western world,” thrillingly close to the Soviet zone.\textsuperscript{166} Indeed, \textit{Vogue} reporter Victoria von Shack noted that though “social life diminished since the diplomatic corps stationed in Bonn and Berlin lacked pre-war international elegance,” the social scene was still exciting because “one met not to go dancing, but to discuss international affairs.”\textsuperscript{167} The city was “electrifying and very friendly to Americans,” as were many other major West German cities.\textsuperscript{168}

The 1956 Berlin Industries Fair, an initial staging ground for one of many U.S./Soviet cultural confrontations, drew even more attention to West German culture and its exciting international political position. \textit{Vogue}’s, editorial board, under the direction of the United States Information Services (USIS), organized a fashion show to “demonstrate a contemporary way of life and a contemporary American look” to the twelve nations (including the Soviet Union and East Germany) participating in the Fair.\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Vogue} fashion editors used only German models styled to look so American that announcers had to make a special point of announcing their nationality. Over 270,000 Berliners saw the fashion show, which opened in mid-September 1956, running for three weeks and presented ten times daily. The fashion show enhanced the American pavilion’s popularity, and was even successful at drawing Soviet men, who enthusiastically cheered

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\textsuperscript{166} Travel Editor, “Travel Bazaar: Berlin and Points South,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 90, Number 2935, p. 35.


\textsuperscript{168} Travel Editor, “Travel Bazaar: Berlin and Points South,” p. 35.

\textsuperscript{169} Staff Editor, “Berlin Diary,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 127, 1 February 1956, p. 113.
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the models. If the Industries Fair’s success was any indication, cross-cultural exchanged seemed to work in creating a strong German-American relationship.

Such was also the case with Japan, a nation that underwent a tremendous rehabilitation during the early Cold War moving from reviled enemy to valued ally in Southeast Asia. Before the war, Japan did not much register in the minds of upper class women (diplomatically or otherwise), but by the early 1960s, Japan was a hugely popular tourist destination and source of fashion inspiration. Immediately after the war, however, and similar to their coverage of the Germans, magazine editors had only negative reports about the Japanese. When troops took Tokyo and news correspondents reported from the scene, *Newsweek* reporter Robert Shapiro remarked that the bulk of the Japanese people he met were still numbed by the swiftly negative turn of events. Like the Germans, the Japanese believed their government’s propaganda, and in turn, were defensive about their loss, exhibiting a “sullen disregard” for occupation forces ironically evidenced in an “overly courteous” manner toward American soldiers.¹⁷⁰ Shapiro and other editors initially bought into traditional stereotypes, portraying the Japanese as a sly people who engaged in “double speak” and could not be trusted.¹⁷¹ They were unconvinced of the error of their ways, and while acknowledging the American victory, the Japanese most definitely did not recognize American superiority. Indeed, in Shapiro’s eyes, and somewhat similar to the Germans, the Japanese felt they lost the war simply because they


¹⁷¹ Ibid.
were “sucker punched” by the atom bomb.\textsuperscript{172} Vogue’s Pacific Theater reporter, Mary Jean Kempner, backed Shapiro’s reports, noting that even in surrendering a million troops the Japanese delegation viewed American victors with “distaste” and indeed, were loathe to admit that they had lost the war.\textsuperscript{173}

Soon enough, negative reports on Japan subsided because of the Cold War – diplomatic need made imperative a positive, sympathetic view of the population. In some cases, coverage of Japan in this vein started even before the Pacific War ended, and like Germany, differentiated the population from its misguided leaders. Mary Jean Kempner and Captain Edward Steichen, for example, both profiled the battle of Iwo Jima in the July 1945 issue of Vogue Magazine. Each emphasized the bravery of Japanese soldiers and the devastation the war had wrought on their army and nation.\textsuperscript{174} Kempner continued describing the Japanese while she reported her experiences traveling in a flying ambulance in Okinawa. In her view, American soldiers intensely disliked the Japanese leadership that guided the nation into war, but in her opinion, surprisingly separated this hatred from the Japanese people, respecting their culture and the population as an industrious group.\textsuperscript{175} Despite her anger over Japanese actions in China (her station during the war), Kempner was sympathetic enough to believe that for the Japanese, “in the

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\textsuperscript{173} Mary Jean Kempner, “Cabled From Chihkiang: Japanese Envoy Flied in to Surrender,” Vogue, Volume 106, 15 September 1945, pp. 141, 196.


\textsuperscript{175} Mary Jean Kempner, “Flying Ambulance, Okinawa,” Vogue Magazine, August 1, 1945, pp. 100-103. I would like to investigate this further to determine whether this particular judgment was accurate.
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future, humanity [would] be more important than nationalism,” or in other words, that the nation could be rehabilitated as a friend.\textsuperscript{176}

When writing about Japan later, magazines were concerned with presenting the Japanese people as in need of guidance rather than sympathy, or like the Germans, reeducation. Elizabeth Gray Vining, of \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} profiled the American tutor for the Crown Prince of Japan, and recorded her favorable impression of the young prince, an eager student with a relaxed, peaceful nature. His pleasant, easy personality boded well for Japan’s future government, and the prince reflected the personality of his subjects.\textsuperscript{177} Shiro Tashiro’s “If You Want to Understand the Japanese Surrender in Japan,” argued that Japanese people by nature were peace-loving but that their leadership had not exhibited these qualities during the war.\textsuperscript{178} Tashiro went on to emphasize the Japanese respect for honor and authority, their culture’s religiosity, and average person’s humble nature. Like their prince, the Japanese were pleasant and peaceful, simply needing guidance and education to set them on the proper path towards democracy.

Next, editors began using the familiar tactic of highlighting Japanese participation in internal resistance efforts and creating sympathy for women, possibly to help mitigate American dislike for the nation. Tashiro emphasized that there was a significant

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  \item \textsuperscript{177} Elizabeth Gray Vining, “The School is the Happiest Place,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 81, Number 2823, March 1947, pp. 254-55, 314.
\end{itemize}
resistance movement in Japan, particularly among intellectuals. Although no fan of Japanese treatment of the Chinese during the war, Mary Jean Kempner made clear that the Japanese people had quickly changed, dropping their nationalistic sympathies in favor of a more worldwide, humanitarian outlook. The Japanese had a number of admirable qualities; they were “perpetually working and constantly thrifty because their tiny islands support[ed] over 84,000,000 occupants,” and their “industry produced first-rate professionals, even when handicapped,” while welcoming visitors with “neon signs that were beautiful, and every one [was] a smile.”

When the “the action of the United Nations and the United States in Korea changed the atmosphere of the world,” and later, when the United States began sending troops to Vietnam, Japan became an even more crucial ally because of its geographical location in the Pacific, and probably not coincidentally, fashion editors (and presumably their readers) became fascinated with all things Japanese. Coverage of the Korean War was not especially intensive, but rather, served as a backdrop for stories on East Asia and particularly travel and culture as ways to forge friendship between the two nations. Later in the decade, travel to Japan was made more enticing because of the “value and beauty” of the country’s products, and because of the nation’s influence on fashion, furniture, and architecture, to which Harper’s Bazaar’s Carmel Snow even devoted an entire issue.

When the war ended in 1953, the U.S./Japanese relationship entered into a period of resurgence and even amity.

Even though Japan was not a popular travel destination before the Second World War, after the Korean War, Japan quickly became a fashionable tourist spot. *Vogue* writer Helen Rutting (Mrs. Charles Snyden) traveled to Japan, where she described a population that had taken to “democracy and Western culture (perhaps too quickly) because of an ability to incorporate the best of other worlds with their own.”

The Japanese had a burgeoning tourist industry bolstered by the fact that it “always welcomed Americans,” including the “busloads of GI tourists everywhere,” and extended their friendliness to the American occupying forces, whom they believed “enhanced and reinforced Japanese culture.”

Japanese industry went so far as to erase the past to a certain extent, including “completely rebuilding Hiroshima,” even if “in a shabby way.” By the late 1950s, “Hiroshima was so completely rebuilt it was difficult to remember it had been reduced to an atomic desert.”

Kyoto, the most “unchanged city in Japan,” had an untouched beauty enhanced by its thousands of temples, and Tokyo “was now as vividly international as Paris or prewar Shanghai;” “glamorous at night, raucous and confused by day.” By mid-decade, *Vogue* travel and social editors noticed an increasing “spurt

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towards Japanese movies, houses, gardens, dances, books, and prints; all things
Japanesque.\textsuperscript{188} Tokyo, at the end of the decade, intrigued travel writers as a city “made
of startling contrasts,” with “people who cried upon meeting an American,”
enthusiastically accepting Western ways while maintaining old ceremonies and an
“unparalleled hospitality.”\textsuperscript{189} Overall, “the most important discovery [travelers would
make] would be that despite all the nonsense which continued to be written about them,
the Japanese were as simple and complex” as Americans.\textsuperscript{190}

As in the cases of the three other key allies, as U.S. travel to Japan resumed,
editors at both magazines began extolling Japanese culture, drawing a picture of well-
established literary and artistic traditions, while emphasizing the nation’s growing
modernity and Americanization. Through travel articles, readers might begin to
understand the Japanese mindset, and how to befriend the people of its nation by
comprehending its culture. \textit{Vogue} editor Joshua Logan, for example, loved Japanese
theater, a “highly honored profession,” so much that when he “saw its fun and fantasy,”
he “promptly made arrangements for its future tour of the United States.”\textsuperscript{191} \textit{Vogue}’s
social editor reported that other “people [were] talking about Kabuki, the magnificent

\textsuperscript{188} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 125, 1 February 1955, pp. 143-44.
\textsuperscript{190} Donald Keene, “Japan, Its Byways and Their Ways,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 135, 1 April 1960, pp. 154-55, 184.
Japanese national art.” Zabriskie Curran, a contributing editor at *Vogue*, gave her impressions of Japanese culture when she described a Japanese family dinner to which a Japanese university friend invited her. Curran described a Japan torn between East and West, with a youth culture that combined the best of both worlds, but did not abandon their culture’s traditions. Japanese life to her was strict and difficult for women, but in some ways, “more convenient for a lady than America.” Outside of travel, even children could participate in exploring Japanese culture, learning to understand the country through song, using a series of albums, “Children’s Songs from Japan,” created specifically “to promote cultural understanding.”

As they did with France, Great Britain, and Germany, editors at both magazines encouraged American readers to identify with (or emulate) Japanese women, possibly in an effort to engender friendly relations. Although at first, Japanese women were characterized as simply victims of their overwhelmingly male-dominated society, magazine fashion editors soon began shooting fashion spreads in Japan and urging American women to emulate their Japanese sisters’ “timeless fragility and allure,” in their clothing and make-up. Artist René Bouché drew a series of paintings giving readers an intimate look into the private make-up ceremony of a Japanese Geisha, with

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192 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, Volume 123, 15 February 1953, p. 79.
descriptions of how American women could adapt the look for their everyday lives. Or, American women could learn “the art of pleasing,” by following a Geisha’s mannerisms as presented in a photo essay. With that in mind, American designer Carolyn Schnurer even designed an entire collection of resort clothes inspired by her travels in Japan and modeled in Vogue in 1952.

In her travel report on Japan, Helen Ruthing held Japanese women up as an ideal, claiming that the country’s “most wonderful aesthetic products were its women,” whom Americans would do well to imitate. Ruthing admired more modern Japanese women, honoring “six distinguished women whose lives were both of the Orient and of the West.” Mesdames Mayeda, widow of General Mayeda; Tsuneyoshi Takeda, wife of the head of Takeda Textiles; Tetsuro Furukaki, married to a U.N. representative and president of the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation; and Yoshitaka Mikimoto, whose grandfather invented cultured pearls, all “belonged to an international, East-West community that grew up after 1947 when Japan’s constitutional government was established.” The four also had qualities with which magazine readers could identify,

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200 Ibid.
like Western ways of dressing, multilingualism, and an interest in their nation’s political and artistic worlds.\textsuperscript{202}

Lastly, American women might be able to identify with Japanese women through the common bonds of motherhood, as indicated in a \textit{Vogue} editor’s review of “the new book, \textit{Mother and Son: The Wartime Correspondence of Isoko and Ichiro Hatano}, in which she (the mother) worried so much about…the mundane things in life during the war,” just like many American mothers might have done.\textsuperscript{203} The book was “immensely touching in its concern with the ordinary” and ultimately heartbreaking because the mother wrote her son throughout the war, only to find out that he had died almost at the beginning of the conflict. Her letters were collected by his commanding officer, who was unable to tell her of her son’s death because of rules about morale.\textsuperscript{204} Readers with sons in Korea might sympathize with the story, feeling the common bonds of motherhood, if identifying with nothing else in the Japanese character.

While creating a better postwar image for Germany and Japan took a fair amount of time, Italy emerged from the war with a more polished reputation. Italy’s resurgence was due in part to the nation’s status, as of 1943, as an Allied nation and in part to its strong wartime resistance movement. Like Germany, Italy still carried the taint of fascism, but Italy had not participated in Hitler’s final solution and even protected its country’s Jewish population from expulsion to concentration camps. Despite Mussolini’s


\textsuperscript{203} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 140, 15 September 1962, pp. 152-53.

\textsuperscript{204} \textit{Ibid.}
pursuit of a new Roman empire, moreover, Italy did not have quite the same record of wartime atrocities in its occupied areas as did Japan in China or Korea. The country, like France, also had a large population of displaced nobility coming back into power and fortune while reestablishing international social connections in the postwar world. Finally, and again similar to France, Italy’s cultural resurgence exploded into the American consciousness in the late 1950s, when its fashion, films, and favorable exchange rate made it a popular tourist destination.

Of course, the most important reason for presenting a positive image of Italy was political necessity. The country’s shattered postwar economy and crumbling infrastructure created an ideal situation for communists to dominate the Italian government. After the war, most Italian cities were intact, although reports indicated the “people were broken.”205 The wealthy “survived nearly with fortunes intact, the poor were the same as before [the war], and the hardest hit were the middle classes,” a situation leading to deep class divisions.206 Despite massive inflation and the enormous task of rebuilding, however, Italians were soon “enjoying a resurgence and vitality” that was “helping Italy to reemerge.”207 Even poverty, the black market, and class and political divisions could not dull the “eternally happy” spirit of “Italians, who despite having every reason to be down, were pulling themselves together.”208

205 Frances Keene, “The Clean Wind from the North,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 80, Number 2805, September 1945, pp. 128, 164, 166.


Italy’s geographic location close to Greece, Turkey, and the emerging Soviet bloc nations made it a good ally to cultivate after the war. Possibly out of political necessity and similar to France and Germany, editors early on began explaining away Italians’ earlier fascination with and election of Mussolini, making sure readers knew Italy was ripe for democratic change. (That many American readers admired Mussolini before the war did not hurt the nation’s situation). The wealthy were innocent of any wrongdoing because they had “voted for the monarchy…in order to perpetuate their class” and because of a “reliance on old feudal values,” that prevented them from supporting Mussolini, while the poor were actually responsible for electing Mussolini because they “wanted a master,” a forgivable error.\textsuperscript{209} Since the ruling upper class was also working to unify the Socialist party to be an effective counterpoint to the Communists, Italy could become a promising ally. Indeed, Italians were “making much of the experience of liberty: voluptuously setting up house with new furniture;” eager for democracy.”\textsuperscript{210}

Within three years of the end of the war, the United States would secretly intervene in elections to ensure a friendly, democratic government, and American interference, by the early 1950s, seemed to be working. In 1953, “the elections in June…[led to] a new law pushed through in a 69-hour session by the Democratic-Christian bloc to give at least 64% of the seats in the Chambre of Deputies to any group

\textsuperscript{209} Mannes, “Italy Revives,” pp. 191, 196-203, 324-5.


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with a bare majority (the Democratic-Christians).” Still, *Vogue*, in its first issue devoted entirely to international issues, worried about the “neo-Fascists very much in the public scene of elections, who produced in public squares orators as beautiful to hear as tenors, leaving the hearers undecided whether to applaud the voice or hiss the speech…resulting in hisses and applause.”

Just as it did for European nations, political need necessitated considerable economic aid, and magazine editors showed Italy’s desperate economic situation in stark clarity. Richard Avedon of *Harper’s Bazaar*, a prominent fashion and a news photographer, illustrated the situation in black and white. His grainy, gritty 1948 photo essay of “Portraits from Italy” showed a devastated nation of people fighting for every day survival. Despite their poverty, Italians and were described as “openhanded even to the limit of embarrassment – they would even give from poverty…even though the poverty of the nation drove people to crime.” Italians had character, and therefore, according to magazine editors, were worthy of American economic aid. By 1958, the nation was still not out of trouble; the “cost of living was high, there was poverty everywhere, and even the rich had to cut back.” To editors, that situation indicated that

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211 Social Editor, “People are Talking About, in Rome,” *Vogue*, Volume 121, 15 March 1953, pp. 74-75, 141.


democracy in Italy still might not be immune to Fascist (and Communist) threats, meaning Americans should redouble efforts to aid the nation.

Mrs. Henry R. Luce (Clare Booth Luce), “the president’s unorthodox but widely acclaimed choice as Ambassador to Italy,” reinforced Italy’s importance as an ally. Luce was popular, experienced in journalism and politics, and most importantly, in a “diplomatic post that was one of the, if not the, most crucial held by a woman.” Before working for her husband’s magazine Life, Luce in the 1930s was an editor at Vogue, and a former Republican Congresswoman from Connecticut. Additionally, Luce was in the same class as her readers, and her impeccable credentials as a firm anti-communist meant her endorsement of the nation as an important ally might encourage readers to look favorably on Italy, travel there, and push for economic aid. Again profiled in 1955, Luce’s Ambassadorship continued its successful route, and she went far to help improve Italo-U.S. relations, negotiating issues like a border dispute between Italy and Turkey and encouraging Pope Pius XII to be more vocal against communism. Italians loved Luce so much they nicknamed her “La Luce,” and had a “growing, almost cozy interest” in her career there.


Despite an increasingly healthy relationship with the United States, internal economic and political turmoil created a country of great contrasts by the early 1960s. Carlo Levi, author of Christ Stopped at Eboli, wrote for Vogue about Italy’s continuing political and economic issues, explaining that Italy was a country of multiplicity, and that there were actually two Italys, the “modern, rich, industrial North and the ancient, undeveloped, peasant southern provinces and islands.” There were “extremes of prosperity and displays of the newly rich that were almost like the rich days of the Republic.” The North was experiencing a Second Industrial Revolution, but the poor “destroyed everything modern, were entrenched in a poverty and filth worse than in India or Egypt, and the contrast had only deepened with development,” with the South becoming a colony of the North. Socially, Milan had something like the “two hundred families of France, with their own codes, but they were all flashy newness and illusion.” The “struggle against Fascism did provide a Revolution that helped effect change because it laid the foundations for a new society” and mixed up the classes in a common struggle, but the new vitality was causing traditions to break up, making poverty more apparent and aid more urgently needed.

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220 Carlo Levi, Italy – A Living Summary of All History,” Vogue, Volume 137, 1 March 1961, pp. 164, 185, 187-88. The two hundred families in France were something like the four hundred families in New York. They were theoretically the last two hundred families of nobility who controlled the French economy and its society, but in reality, were people descended from the first two hundred shareholders in Napoleon’s Banque de France.

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 Ibid.
When Pope Pius XII declared 1950 a Holy Year, a time when Catholics traditionally made a pilgrimage to Rome to ask for forgiveness of sins, he reinforced Italy’s image as a nation “yearning for penitence and peace” especially deserving of economic aid and political support.\(^\text{224}\) A Holy Year traditionally occurred every twenty-five years, although Popes could declare them at any time. The Holy Year marked a religious revival in Italy, and editors took note, remarking that “never has a troubled world looked so anxiously for an augury of peace,” suggesting that religious revival was good not just for Italy, but also for the world.\(^\text{225}\) Still, editors held mixed feelings about Italy, on the one hand believing “it was an odd thing that two million Romans – despite Mussolini, Hitler, war defeat, and economic collapse were able to fall asleep each night without sleeping pills, while on the other, according to Vogue travel editor Ben Hecht, World War Two was purifying for Italy, like it was for its former ally Germany.\(^\text{226}\) By the early 1950s, however, the country seemed “to run better than before the war…everyone seemed to work, the people looked healthy, food seemed plentiful, [and visitors] didn’t feel the political unrest, (although it was surely there).”\(^\text{227}\) Despite its new found


\(^{227}\) Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 118, 1 September 1951, p. 248.
efficiency, the government still needed guidance, because it was “characteristic of Italian governments to put a clean face on a mucky condition.”

By the early 1960s, the Italian government seemed to be on a better track, especially after the 1960 Olympics in Rome. The 1960 Olympics were the first to be televised, and triggered a period of rebuilding to prepare for tourists and television cameras. During preparation for the Olympics, social life soon reemerged as well, drawing American visitors to Italy. One annual fête, the Bal de Bestegui, was a ball given in Venice by international social figure Carlos de Bestegui, who recreated, in his villa, 18th century Venice. Sending out over one thousand invitations, the whole city participated in a parade before the ball, and figures like Susan Mary Patten and her friend Lady Diana Duff-Cooper were invited to stay with de Bestegui the week before the ball. The ball and its upper class attendees received extensive coverage the first year it was held, and every year after that, throughout the 1950s. De Bestegui’s party did not just signal Italy’s return to the social stage, but also its acceptability to the upper classes which boycotted travel and social life there during the war. Italy’s reputation was restored.

While Carlos de Bestegui reinvigorated Italy’s upper class social life, other Italians giving “their time, thought and care to Italy and to the world’s awareness of it,” brought attention to the country’s distressing social issues to help United States readers

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understand why the nation needed American aid. Donna Marguerite Caetani, Princess of Bassiano, for instance, edited an influential literary review to draw attention to Italy’s struggling writers. Princess Flavia della Gherardesca was the Vice President of the Italian League of Women Voters, working for democracy by getting more of the nation’s women to vote. Princess Gabriella Pacelli took Italian orphans from the War Relief Services of the National Catholic Welfare Conference to place them with American families and volunteered with the Political Mission of Assistance organization, part of the Ladies’ Charity of Rome. These three women were not only excellent representatives of the Italian upper class, they might also prove wonderful role models and women with whom readers could identify because of their own charity work.

Along with its social rebirth, Italy’s cultural resurgence could also, as with France, contribute to a healthy relationship with the United States. According to one Harper’s Bazaar travel editor, Italy was in the lead for a postwar artistic and cultural renaissance. The magazine’s arts editor asserted that “Fascist art was too tawdry because it celebrated the ordinary rather than the magical,” and postwar Italian painters rejected this trend, attracting influential American collectors like Peggy Guggenheim, who sponsored the careers of a variety of Italian artists throughout the late 1940s and 1950s.

With Italian art in mind, the Bouvier sisters made Venice one of their longest stops on their European tour so that Jacqueline could visit its museums and galleries while her

231 Ibid.
sister Lee took singing lessons from an Italian coloratura. According to Harper’s Bazaar travel editor Ben Hecht, art was so important it “alone kept Rome alive” after the war’s devastation.²³³ Possibly using culture as diplomacy, Princess Geurielli (Helena Rubinstein, an American cosmetics magnate), commissioned a group of emerging Italian artists to paint a series of paintings that illustrated what they thought American was like, although none had never visited the United States. The paintings were exhibited in Rome, then Capri, and finally in New York, for the benefit of the Hospitalized Veterans’ Music Service, and were well-received as a friendly gesture from Italians to Americans.²³⁴

Italy’s cultural renaissance, led by highly specialized artisans and designers, was also boosted by a postwar popularity surge in the film industry. The Italian film industry, centered around the influential Cinecittá studios (which also helped produce American films), was led by directors Roberto Rossellini (Paisá, 1946); Vittorio de Sica (The Bicycle Thief, 1948); and Federico Fellini (La Strada, 1955, La Dolce Vita, 1960). They, along with actors like Anna Magnani (The Miracle, 1948) and Marcello Mastroiani (La Dolce Vita, 1960) initiated the Italian neorealist movement which combined gritty images with tragic stories of poverty and heartbreak that captured American filmgoers’ imaginations. Even though all three directors were involved in the Fascist movement, their role as filmmakers for Mussolini were quickly forgotten. The directors’ subsequent work went far to create sympathetic image of Italians as noble, but impoverished and struggling to rebuild their country (presumably needing American help).


Like art and film, Italian opera resurged, particularly after the 1946 re-opening of La Scala, featuring a concert directed by Aruturo Toscanini. Throughout the 1950s, Italian Opera singer Maria Callas enthralled Americans with not only her voice, but also her beauty and glamorous lifestyle. (Lee Radziwill, incidentally, had an affair with Callas’ lover, Aristotle Onassis, in the 1960s, and her sister Jacqueline ultimately married Onassis in 1968). Florence had its first social season in 1949, establishing an annual musical festival that drew numerous American tourists.235 Another prominent music festival, “The Festival of Two Worlds, began in Spoleto, Italy in 1958, and according to travel and social editors, engaged in its own form of diplomacy, “bringing together known and unknown musicians from Italy and the U.S.” under the production of GianCarlo Menotti, president of the festival’s foundation.236 By 1960, Americans had a “great…crush on Italy – travel, movies, beauties.”237

**Conclusion**

Culture was just one of the major areas that potentially brought together the United States with old and new allies. When relations with France and Great Britain were shaky, editors at American magazines tried in their own fashion to keep diplomatic affairs steady by creating sympathy for the European postwar plight while portraying French and British wartime histories in the best possible light (a task that was simple for

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Great Britain but trickier for France). Magazine editors appealed to readers’ shared cultural interests, but also encouraged women to support aid to England, France, Germany, Japan, and Italy for diplomatic reasons. To do this, editors educated women on wartime histories, in some cases even explaining away the rise of fascist or totalitarian regimes and war crimes as anomalies in overall admirable histories. Additionally, they encouraged women to identify with their female counterparts overseas, perhaps with the idea that shared bonds of womanhood might help create support for critical American aid where other efforts might fail. Ultimately, although it is difficult to determine definitively, their efforts may have been successful, especially toward the end of the 1950s, when Americans flocked to Great Britain, France, and Italy for travel and luxury goods and to Germany and Japan as newly fashionable tourist destinations.

Diplomatically, positive coverage for all these nations may have built support for programs like the Marshall Plan while soothing any potentially hurt feelings when a relationship with former enemies became a political necessity. American readers like Susan Mary Patten and her friend Marietta Tree heartily supported aid programs like the Marshall Plan as a way to bolster faltering economies and build solid international alliances to discourage Communist inroads. They also supported rebuilding Germany and Japan into strong postwar allies against the Soviets. Urging readers to identify with their populations and supporting close diplomatic ties with old friends France and Great Britain, and new allies Germany, Japan, and Italy may have had far reaching effects on the new international balance of power. The United States did ably manage to keep friends close and draw old enemies closer. It would then have to turn its attention to
helping rebuild these nations’ economies if their governments were to remain stable and friendly to American interests. The most effective manner in which upper class women helped in that task was through spending money in the re-emerging fashion industry and later, by presenting a good image of Americans when taking advantage of ever more available travel opportunities, especially in France, Great Britain, and Italy, nations with the most potential for a swift recovery.
Chapter IV

Dollar Diplomacy: Rebuilding the European Economy One Dress at a Time

In March 1945, “all the great names of couture” (French high fashion), making a concerted effort to jump start the postwar French economy, came together to spread the news that French fashion was back in business. To make their announcement, French high fashion designers (haute couturiers) used an old-fashioned tool – fashion dolls. In the nineteenth century, china dolls dressed in the latest designs were not just toys, but were also used to carry news of French fashion developments around the world. With this Victorian era practice in mind, a group of thirty-five modern day couturiers created a series of dolls for an exhibition called the “Theatre of Fashion” (Théâtre de la Mode). Interior decorator and theater set designer (and close friend of Susan Mary Alsop) Christian Bérard led the immense project, creating fifteen small theatres used to feature dolls dressed for a variety of activities, from bicycling to dancing at a ball. The effort was so important that everyone from artists like surrealist filmmaker Jean Cocteau (who placed his ball gown-clad dolls in a bombed mansion) to Jean Saint-Martin, “inventor of the wire mannequin” and creator of the seventy-centimeter-tall dolls, participated along with the couturiers.¹

The exhibition, which raised funds for war victims, consisted of “170 small figurines dressed and coiffed by thirty-five couturiers, twenty-five milliners, and twenty hairdressers.”² Made of wire, with plaster masks for faces, the doll exhibition traveled the world, staging a finale in New York, and letting eager women everywhere know that French fashion was soon to be back in production. More importantly, “throughout their travels these gracious ambassadors of fashion demonstrated that the war had not stifled the couturiers’ talent” and that “Paris fashion triumphed once again.”³ The exhibition attested both to the importance of fashion to the French economy, and, with its “gracious ambassadors,” to its potential as a diplomatic tool in the postwar world.⁴ After the long occupation years, when French fashions were unavailable for export, the rest of the world impatiently waited to see what the finest designers, seamstresses, and tailors would show for their first postwar collections.

During the postwar era, fashion served an important purpose, allowing American women of all classes to help allied nations restore their prosperity, which in turn facilitated favorable foreign relations between the United States and Europe. Upper class women bought enthusiastically from the first postwar collections, modeling their purchases in fashion magazines, and perhaps inspiring women of other classes to copy their style. Those women of other classes could then emulate upper class style setters by purchasing little luxuries from Europe or spending smaller amounts on less expensive designer clothing. Since the French fashion industry depended upon the products of other

² Veillon, Fashion Under the Occupation, p. 144.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
nations, revived spending among all classes of American women also helped restore other economies, especially those of Great Britain and Italy, where London and Milan, the world’s other two fashion capitals, were located. Although Britain was already an ally, maintaining the relationship could have made necessary cultural exchange through fashion, among other means. Italy was not yet an ally, but was transformed into a significant Cold war partner at least in part through rehabilitating the nation’s reputation, followed by informal cultural diplomatic tools like buying fashion and later, travel to its fashionable cities. French couture could not have been revived at a better time, since American spending to help rebuild European economies might also help create the good diplomatic relations the United States wanted during the early Cold War.

**Fashion Plates: American Wardrobes Boost the European Economy**

When Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Lee Radziwill debuted and married, they entered a world of rigid social obligations. People in their class might be featured in fashion magazines, but they were never mentioned in the newspapers unless it was for their birth, marriage, or death. They also bore the responsibility, like the men in Robert Dean’s *Imperial Brotherhood*, of noblesse oblige. Each was passionately interested in and informed about political, cultural, and social issues, working for prominent causes to fulfill a belief that (in Marietta Tree’s words) “everyone in a community has duties as well as rights” and to be exemplars of their class.⁵ All four women at times were married to men “in the great tradition of those New

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Englanders, who, while remaining sturdily American, were able to appreciate and derive
the best from their adopted homes in Europe," and they held similar values, hoping to use
their cultural influence to improve the postwar world. Their views were molded by their
upbringing, and each brought the same backgrounds and values to interpreting
international issues as their male counterparts.

Unlike the men in Dean’s book, however, part of fulfilling the obligations of their
class included dressing the part, and dressing well at all times. The actress Leslie Caron
(*An American in Paris*) succinctly summed up this ideology when she said “It was as
important to be well-dressed as it was to be educated, have good manners, eat well.” Fellow actress Olivia de Havilland (*Gone with the Wind*) agreed, noting that “it was such
a responsibility to be impeccable.” Dressing well was important not just for maintaining
a social position, but also because “the elite determined the trends to which men and
women were expected to conform,” and these trends began in Paris, the home of the
couture. Upper class women spent considerable amounts of time and money on custom-
made (or what is also called “haute couture” or simply “couture”) clothing. Maintaining a
couture wardrobe was a rigorous process. It involved seasonal trips to Paris, the capital of
haute couture, or high fashion, to meet with designers, view fashion shows, and from

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8 Thomas, *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster*, p. 104. Although actresses were not normally dressed by
couturiers, who refused to put their designs on screen until the late 1950s, both women were members of
prominent families and were able to maintain their status in the upper reaches of French and British society,
primarily because of their acclaimed careers and strong family lineage.
there, plan wardrobes for each season. Upper class women’s elaborate wardrobes included everything from lingerie and morning gowns to day and evening suits, cocktail and dinner dresses, and ball gowns. Women could change clothing up to five times daily simply to meet social obligations. As fashion historian Dominique Veillon makes clear, “ways of dressing were part of a code of distinction.”\textsuperscript{10} Following the fashion code was part and parcel of an upper class woman’s routine.

Because of this expectation, before and immediately after the Second World War, \textit{haute couture} was a huge segment of the European, and especially the French, economy. Fashion was France’s largest industry, an important source of national pride, and as “a large-scale consumer of textiles, depend[ed] on other countries for imports of wool and silk for its fabrics and leather for its luxury trade.”\textsuperscript{11} Fashion helped the economies of other nations, but without their products, the industry could collapse. In some ways, fashion’s interdependence with other nations was good, because if it could quickly be revived after the war, the economic impact might be widespread. On the other hand, if the businesses of nations upon whose products it depended were not operating, neither could fashion function. Collapsing economies, in the American view, bred the conditions for Communist uprising, and if France collapsed, economies of the two nations it relied on for materials, Great Britain and Italy, might by extension also fail. One of Great Britain’s largest exports was textiles, and one of Italy’s was leather, both going to feed French fashion, and later on, their own couture industries. In Great Britain, custom-made, or bespoke, suits and shoes for men, and tweed country clothing and knits for women

\textsuperscript{10} Veillon, \textit{Fashion Under the Occupation}, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{11} \textit{Ibid.}
comprised large chunks of that country’s economy just as haute couture did in France. In Italy, leather goods and, in time, couture clothing also became crucial industries. Initially, however, both countries depended on the resurgence of French fashion to bolster their own economies, making it the most important to reinvigorate.

**French Couture and the Cold War: Building Strategic Relationships**

By the early 1960s, fashion was so important to France’s economy that Jacqueline Kennedy’s “clothes might arouse cheers from the ateliers of Paris – or anguished screams,” because any dress in which the First Lady was photographed became an instant best-seller. The French clothing industry was the first portion of the economy to revive after the war, and other upper class women’s clothing purchases from couture houses in France could have continental economic ramifications. Clothing choices were a primary way upper class women helped revitalize the European economy after the war. In turn, couture clients promoted European clothes by wearing them in American magazines, either in fashion spreads or in the social pages. Upper class women could potentially combine the responsibilities of being well dressed with conscious (or unconscious) geopolitical duties through buying, wearing and being seen in the height of European fashion, a tactic which may also have helped foster goodwill between the United States and its allies. As social and fashion role models, editors then featured upper class women’s wardrobes from around the world in the pages of their fashion magazines, implicitly urging other readers to follow their subjects’ examples. Molly Wood’s studies of foreign service wives overseas emphasizes this point, showing “how the seemingly

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frivolous issue of dress comprised a consequential element of strategy.”\textsuperscript{13} Joanne Meyerowitz echoes Wood, pointing out that “the Cold War made women’s political participation an international obligation,” and “popular magazines incorporated women’s public participation as part of a positive image of the modern American woman in the postwar world.”\textsuperscript{14}

Aware of her target audience’s social influence, editors like Carmel Snow of \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} asked upper class women like Susan Mary Patten to write for her publication, and featured her and her Paris home “all over the fashion magazine.”\textsuperscript{15} Patten did worry her friend Marietta Tree, to whom she wrote about the photo shoot, “[would] be ashamed of me” for appearing so much in the magazine, but also knew “it did help” the French economy.\textsuperscript{16} Throughout the late forties and into the early fifties, the importance France, in particular, but also Great Britain and Italy placed on their own designers and luxury goods manufacturers indicated that the tactic of using upper class women to promote clothing did indeed help rebuild the economy. The country this strategy impacted the most, and more quickly, was France, with whom the United States also most immediately had a potentially problematic relationship.

After the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 and end of the war in August, President Truman and his advisors worked to improve the American relationship with


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid}.
France, a strategically necessary ally with renewed clout as a partner in the German occupation. Relations were already prickly, as Susan Mary Patten noted, because “Paris was clouded and confused by [the U.S.] government’s delay in recognizing de Gaulle and his ministers as the French government” after the country’s 1944 liberation.\textsuperscript{17} Rather than worrying about De Gaulle, Truman was more concerned about the socialist party’s influence in France and the government’s desire after the war to retain its colonies and begin testing nuclear weapons. In turn, France under De Gaulle chafed under a newly powerful America, which declared its opposition to colonialism and a French nuclear program. The new government also worried about the increasing Americanization of its people and a corresponding loss of cultural authority around the world. Emily Rosenberg’s work about female consumers points to “Richard Kuisel’s \textit{Seducing the French},” to show “how the emotional debates over ‘Americanization’ within French culture during the 1950s were intertwined with discussions surrounding a more independent French foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{18} France’s desire for independent foreign policy did not sit very well with the United States. Of course, the slight of not having been invited to the Potsdam conference, although granted an occupation zone in Germany, also rankled, and the French government was initially in no mood to surrender any power in the interests of American Cold War objectives.

In Patten’s view, though, Truman’s worrying about those issues was a mistake, and immediate recognition along with a plan to bolster the Franco-American relationship

\textsuperscript{17} Alsop, \textit{To Marietta From Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 6.

would have been the best course of action if the United States wanted a solid postwar friendship. Quoting her friend Duff Cooper, Patten felt “it would be interesting to collect historical instances of harm that has been done by the reluctance of men to accept readily what they know they will have to accept in the end.”

Patten worried that the U.S. government took “two months after the liberation of Paris” before it “recognized the government of General de Gaulle, which, during the whole of that period, was carrying out the functions of government and plainly had the support of the people.”

As Patten pointed out, “De Gaulle never forgave,” and did not forget either the recognition issue or the Potsdam slights, making difficult any immediately easy Franco-American Cold War partnership. And yet, Patten and her husband had an excellent first few years in France, even though she felt “an opportunity had been missed. The national feeling [for the United States] was still there, not as in 1944 but still there, and though statesmen [could not] create national feeling they [could] take advantage of it.”

Even if statesmen could no longer exploit France’s “national feeling,” American women might still contribute to building good relations in a small way. They could do this on a personal level by helping rebuild the economy, or like Patten, by developing individual relationships with French people, who, as a society, generally held warm feelings for Americans.

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20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.
Of course, France’s most immediate postwar problem was its tattered economy, and French fashion in particular was one of that economy’s cornerstones. From the 1920s and to World War II, the fashion industry employed over three hundred thousand master “seamstresses, cutters, embroiderers, furriers, weavers, spinners, and milliners,” almost twenty-five thousand of whom were women.\(^{23}\) Until 1939, “orders flowed in from the four corners of the globe and…the sale of a luxury gown enabled the state to buy ten tons of coal, and the sale of a litre of perfume, two tons of petrol.”\(^{24}\) Fashion was so essential at the beginning of the war that designer Lucien Lelong explained that it was “vital for French couture to defend its share of foreign markets at any cost” because “luxury and quality [were] national industries…they bring millions of foreign currency into the state coffers, which we need now more than ever…what Germany earn[ed] with chemical products, fertilizers and machinery, we earn with diaphanous muslins, perfumes, flowers, and ribbon.”\(^{25}\) Ultimately fashion was also an integral part of French national pride and culture “because the majority of rich or well-off women throughout the world dressed, made up, styled their hair and decked themselves out not only according to Paris fashion, but also with the intention of imitating Parisian women.”\(^{26}\) Most importantly, though, haute couture kept “state coffers…well-lined.”\(^{27}\)

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\(^{23}\) Dana Thomas, *Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster*, p. 27.


\(^{25}\) *Ibid*.


During the Second World War, many couture houses closed, either because they refused to sell clothing to Nazi occupants, or because of a lack of materials. The Vichy regime agreed with a Nazi plan to move the lucrative fashion industry to Germany “because the Germans saw it as a possible challenge to National Socialist cultural hegemony.” Couturiers fought back and were so determined to keep haute couture in France that the designer Lucien Lelong (President of the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture) risked jail when he pled his case before German high commissioners in Berlin, exclaiming couture “either stays in Paris or it ceases to exist.” (Lelong however, was willing to go so far as selling clothes to the wives of prominent Nazis to keep the couture in France).

Couture and other luxury industries did not entirely die out during the war, of course, since the houses conducted a vibrant business with Nazi occupants hungry for luxuries unavailable in their own country and inexpensive because of a favorable exchange rate. Because of many designers’ close relationships with the Germans, some of the leading names in couture could have been accused of collaboration (particularly well-known was Coco Chanel, who took a German soldier as her lover and was socially shunned for almost a decade after the war). But after the war, “to prevent the great brands…from resuming their activities on the pretext that their businesses had flourished during the war was unthinkable because the state coffers were empty and only exports

28 Veillon, Fashion Under the Occupation, p. 142.

29 Thomas, Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster, p. 237.
Indeed, even though “the ruined country could not get back to work overnight…everything that belonged to the domain of creation and good taste seemed to be directly exploitable and profitable.” When the war ended, almost all couture houses re-opened (or expanded production with newly available textiles), and the luxury clothing industry was one of the first trades to revive, in large part because of American dollars. As early as 1946, over one hundred fashion houses reopened their doors. By the end of the 1950s, French designers had licensed their names for handbags, hosiery, gloves, and even girdles, creating the very first of what would today be known as “global” brands. They became fabulously wealthy, and catapulted the fashion industry, which represented over half of the French economy, into its biggest boom in years.

All over the United States and South America (places where couture was primarily exported), women like Susan Mary Patten, Marietta Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy, and Lee Canfield, “long deprived of the French label or signature, waited impatiently for the resumption of relations with France,” which in turn recognized that “here was a market to recapture, foreign currency to earn.” Upper class American women were among the world’s first customers to purchase from the selection of postwar couture showings, and their support helped revive the couture industry. Upon moving to Paris, for instance, Susan Mary Patten immediately supported the house of Balmain and two years later, entered into a discreet modeling and borrowing agreement with the designer

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30 Veillon, Fashion Under the Occupation, p. 143.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid.
Christian Dior. When she resided in Great Britain, Marietta Tree was famous for her (mostly) British-made (she also wore French couture) wardrobe and support of local handicrafts. In 1951, Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier took a tour of Europe which involved purchasing copious amounts of clothing and Italian leather goods to supplement their U.S. wardrobes. (In fact, Jacqueline Kennedy as First Lady later came under criticism for her preference for French fashions over American-made ready-to-wear clothes). When Italy started producing luxury leather goods, and later, couture clothing, that country’s economy received a much-needed boost significant in helping rebuild its own suffering postwar industries. *Vogue*’s Marya Mannes nicely captured the political impact of helping revive struggling European (and especially French) economies when it urged readers on to “a high standard of giving,” assuring them that “fortune and power could only be justified with generosity,” or “there will be a World War Three.”33 One way to be generous (and at the same time promote a peaceful world through capitalism) was to spend overseas the money Americans were fortunate enough to have in their own booming postwar economy.

Fashion magazines and upper class women, then, had a synergistic relationship centered on reinvigorating the couture clothing industry. Fashion magazines urged readers to purchase French (and British and Italian) fashions as soon as they were available after the war. When upper class women bought and wore French designs, they helped boost the economy by encouraging other women to make purchases and copy the styles they set. The French government recognized that magazines were so crucial to the

survival of the couture that it made Carmel Snow, the editor-in-chief of Harper’s Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor in a ceremony in France on 13 April 1949. Her award was presented by M. Ludovic Channel, Consul General of France, representing the president of the republic.34 Vogue publisher and Condé Nast president Iva S. Patcévitch was similarly recognized in 1950, when French Ambassador Henri Bonnet presented him with the French Legion of Honor for “devotion to the cause of Franco-American friendship,” through “fostering cooperation between the two nations in art and fashion.”35 Later, Vogue’s editor-in-chief, Jessica Daves, was similarly honored in 1959 for her role in “advancing the continued understanding and cooperation between the United States and France in the realm of fashion.”36

American magazine editors played a key role in driving the fashion market, recognizing that clothing sales could have international ramifications. Fashion was so important in the Seamproof Hosiery and Lingerie Company’s opinion, that it “furthered America’s cause of global goodwill.”37 In this spirit, the company held a contest judged by Harper’s Bazaar Editor-in-Chief Carmel Snow to elect a U.S. “Ambassadress of Fashion,” who was flown by Italian Air to twenty-six fashion capitals where she would


receive fashions from couturiers in each city.\textsuperscript{38} The fashions were worn at publicity events in each city, and later, the “Ambassadress” presided over a ball for the United Nations Children’s Fund. Recognizing fashion’s global impact, Snow declared in a later issue of \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} that “one [could] no longer say ‘French fashions for the French and American fashions for Americans’ – fashion is fashion,” or in other words, fashion was international again, and purchasing it had worldwide impact (even if most of the industry was centered in Paris).\textsuperscript{39} The collections were so important to the French economy (and in turn, the British and Italian economies) in fact, that “even government officials ask[ed] anxiously what I thought of the collections” every time Carmel Snow visited Paris.\textsuperscript{40}

In the spring before the formal November 1945 showings, the first designers with limited collections included Mademoiselle Lanvin, who held weekly fashion shows for American GIs followed by parties to lift their spirits (and presumably help convince them to purchase designs for sweethearts back home). The parties were not just a goodwill gesture in France, but also played well in the United States, where Lanvin was a popular label. Other designers like Canovas de Castillo, Colette of Hérmès, Mademoiselle Maud Carpentier of Mad Carpentier, and the house of Paquin soon followed suit. Full-scale shows, however, were not held until a few months later, when fabric houses were again


\textsuperscript{40} Carmel Snow, Editor, “Notes From Paris, Continued,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, May 1946, Volume 80, Number 2813, pp. 200, 209.
up and running (although not entirely at full speed – they depended on fashion sales, which drove textile orders). Snow covered the first full-blown season of French collections in her “Cable from Paris” issue in November 1945, and again for the winter collections in May 1946. Snow’s May issue coverage pointedly listed women like Lady Diana Duff-Cooper (one of Susan Mary Alsop’s best friends) who purchased items from the first years’ collections, and urged other women to follow suit.

Like Harper’s Bazaar, Vogue’s fashion editors recognized the power of postwar French fashion, declaring “the celebrated industry vital to the economic life, prestige, and morale of France. The first French Vogue issue after the liberation was published “at the urgent request of the couture” industry, officially made by the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture, and implored readers to help the French economy through purchasing couture clothing. Profiles on fashion designers like Elsa Schiaparelli, whom other designers constantly asked “When are they [Americans] coming back to Paris to buy?” let American women know how much fashion mattered in France, and of course, that the French felt nothing but friendliness toward American visitors. In its coverage of the first Paris collections after the war, Vogue editors declared that “fashion can bring a greater return than any other commodity…”

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herself, to feed and clothe her people who now live in conditions that would be unconceivable to most Americans.” Since fashion brought “the quickest profits,” and could be rebuilt quickly because it was the industry “the least touched by the Germans,” purchasing French fashion and luxury goods was one of the fastest ways to help France revive its economy while building international goodwill. Urging Americans to buy French fashions also put a quick damper on any American ambitions to become known for fashion. In New York especially, American designers (previously just known for ready-to-wear, high quality but factory made clothing) asserted themselves during the war, building lists of custom clientele, and could prove a serious threat to the French couture if not swiftly discouraged.

Not only were the fashion collections important for the revitalization of the European economy, then, they could “promote international understanding,” achieved “not only over the conference tables, but in daily business and particularly by a respect for and generous understanding of talent and skill.” When Carmel Snow died in 1961, she would be credited with having recognized that Christian Dior’s revolutionary 1947 “New Look” collection, for example, with “its long, full skirts meant millions of dollars, francs, pounds, lire and piasters in increased use of silk and cotton. Dior’s collection had worldwide ramifications, in its “effects among the mulberry leaves around Lake Como

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45 Staff Editor, “Paris Collections,” Vogue, 1 April 1946, Volume 107, pp. 168, 220, 222.


to…the cotton fields of Egypt.” The “New Look” was so called because it featured clothing designed with a dramatic departure from wartime fabric restrictions or plainer styles in mind. It featured ball gowns with up to twenty yards of fabric, day dresses that fell to twelve inches above the floor, and exaggerated, often padded, hips and bosoms. Because they were so popular, selling thousands of models, the fabric required for Dior’s designs alone could help revive the textile industry.

Few French women could afford these kinds of clothes, but remaining wealthy European women and American women loved the “New Look,” especially after a year. Harper’s Bazaar editor and photographer Louise Dahl-Wolfe declared “the year of the pretty woman (because it was the year when the men came home).” The New Look was so popular that simply getting into the frenzied couture shows was a trial. In 1947, Susan Mary Patten managed to fight her “way through hundreds of richly dressed ladies clamoring” to get into Christian Dior’s first couture show. Afterward, while trying on dress models, she described the dressing rooms as “more dangerous than entering a den of female lions before feeding time, as the richest ladies in [the world] were screaming for the models.” Dior’s popularity significantly affected the French economy (in fact, he accounted for “fifty per cent of the much-needed dollars France got from the fashion industry”) and revolutionized women’s clothing. Dior was even well-known enough to

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50 Alsop, To Marietta from Paris, 1945-1960, p. 93.

51 Ibid., p. 310.
inspire groups in the United States called “A Little Below the Knee” clubs that protested his designs, deeming them too restrictive and a setback to the wartime freedoms women gained in shorter skirts and looser jackets. The British Board of Trade, fearing competition for its own couturiers and a run on already scarce, rationed fabric supplies, initially condemned Dior’s designs. Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret along with other members of the royal family, had to view the 1947 collection secretly at the French embassy in London. (Princess Margaret was the first to adopt the New Look, popularizing it in England). Dior’s “New Look” introduced a new term into the language, and it is probably no coincidence that President Eisenhower’s national security policy was also interestingly called the “New Look.”

To meet a demand magazines and style setting readers helped create, American department stores and clothing and textile manufacturers provided crucial support of the French fashion industry by bringing products directly to the United States for sale in their stores. Since department store purchases also helped revive the economy, the French government went out of its way to also recognize leaders in that field, just as it did with magazine editors. In 1950, for example, Grover Magnin, owner of I. Magnin department stores, received the Legion of Honor from his friend, Count Jean de la Garde, the French Consul in San Francisco, for his support of French fashion. The French government recognized Magnin for his work in bringing French designs to American buyers through his enthusiastic purchases of major postwar collections and licensing deals with French

designers.\textsuperscript{53} Another Legion of Honor recipient was Adolph P. Schuman, president of the San Francisco dressmaking firm \textit{Lilli Ann}, who in the French government’s opinion, “worked voluntarily to revitalize the textile industry by bringing modern methods of production and opening up wider markets in a field whose glory is, as always, the handloom and the skilled individual craftsman.”\textsuperscript{54} He was the first American manufacturer to receive this honor, a particularly significant one at a time when French industry was desperately trying to modernize.\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Vogue} nicely summed up the French government’s understanding of fashion’s importance, noting that by 1953, “in France it has proved itself such a vital power that…it was a part of the government’s business.”\textsuperscript{56} Furthermore, women could, “on the strength of fashion, for fashion’s a force in the world economy[.] support the world here.”\textsuperscript{57}

In the late fifties and early sixties, one department store in particular, Neiman Marcus, based in Dallas, Texas, played an enormous role in bringing fashions from around the world to the United States. At the same time, it helped develop good political relations with featured nations. Stanley Marcus, owner and CEO of Neiman Marcus, organized a series of two-week long bazaars featuring prominent designers, artists, and politicians. The store prepared exhibits of rare cultural artifacts, artwork, and


\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid}.


\textsuperscript{57} \textit{Ibid}.
performances by leading musicians in addition to a daily fashion show with mannequins dressed in the highlighted nation’s fashions. The first and largest of these, the French Quinzane in October 1957, was co-sponsored by Air France, which at the same time conveniently opened its first direct route from Orly to Dallas. An amazing array of high profile dignitaries, from politicians like Hervé Alphand, the French Ambassador to the United States, to the actress Marie Hélène-Arnaud flew in for the festivities. Their attendance made plain just how important fashion was to France. Attendees were honored at balls, breakfasts and luncheons, and the event emphasized Texas’ “admiration and respect” for France.⁵⁸ Although not intentionally held in the same month as the Russian Sputnik launch, Neiman Marcus’ timing could not have been better, because cementing the Franco-U.S. relationship would then be more important than ever. Only a year after Suez, the Fourth Republic was close to collapse because of its war with Algeria and its debacle in Viet Nam, meaning both countries had a heightened need to maintain smooth relations. Ambassador Alphand was particularly keen on events like the Quinzane because Texas had a large population of newly-wealthy oil barons eager to spend their money overseas to gain social status at home.⁵⁹

The French Quinzane proved so successful that Neiman Marcus created similar programs for Great Britain and Italy, offering the best in each nation’s fashions, arts, and antiques, all for sale. Ambassadorial attendance at all the programs attested to the events’ success and to the power of fashion in those nations’ economies. The celebration for Italy


even had a replica of La Scala, created for an opera performance at a Charity Ball for the Italian Ambassador, the Honourable Manilo Brosio. Neiman Marcus’ Italian event came on the heels of an almost decade-long polishing of Italy’s postwar reputation and U.S. intervention in Italian elections to secure a friendly Italian government. The popularity of Italian fashions and luxury goods was at an all-time high, and this event helped in a small way to solidify friendly relations (at least on an economic level) between the United States and Italy.

Finally, and perhaps in a nod to Jacqueline Kennedy and Lee Radziwill’s goodwill tour to India, Neiman Marcus held a similar affair for India, Japan, and Hong Kong in 1962. Probably not coincidentally, the Far East celebration nodded not just to the goodwill trip and an ensuing nationwide fascination with all things Asian, but also to an increasing need for a solid diplomatic relationship with those governments because of the presence of U.S. troops in Viet Nam. In any case, in October 1962, the “Far East met the West at Neiman Marcus,” with two weeks of fashion, art, and exhibits of products like tea, spices, perfume or technology. American events like these drew attention to the French in particular, but also to other nations’ fashion and industry. Most importantly, they had the potential to help cement good political and economic relations between the United States and other countries.


Department stores like Neiman Marcus gave customers easy access to the best goods from around the world. Abroad, the creation of “duty-free” shopping made buying luxury goods overseas (and infusing American dollars into the European economy) even easier. This system began when ships and aircraft traveling overseas across international waters sold things like liquor, cigarettes, small food items, perfumes, and gloves or hats without the usual tariffs travelers paid when bringing these items into the United States. The practice grew more successful throughout the 1950s as international travel increased, and was finally formalized in the 1960s with the establishment of DFS, or “Duty Free Shops.” DFS was a business begun by two American college students who wanted “to sell liquor tax-free to GIs ending their tours in Europe.” 62 From there, DFS spread to almost every international air or liner port in the world, making both men multi-millionaires while opening up the idea of purchasing luxury goods from overseas to a wider audience. 63 Because of DFS, soldiers returning from overseas could better afford to bring presents like those upper class women regularly bought on their own trips, to their girlfriends or wives who did not have the means to travel. Also, duty-free shopping infused much needed cash into the European economy. By 1950, if travelers needed help selecting gifts from the array of newly-available luxury goods, there were personal “shopping advisors” in major cities like Paris and Rome to help them make the appropriate selections to take “duty-free” back to the United States. 64

62 Thomas, Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster, p. 82.

63 Ibid.

Although between 1947 and 1962 few women could afford handmade couture fashions, by 1955, mid-priced French fashion designs started spreading to middle class women wanting to emulate their well-dressed upper class compatriots. Middle class American women had more access than ever before to European designers’ work and if they were inclined, could help rebuild foreign economies just like women held up as the epitome of style. In the first few years after the war, high-fashion “trickled down” to the masses through three major business practices; licensing agreements with American department stores, fashion features demonstrating how to wear European looks and where to buy them for less, and pattern deals with couture designers that allowed American women to sew their own Paris designs. Later, because of widespread and unauthorized copying, the French in particular enacted more stringent rules for covering fashion and for its reproduction, but designs at every price point remained widely available throughout the Cold War. (The stricter laws were also part of a wider effort to avoid Americanization and loss of French cultural superiority, in which couture played an enormous role).

Before the war, European clothing makers expanded their businesses to sell “their goods in fine department stores in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Chicago,” but going abroad for clothing was still the norm for style setters in the very upper classes.65 French couturiers after the war resumed relationships with larger department stores to manufacture “American translations of French fashions” for women

65 Thomas, Deluxe: How Luxury Lost its Luster, p. 237.
who could not make the trip to Paris twice yearly, but still wanted a “Paris Look.” The first French designer to do this was Jacques Fath, who was, after Dior, the most popular couturier in the world. Fath was invited by a cohort of American manufacturers to create a special collection for the U.S. market. In less than a year, his American collections sold out, and had the side effect of quadrupling sales in his Paris salon.

Next, designers freely sold their names in lucrative licensing agreements with clothing manufacturers and department stores in order to create clothing priced well-enough for “every woman’s pocketbook.” As a result, major department stores across the country opened their own “couture salons” where they sold both original exported fashions and copies. Working in these couture salons were highly skilled in-house designers who interpreted French (and other countries’) fashions for the American budget. Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier often brought photographs to salons like these to have French designs copied at home, and when she became First Lady, Jacqueline Kennedy had her inauguration gown made at the couture salon at Bergdorf Goodman department store. Other women regularly took magazine pages directly to dressmakers to get designs replicated without having to make the trip to Europe, although this was not a practice the French government officially condoned. Again, partially due to extensive “informal” copying, French designers later exerted tighter control over their ideas, but

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licensing European designs for sale in major department stores lasted throughout the post- and Cold War eras.

Fashion magazines also helped women find European designs for lower prices, even if the purchase was as small as a couture accessory. During the early 1940s and later into the 1950s and 60s, “the pages of Vogue [were opened] to moderately priced clothing…editors [were instructed], in each of their photo shoots, [to] include not only expensive clothing by recognized designers but also quality items priced for the middle class woman.”

Vogue magazine also played an especially large role in bringing French fashion to the masses through its pattern partnerships with French designers. In 1950, Harper’s Bazaar followed suit, instituting a series of twice yearly issues devoted to “the Well-Spent Dollar,” which featured pages of stylish, well-made, and mostly French fashions available at “a favourable exchange rate.” The magazine, similar to Vogue, paired with Simplicity Patterns to create a line of pattern designs inspired by the European showings to allow the home sewer to stretch her “well-spent dollar.” Simplicity patterns, unlike Vogue patterns, were not designed in conjunction with individual designers, but magazines and advertisers urged home sewers to purchase French or British fabrics for

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use in their projects as a way to help the textile industry (seventeen percent of French exports in 1950) of both nations.\textsuperscript{72}

American women wanting to dress well walked a tricky line, though, in that they desired Paris fashions, whose purchase rebuilt economies, but in the face of postwar poverty, power and food shortages, and extremely cold winters, did not want to flaunt their good fortune for the world to see. \textit{Vogue} fashion editors helped with “Guess How Much” features immediately after the war, later running stories along the lines of “Price Tag Anonymous,” in which they declared that “no woman of taste these days wishes to look as though she has spent a great sum of money on her clothes.”\textsuperscript{73} Given this concern, \textit{Vogue} continued throughout the 1950s appealing to women who wanted to be well-dressed but worked within a small budget by running a feature on women the magazine termed “nillionaires.” “Nillionaires” were (generally young) women of taste with a budget of “nil,” and the stories featured models posing in lesser-priced French, British, and Italian fashions.\textsuperscript{74} With these varied resources at hand, women of all classes could dress well for less, democratizing style while also helping reinvigorate Europe’s (and especially France’s) fashion industry.

To bring couture designs home while also helping support designers themselves, by the late 1940s, \textit{Vogue} entered into a more than decade-long alliance with eight popular


French couturiers to produce patterns inspired by their seasonal showings. Pierre Balmain, Jacques Fath, Jacques Heim, Lanvin, Paquin, Robert Piguet, and Elsa Schiaparelli created special designs for *Vogue* patterns that were true “Paris Originals” not available on the runway. These licensing deals were so profitable some still exist today. Moreover, since “*Vogue* patterns…were an established American habit,” women without the means for a designer outfit directly from Paris could make their own Paris originals (not available on the runway), and in an admittedly smaller way, potentially help contribute to international goodwill by supporting French designers. The patterns even included labels bearing the designer’s name and the legend “*Vogue* Original Design” women could sew into their home made fashions. Finally, pattern manufacturer *McCall’s* got in on the act, creating patterns for the home sewer that would make her look “as elegant as if you’d just been to Paris!”75 Similar to *Simplicity*, *McCall’s* did not have direct designer licensing deals, but helpfully recommended French or British fabrics for use in making the patterns. *McCall’s* pattern company advertised in both magazines’ pages.

Aside from agreements with department stores and pattern licensing deals, designers themselves actively courted American customers with a limited budget. For a collection he was invited to create specifically for sale in the United States, Jacques Fath traveled the country in 1948 personally conducting research on American women’s clothing needs. The resulting dresses sold so well, a group of American buyers and manufacturers invited him back in 1949 to create a collection for 1950. Christian Dior,

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the epitome of French style during the 1950s, tried to make couture more available to women by traveling with his clothing collections twice yearly to the United States. In doing so, he was able to meet directly with American women who wanted to purchase his clothing but could not afford to travel abroad. Dior followed Fath’s lead, breaking into the American fashion market by traveling directly to consumers themselves, conducting what would today be called “trunk shows” where designers came to department stores literally with trunks full of their clothing.76

Later, the influential designer Coco Chanel, whose career began in the early 1900s but was reborn in the 1950s, “fully aware that her classic style had been copied incessantly…accepted the adage that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery: ‘I am no longer interested in dressing a few hundred women, private clients; I shall dress thousands of women. But a widely repeated fashion, seen everywhere, cheaply produced, must start from luxury. At the top of the pinnacle – le point de depart must be ‘luxe.’”77

What this statement meant was that Chanel maintained strict control over her designs (she very much wanted to preserve couture’s cultural heritage for France), but made sure they were, at every price point, well-made in French factories. To maintain quality control and gauge her customer’s needs, Chanel gladly promoted her fashions, at a
variety of prices, in American stores around the country. She was so popular in the 
United States that her designs in time became the uniform of millions of modern 
American women because they were comfortable, well-cut, and conducive to an active 
lifestyle.

Aside from magazine editors’, American buyers’, and French designers’ efforts, 
the world economy conspired to help American women purchase French and other 
fashions. If American women could not afford original French fashions and handicrafts, 
for instance, but still wanted to assist in rebuilding the European economy, help was on 
the way by the early 1950s because the devaluation of the franc meant that the “dollar 
[went] far in France.”78 While this situation on the surface might seem unfortunate for 
France, in reality, it meant more women had better access to the formerly expensive 
designs they saw socialites wearing in magazine pages and in the social columns. The 
expanded customer base meant more exposure for French fashion, and in turn, more 
money channeled into that industry and more dollars into the economy.

Magazine promotion and department store sales, along with the buying examples 
of upper class women (and some help from the French economy) were all fabulously 
effective at boosting the French economy. Where the industry was left in a “truly dire 
moral and economic position” after the war, within five years, it recovered with the help 
of “foreign buyers, the international press, and the vitality of the designs.”79 The House

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78 Staff Editor, “Paris is Celebrating her 200th Birthday in 1951: Give to the Party!,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 85, Number 2872, March 1951, p. 253.

of Dior provides a good snapshot of fashion’s impact on the economy. Christian Dior’s client list rose to over three thousand private clients in the 1950s, and he produced over five thousand handmade garments in the 1954-1955 season alone (with price tags of $2,000-$3,000 per garment, or about $15,000-$20,000 in today’s dollars). Jacques Fath and Pierre Balmain followed up his lead by producing over three thousand handmade garments each during that same year.\(^8^0\) (Handmade, couture garments were the inspiration for ready to wear, or prêt-á-porter, clothing and sales increases in this category drove sales in other areas). By 1957, its ten year anniversary, Dior’s design house had sold over one hundred thousand garments, generating approximately two billion dollars in sales over the decade.\(^8^1\) Dior alone generated sales of over twelve million francs by 1949 (just two years after his first collection), and his house generated five percent of all French export revenue that year.\(^8^2\) Christian Dior was the best selling designer in France, but his example held true for the other two dozen or so couture houses, all of which experienced tremendous sales increases throughout the 1950s.

Success in clothing sales allowed designers to turn their attentions to creating other luxury goods, in the process possibly allowing almost every American woman, even if she could not afford new clothing, to imitate her upper class sisters in helping the French. Probably the first item any woman bought when she went to France, and most likely because it was the first luxury item available after the war, was perfume. Perfume

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\(^8^1\) Ibid., p. 128.

in France was a twenty-billion franc industry, so important to the French economy that it
“followed the politics of the nation,” with scents that could be uplifting, or as
“demoralizing as skirts…up to the knees.”\footnote{Staff Editor, “French Perfume – A Twenty Billion Franc Industry,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, 15 March 1950, Volume 84, Number 2860, pp. 60-1.} The most popular French perfume in the
world was \textit{Chanel No. 5}, which “the GIs queued up for blocks to buy.”\footnote{Staff editor, “Chanel Designs Again,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 123, 15 February 1953, p. 128.} Other bestsellers
included \textit{Shocking} by Elsa Schiaparelli or \textit{Miss Dior} and \textit{Diorissimo} by Christian Dior.
Perfumes were generally created by couture houses, but were also independently
produced by perfumers such as Coty. (In addition to French perfume, British perfume,
soaps, and toiletries by makers like Yardley of London or Casswell Massey were quickly
available and inexpensive - and therefore, very popular - right after the war).

After the war, perfume producers advertised widely in \textit{Vogue} and \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, and while they remained luxury goods, perfumes were also more moderately
priced than clothing. In fact, the most popular gift a soldier deployed overseas could send
home to his mother, sister, wife, or girlfriend was French perfume, partially because it
was unavailable during the war, but also because it was an affordable luxury item that
allowed women everywhere to own a little bit of an upper class label. Advertisers went so
far as to market perfume as a pathway for American and French women better to
understand one another’s cultures. Recognizing their popularity and the possibility for
increased sales, designer Lucien Lelong not only lowered the price of his perfumes to
make them more accessible to women with limited budgets, but also ran combined ads
for two perfumes featuring an American socialite (Miss Cynthia Cogswell) and a French
woman (the Vicomtess de Breson). These women combined “American know-how with French chic” and each wore her perfume differently. As suggested in the advertisement, American women could use their “know how” to select the right perfume for themselves (with the help of Miss Cogswell’s recommendations). Then, they could emulate French chic by wearing more perfume, as the Viscomtess demonstrated, which also (not coincidentally) would help Lelong sell more of his product.85

Other luxury goods almost immediately accessible after the war included cosmetics and accessories. These were smaller items, affordable, and like perfume, more immediately available for sale, which allowed Americans to put money back into the European economy even before clothes went into production. According to a Harper’s Bazaar beauty editor, after the war, there was “evidence of a tremendous postwar resurgence in the famous French cosmetic laboratories.”86 One of these, Orlane of Paris, trumpeted the revival when it advertised its products, only available through Neiman Marcus department stores, as “made, packaged, and sealed in France!”87 The cosmetics firm emphasized that its products were “the creams used by Frenchwomen to maintain their beauty.”88 Like perfume, cosmetics purchases offered a means to support the producing country’s economy, while using the same goods as did upper class American and chic French women.


88 Ibid.
When the French and British couture collections were held again in 1946, they by extension helped re-invigorate the accessories trade, which was “opening up importantly…back to pre-war French workmanship.”

American women could buy French gloves from “the first shipment in five years, with the memory of the Resistance sewn into every stitch.” (Although the question of French collaboration was not yet settled, if magazines are to be believed, most Americans seemed to buy wholeheartedly into De Gaulle’s image of all the French as members of the Resistance. The romantic picture probably did make the transition to peacetime amity – if lingering doubts existed about the French - a bit smoother.) Later, women could buy British shoes for going back to school to give an “English complexion” to their goodwill purchases. To make a more overtly diplomatic gesture, women could even buy fabrics and curios from a new United Nations gift shop housed in the Assembly Building, and selling wares from “some sixty-odd nations.”

Not without coincidence, the fabric industry rebounded after French fashion shows resumed, especially after the “New Look” collection. Wide, crinolined dresses for day in lengths just above the floor and sweeping evening gowns required yards and yards of fabric, and since Dior was besieged with orders, the textile industry went into overdrive. Blin and Blin, for example, celebrated its good fortune when it advertised its

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92 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, 1 November 1952, Volume 120, p. 124.
fabrics in the 1950s as one of “France’s great contributions to the world of fashion” (textiles represented seventeen percent of all French exports in 1950). Later, the Lace Industry of France followed suit in advertising itself as another of “France’s great contributions to the world of fashion.” When covering Christian Dior’s revolutionary 1947 “New Look” collection, Vogue fashion editors also recognized that “Dior’s success was a political and economic event” that “gave French couture [new] confidence.” Dior was at times credited with single-handedly reviving the French couture industry, and by 1948, the Paris collections did entertain its largest American audience since 1939, inspiring 250,000 ocean crossings and bringing American buyers in droves.

The travel and buying upswing led to declarations of a reinvigorated postwar Franco-American partnership. By 1950, editors declared “the best fashion of [the] year…carried an American accent (which just could turn out to be international!).” As the fashion industry in France revived, it started selling French fashions that designers claimed were inspired by American women’s different clothing needs and more active lives. This tactic was one often used to entice women to buy in the name of international goodwill and partnership, because the French were not simply releasing fashion dictates, but were now creating fashions with American customers’ specific needs in mind. Later


95 Staff Editor, “Paris Collections,” Vogue, 1 April 1947, Volume 109, p. 159.

96 Staff Editor, “Paris to America,” Vogue, 15 September 1948, Volume 112, pp. 130-139.

in 1950, a *Vogue* fashion editor reported, “there [was] talk, and truth in the talk, of a newly international accent in fashion; American designers visiting Paris, French designers visiting here.”

In 1954, when the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and corresponding American refusal come to their aid necessitated special attention to smoothing the Franco-U.S. alliance, features such as one in *Vogue* declared that fashion ideas were traveling back and forth across the ocean so quickly that lines between the two countries’ industries were blurring, “by international agreement, first in America, and then at Dior.”

Fashion was, according to *Vogue* staff, “one of the finest systems of international communication,” because it was “fast, effective, and work[ed] a wonder” for international goodwill.

Between nations, even if government relationships faltered, fashion communication at least was “always friendly and in good health,” and, at times, may have been the only way the United States and France remained on good terms. Susan Mary Patten noted on a personal level that even when relations were dire, she could get along with her hosts in France on the basis of a dress. In 1957, she related to Marietta Tree that “the French were in a vile humor [because] we gave arms to the Tunisians and the entire country seemed to think we did it deliberately to hurt the French army in

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98 Fashion Editor, “They See You This Way,” *Vogue*, 1 September 1950, Volume 116, pp. 155, 195, 205.


Algeria,” and that because of this, the “nice new ambassador, Amory Houghton, was having a rough time.” 102 Houghton gave a dinner party and when many of his French guests cancelled, Patten filled in, wearing a “reasonably dressy red satin Balmain and feeling like an [overdressed] fool as the other women wore short black dresses, mainly wool.” 103 Although embarrassing, her gaffe provided guests with a good laugh, breaking the ice enough to allow Houghton’s dinner to proceed smoothly.

If women had any doubts about spending so much money in the face of postwar Europe’s abject poverty, Carmel Snow reassured them “France needs machine tools and farm implements and tractors,” she insisted, and “in order to buy [these] abroad, she must export and fashion is one of her greatest exports.” 104 Snow continually emphasized the connection between fashion purchases and rehabilitating the French economy, observing that the French “…knew very well that they must have dollars in order to buy basic supplies and machine tools to get their reconstruction going; that in order to get this dollar exchange, they must export.” 105 She went on to underscore that French “goods for barter [were] luxury goods and so in Paris, today, undernourished workers [were] making fabulous flowers and soutache embroideries, and 50,000 franc dresses fabricated for dream worlds of pleasure.” 106 Harper’s Bazaar’s fashion editors also noted that “the

103 Ibid.
105 Ibid.
fortune of France [was] in the hands of its craftsmen,” (in a special March 1950 issue devoted to coverage of the Spring collections and to other French industries).\textsuperscript{107} In fact, “everyone in France” was “informed” about fashion, and \textit{Vogue’s} Editor-in-Chief Jessica Daves noted that even taxi drivers asked her what she thought about the collections.\textsuperscript{108} Daves echoed her own statements seven years later, when she noted that “press and buyers from a dozen countries travelled a collective million miles to see what Paris was thinking about fashion for Spring,” and that Parisians happily provided at great expense to themselves “gasoline for visitors’ rented cars and for taxis, and for everyone else.” Parisians made such sacrifices, in Daves’ words, because “whatever difficulties France might face in other departments – political, governmental, economic – here in the Collections (in whose success depend the earnings of thousands of French workers) was the living proof of one kind of pre-eminence; the proof that France has something so powerful, so desirable, that the world will travel as far as it must to get it.”\textsuperscript{109}

The French fashion industry was so well established and profitable by the early 1950s that in 1951, the government and the Chambre Syndicale de la Couture requested that both \textit{Vogue} and \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} begin printing “copyrighted model – reproduction forbidden” on French fashions shown in their pages.\textsuperscript{110} This was an attempt to prevent


American copies of French designs from being made before original models could make it into the major department stores. Copying French fashions for sale in the United States was a custom prevalent before the war, but afterward, couturiers banded together to prevent this practice, protecting their ideas, industry, and cultural heritage for a France they worried was becoming too Americanized. Three years later, French couturiers were so powerful and their designs so popular, they began restricting access even to photographs of their fashions. Editors from *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* both were unable, after the Spring collections in 1954, to print any preview shots or drawings of Paris fashions until after the collections were formally shown.\(^\text{111}\) The concern over copying stemmed from the couture’s importance in the French economy. Even though the fashion industry had revived, it supported thousands, and the rest of the economy, even as late as 1957, was still not prosperous, partially due to France’s extended wars in Vietnam and Algeria. Couturiers, therefore, protected their designs not just because they wanted to make money, but also because fashion “was special food for French pride – and for economic confidence.”\(^\text{112}\) Designers did not resent copies being made of their dresses, or even the growing democratization of fashion in the United States and around the world, but they wanted to make money off their ideas. And, by the mid-1950s, couturiers were setting themselves up to begin making licensing deals with more than just

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U.S. department stores, so protecting their names and images was increasingly important.\textsuperscript{113}

If women felt unpatriotic purchasing French fashions over the American-made clothing that made household names of U.S. designers during the war, \textit{Vogue} and \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} fashion editors reassured readers with issues devoted to cooperation between American textile firms and French couturiers, or between couturiers and American businesses. Purchasing French fashion benefitted American business \textit{and} helped rebuild the French economy. And of course, the growth of American business in turn meant more money in American pockets to spend in France, especially when travel overseas became less inexpensive. Cooperative agreements promoted goodwill between the two nations, and even though many French people could not afford to purchase their own creations, they were grateful for the money the industry brought to their economy.

One special \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} issue from 1950, for example, was dedicated to the partnership between European designers and American textile manufacturers. It featured an advertisement from the American fabric firm Crompton, highlighting a “year of creation,” in which a selection of French and British couturiers created their fall collections from a variety of the company’s fabrics. The advertisement was supported by an editorial feature on the lengthy list of other European designers endorsing (for a fee) Crompton’s fabrics.\textsuperscript{114} In 1951, four French designers teamed with the fabric company

\textsuperscript{113} Ira S. Patcévitch, “Table of Contents,” \textit{Vogue}, 1 March 1951, Volume 119, p. 1. Strict enforcement of these policies was problematic for two reasons: first, tightening access to French fashion might alienate potential American customers, but on the other hand, if a designer’s name was associated with too many goods, it lost its appeal as something for rarefied customers.

\textsuperscript{114} Staff Editor, “Crompton Makes it a Year of Creation,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, 15 March 1950, Volume 84, Number 2860, p. 18c.
“Forever Young” to create copies of their designs “in fabrics terrifique for the money.”

In another more unique partnership, Cadillac teamed up with a series of French designers who created gowns to match the company’s new car models. The ads, featuring models standing next to a new Cadillac, were nothing innovative, but the designer creating the dress the model wore was credited and the dress was for sale in department stores, which was novel. This series of nine ads began in 1956, and they were featured in nine Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar issues throughout the year.

Christian Dior, after establishing his house’s preeminence in 1947, was one of the first designers to expand his licensing deals from department stores to other American companies. He also pioneered the practice of deliberately courting upper class women with clothing loans to wear his designs. The first licensing agreement he created was with Delman shoes, which opened a combination Delman/Dior shoe salon in the Bergdorf Goodman department store. In this deal, Delman, an American shoe manufacturer, designed and manufactured special shoes for Dior’s collections, selling shoes specific to each outfit in the store. Next, Dior lent his name to the undergarment company Lily of France in 1954. An advertisement for its newest corsets featured a telegram from the designer himself, thanking the company for interpreting his ideas carefully enough that it

created the perfect undergarments to maintain the strict silhouette (a wasp waist and exaggerated bustline) required to wear his fashions. The next year, Dior entered into an agreement with an American hosiery company, but instead of taking payment up front for the use of his name, insisted on a cut of the profits, and made far more in royalties than the original $10,000 offered. Deals like these, created throughout the 1950s and entered into by other French designers, solidified the economic relationship between the United States and France. They created at least a solid business friendship during times the diplomatic relationship might be shaky.

Next, Dior courted upper class women to wear his clothes to parties so they would be photographed in his gowns. Susan Mary Patten, for instance, had an agreement with Christian Dior to wear his clothing to diplomatic parties in Paris in exchange for free clothes. Even though Patten was fairly wealthy, she eagerly accepted (although her mother considered this arrangement scandalous), because as a diplomat’s wife, she did not have the kind of clothing budget required to pay for a wardrobe of two-to-three thousand dollar dresses (about $20,000 to $30,000 in today’s dollars). For the rounds of diplomatic events, Patten needed an extensive wardrobe with constant infusions of new clothes so she would not be seen twice in the same dress. Wearing French fashion as the wife of a diplomat to Paris was a politically shrewd decision because it showed she supported her host country’s most profitable industry. Patten related the details of her

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arrangement in a letter to her friend Marietta Tree. After attending the very first Christian Dior show, Alsop wrote:

the prices are very high, as you can imagine, but I have had a piece of luck – only you mustn’t tell a soul. Monsieur Dior has asked me to wear his clothes this season, all I have to do is ring up in the morning and ask them to send over the model I want to wear. Naturally he would prefer people to think that they are my own made-to-order-for-me dresses, hence the need for discretion.121

With this kind of arrangement, Dior got his dresses into the fashion magazines on beautiful upper class women while forging friendships with important international figures like diplomats’ wives. When Christian Dior died in 1957, Carmel Snow reiterated his role in the lasting friendship between France and America, when she noted that his dressmaking, combined with licensing agreements and close relationships with the (primarily upper class American) women who purchased his designs, “saved one of the great inherited traditions in France, and assured a livelihood to hundreds of thousands of skilled artisans.”122

**Great Britain and Italy: The Two Other Fashion Capitals**

After the war, the British economy, like the French one, was in a shambles and needed American help, which similarly arrived in the form of upper class fashion and luxury goods consumers. Just as with France, the United States wanted to preserve its

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122 Carmel Snow, “Homage to Dior,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, December 1957, Volume 91, Number 2953, pp. 13-31, 165. His replacement, the Algerian-born Yves Saint-Laurent, eventually proved as successful as his predecessor. That he was from a prominent French-Algerian family was a happy coincidence of timing. (Saint Laurent was eventually conscripted into the French army to fight in the war in Algeria).
much closer relationship with Great Britain while mitigating new postwar concerns. The vaunted U.S./British “special relationship” was hit by Roosevelt’s death, Churchill’s electoral defeat, and Great Britain’s desire to maintain its prewar status as a world power, although the relationship still remained close. Furthermore, while the United States naturally wanted to keep Great Britain as a close friend and strong Cold War ally, it was not committed to helping the British retain colonial dominance around the world.

Complicating the situation, even though it did not want Great Britain to remain an empire, the United States was not entirely certain of its own desire to be a postwar world power. Doubt about the nation’s course might have arisen out of an American sense of inferiority to the British. Great Britain, after all, had been the greatest empire of the past five hundred years, and had a class system more established than that of the oldest families in New York. Emily Rosenberg, using a gender-driven view of U.S. foreign relations, hints at another reason for American insecurity when she points out that in popular culture, “American mass society itself was cast as feminine” and as such “vapid, rootless, materialistic, and uncultured, and contrasted with a Europe that was refined, aesthetic, spiritual, rooted, civilized, and appropriately masculine.”123 In the end, however, the United States needed to get used to its role as a somewhat reluctant power player on the international scene, and Great Britain’s friendship was crucial both to this role and to maintaining a peaceful balance of power.

On the other side, the British were not entirely willing, despite serious economic hardships, to relinquish much of their role as a European leader, but were, like the United

States, similarly anxious about their place in the new postwar world. Ted Bromond’s work on the Mayflower II points out some of the reasons for British insecurity in the face of new American world dominance. First, throughout the 1950s, “what the Foreign Office wanted was not…sentimental and meaningless popular links but initiatives that would encourage American administrations and the Congress to treat Britain with more consideration in N.A.T.O., the I.M.F., and the United Nations.”

British desires were complicated by the fact that “despite an alliance formed in the heat of war, America’s traditional wariness of Britain faded slowly: not until February 1945 did the Soviet Union overtake Britain as the Big Three Power Americans trusted least.”

The British tried to combat American wariness, but “one of the difficulties the British government encountered in its attempts to make use of cultural diplomacy was Britain’s stuffy, old-fashioned, class-bound image, which contrasted unfavorably with America’s modernity and egalitarianism.” American aversion to British fussiness even extended to their own government, when public distaste surfaced for Undersecretary and later Secretary of State Dean Acheson, whose “personal elegance,” Walter LaFeber explains, seemed to make “him more British than American.” Interestingly enough, the “old-fashioned, class-bound image” was just what made many Americans feel inferior to the British. In Bromond’s eyes, however, the representation was a handicap and “British

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125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

policy-makers were at a loss to devise a national image that compared favorably with America’s modernity.”128 Neither were the British initially certain the United States was capable of managing the responsibilities that came with a role as world’s most powerful democracy. These concerns aside, the economy and diplomatic relations needed help, and fashion and textiles, as two of Great Britain’s biggest industries, could be a key to their revival. Put simply, Americans had money, and Great Britain needed money most of all.

Because of Italy’s wartime history and initially stable postwar government, and because the British were the closer allies more immediately on the verge of economic collapse, fashion editors focused first (after France) on reinvigorating Great Britain’s fashion and textile industries even before V-J day and before focusing on those industries in Italy. Again, fashion magazines urged readers to purchase British apparel and handicrafts as a way to keep warm the wartime friendship and help the nation get back on its feet. Fashion was just as important to Great Britain as it was to France, where “national economists never add[ed] up a column without taking fashion into the reckoning.”129 And, just as in France, the government often formally recognized the industry’s significance in the British economy. In 1955, for example, London’s Lord Mayor highlighted fashion’s importance to Great Britain’s economic revival when he gave a party celebrating the British couture season. He invited prominent magazine editors, publishers, and department store clothes buyers to the party, hostessed by Lady Pamela Berry, the President of the Incorporated Society of London Fashion Designers, an


organization similar to the French Chambre Syndicale de la Couture. The ball and fashion show emphasized the British government’s commitment to helping reinvigorate its nation’s fashion industry.

To sustain the idea established in the war of the British maintaining a “stiff upper lip” in the face of dire straits, and possibly to encourage women to spend as freely in Britain as they did in France, magazine editors quickly began publishing articles on the dire state of the British postwar economy. These articles generally highlighted British bravery maintained despite its country’s destruction and might work to arouse American sympathy. Next, combating a traditional American prejudice toward and possible insecurity about the highly stratified British class system, Vogue ran articles like Bettina Wilson’s “London Food Democracy,” in which “some of the British [wore] black tie again…but all of them ate the same dinner,” to garner empathy for the British, reassure upper class readers that British nobility were still in power, and make clear to others that “England has come out of the war with a highly-developed, public-spirited character.” At the same time, Vogue social editors held up as exemplars of British society women like the Honourable Mrs. Pamela Churchill, who “brought high echelon Americans and Britons together in her house, smoothing the way to better understanding between them.” Articles written in this manner sent a clear message to readers both to identify with the downtrodden British commoners on their way to a more democratic

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nation, and to build politically significant relationships by emulating upper class women like Mrs. Churchill who brought the two nations together, forging diplomatic friendships in her own home. While readers might not be able to hold political salons, they could at the least, build rapport by helping reconstruct the economy through their purchases.

In this case, reestablishing the fashion industry was important, but London was not the fashion capital that Paris was. Great Britain had something else to offer, though, and that was its tradition of finely rendered wool textiles and handicrafts. British fashion designers like Hardy Amies were popular, to be sure, but Great Britain’s most influential, and quickly modernizing, industries were fabrics and handicrafts, generally in the form of woolen fabrics (especially tweeds) and knits. Much of Britain’s textile trade was driven by the French fashion industry, but it was also spurred into production by London’s couture houses, which needed fabric to meet their own customers’ demands. Therefore, as in France, British fashion helped revive the textile industry first, and soon the National Textile Export Corporation of Great Britain began advertising newly available British woolens for fashion collections. In some advertising campaigns, the corporation even urged women to use traditional men’s suiting fabrics (for which Britain was famous) in their own home sewn women’s fashions.¹³³

Magazine editors paid primary attention to London’s fashion industry, however, because its reestablishment on firm footing by extension led to profits for the textile and handicrafts trades. Right after the war, Vogue fashion editors trumpeted British fashions

and exports soon “coming this way.” Reporters at *Vogue* highlighted factories “still engaged in war production, but [which] would soon be making things for export like knitwear, and particularly cashmere of “high quality and workmanship.” Collections held after the war for the first time in April 1946 were featured in both *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar*. In “London Made for Export Only,” *Harper’s Bazaar* editor-in-chief Carmel Snow emphasized the necessity of purchasing London fashions in addition to French designs. Although they were only “available in limited amounts for export, these clothes could not be purchased by British women themselves, so the economy depended upon American dollars. *Vogue* fashion editors noted that similar to the French postwar situation, “it seems unfair, but it is through the export of their goods that the English are rebuilding their economy.”

By 1947, “despite the hardships,” of a cruel winter and a crisis in Greece, *Vogue* editors declared that season’s collections the “best of Britain.” Because of both crises, magazine editorial staff stepped up British fashion promotions, and since British women had no money to spend on luxuries like couture clothing, reinforced messages that American women needed to purchase what the British could ill afford. In this way, American women pumped money into Great Britain, supporting the rebuilding of a

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135 *Ibid*.


crucial industry all while helping increase that country’s morale.\textsuperscript{139} Susan Mary Patten, writing to Marietta Tree, noted this national mood and lamented Britain’s problems, pointing out that “industry [had] practically ground to a stop,” and that “monetary reserves [were] frighteningly low,” but admired the nation’s “reserve of moral strength” that was “hard to describe.”\textsuperscript{140} Despite British moral strength, Patten recognized a need to boost spirits in the face of political setbacks, worrying that “the Greeks [were] going straight into the Russian sphere, politically, unless they [got] help fast, and the English look[ed] like being too poor to help them.”\textsuperscript{141} The British would have to make “a demeaning request to us to take over,” and although they had the “humility of grandeur” (unlike the French) to accept their reversal of fortune, the situation still merited economic and diplomatic attention. Through their purchases of British goods, women might, if they were inclined, at least partially address Patten’s (and magazine editors’) concerns, alleviating the nation’s economic woes, and potentially helping smooth injured national pride.\textsuperscript{142}

In July 1948, Carmel Snow at \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} devoted an entire issue to British exports, beginning with a feature about the “British Can Make It” exhibition. This issue, similar to its French fashion issue, was published to promote British handicrafts like spinning, knitting, cotton production, and pottery, among other industries. Purchasing any


\textsuperscript{140} Alsop, \textit{To Marietta From Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 89.  

\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid.}  

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{Ibid.}  

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of these goods held potential to help Great Britain’s economy recover and “gallop its way to victory.” This exhibition emphasized American women’s crucial role in purchasing products to bolster the British economy. Similar to the French, the British postwar economy was still in shreds, and even though it produced luxury goods (especially cashmere and woolens), the people making those goods continued to have no means for purchasing their own handiwork. Indeed, money was so tight the British public only half jokingly nicknamed the exposition the “Britain Can’t Have It” exhibition.

This exhibition paved the way for even more editorial encouragement of American women of all classes to identify with British cohorts working to improve the economy through handicraft export. The Queen Mother’s own contribution to the British economy, a “famous gros-point carpet,” received excellent coverage in both magazines and gave a boost to the 18,000,000 needle workers producing elaborate decorations for not just the home, but also for clothing. Other efforts at reviving the British handicraft economy were detailed in a profile on the British Women’s Home Industries, Ltd., an export business begun by Lady Reading. The business had a powerful combination of factors to make it successful – a titled supporter and working women struggling to make ends meet using their own handcrafting skills. The article encouraged readers to aspire to be like Lady Reading but also to support and identify with poor British women by


144 Ibid.


purchasing their hand-made (generally hand-knit) clothing, which was both fashionable and well-made. Mrs. Lawrence Lowman, an American socialite, worked in conjunction with Lady Reading to bring American designs made by English knitters to the United States for sale, providing an especially effective American role model of how to support the British economy.

The fashion friendship blossoming between Great Britain and the United States was quite similar to that being established at the same time between France and America. First, British fashion promoted in magazines was similarly important to that country’s government, which made a point of recognizing efforts to promote fashion. In 1953, for instance, the editor of British Vogue (and frequent contributor to American Vogue), Audrey Withers, received the Order of the British Empire for her work in promoting the British fashion industry in her home and in the United States.\textsuperscript{147} Next, magazines urged American women to buy British clothing to help bolster the faltering British economy just as they did for the French. By 1950, because of the devaluation of the pound, Americans could now “afford to buy British.”\textsuperscript{148} With the favorable exchange rate in mind, Harper’s Bazaar editors, in the magazine’s semi-annual issue highlighting American and European fashions at lower prices, urged women to spend extra fashion dollars on British goods and to think of them in terms of “the well-spent dollar.”\textsuperscript{149}

\textsuperscript{147} Society Editor, “People are Talking About: London,” Vogue, 15 March 1953, Volume 121, pp. 88, 174. Withers was also the Chairwoman of the Coronation Souvenirs Association and promoted many souvenirs in the pages of the British and American versions of Vogue.


\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
Finally, like the French, British companies aggressively marketed their wares in the United States, appealing to women who perhaps could not travel, while at the same time announcing that the clothing industry was getting back on its feet. Gor Ray, Ltd., for instance, advertised its “famous all-wool skirts” in a series of ads entitled “A Famous British Skirt Comes to America.” This advertisement assured American women that they did not “have to go to England or ask a friend to bring one [a Gor Ray skirt] back from Bond Street…they’re here now in the store where you shop.” Gor Ray ran a similar ad in *Vogue* that also subtly encouraged imitation of the upper class, alerting readers that “British made Gor Ray skirts” were “to an American woman’s wardrobe what Sheffield silver and Irish linen were to her table.”

The British fashion industry was different from the French, however, in that it not only produced women’s clothing, but also manufactured high-quality menswear. For women and men, in one *Vogue* editor’s words, “the British ha(d) a talent for tweeds and tailoring,” (tweed were generally for men’s clothing and for women’s country clothing, but were starting to be used in women’s daytime city outfits). Highlighting only the men’s fashion industry, however, *Harper’s Bazaar* ran a spread of men’s fashions made in England important because it appealed to women who made many of their husbands’ clothing purchases. Great Britain was well-known for its bespoke (made to measure) suits

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152 Fashion Editor, “From the London Collections: City Tweeds,” *Vogue*, 1 October 1952, Volume 120, pp. 100-1.
for men, which were the “pride of British tailors” housed on London’s Savile Row and Bond Street. By purchasing men’s clothes exported straight from Bond Street (or by encouraging their husbands to “buy British”), American women had yet another avenue to help the British economy.

Aside from men’s clothing and couture collections, the British were also well known for their well-crafted, ready-to-wear clothes, made from high quality textiles. Harper’s Bazaar ran feature articles on read-to-wear clothing made in Britain throughout the 1950s, the purchase of which held important ramifications for that country’s fabric industry. Great Britain’s textile mills turned out superior woolens and cashmeres well-suited to that country’s upper class obsession with country life. These fabrics worked well for the American upper class’ habit of spending weekends in country homes and for middle class women’s daytime outfits, and were marketed as such. They were also especially aimed at women moving to the suburbs and leading more active lives, who needed the sturdily well made and practical clothing in which British designers specialized.

Purchasing British clothes made with British textiles provided a helping hand to the economy and cemented a friendship even closer than that between France and the United States. In this spirit, British Woolens ran a 1951 advertising campaign emphasizing some of the things Americans shared with the British, like “violets in the

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Spring,” or “carriage rides in the park.”\textsuperscript{155} The campaign’s purpose was to create a sense of rapport between the women of both countries that might encourage American women to buy British woolens for their own home sewing.\textsuperscript{156} Ted Bromand’s article on the Mayflower II caught this trend, explaining that “British exporters had concluded that one of the most effective ways to sell their goods abroad was to surround them with ‘traditional’ British pomp and circumstance and to rely…on the appeal of heritage and sentiment, a strategy that was later extended to the selling of Britain itself.”\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{Vogue} fashion editors noticed, in 1953, a “nice coincidence: this year being tweed’s year, and this year’s British tweeds,” which the collections used to “add some brand new experiences to the tweed world.”\textsuperscript{158} Tweed, a typically British fabric, was fashionable that year, and purchasing it helped the economy while giving American women another reason to buy British. Finally, the British Woolen Industry ran advertisements in American magazines assuring women that “the wonderful woolens of the world come from Britain,” and that these woolens possessed “all the quality and individuality that age-old Britain still can lavish on them.”\textsuperscript{159} This advertisement had two effective messages; first that women, no matter what class, should buy woolen fabric from British makers, and second, that by purchasing British made fabrics, any woman


\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{157} Bromond, “‘This Somewhat Embarrassing Ship’: The British Foreign Office and the \textit{Mayflower II}, 1954-1957,” p. 59.


could have the same quality fabric as her upper class sisters. Companies wanted to create a bond between all classes of women in the United States and their contemporaries in Great Britain.

By 1953, the British fashion industry got another welcome jolt with the news of Queen Elizabeth II’s impending coronation, which created a mania for all things British. Even though the country was run by a monarch, and Americans were still somewhat leery of anything smacking of British snobbery, the spectacle was perfectly suited to the American upper class obsession with titles and royalty. Additionally, the coronation went far to promote heartwarming images of the common British-American heritage, reminding consumers of the two nations’ special friendship. Finally, the coronation was a fantastic opportunity for magazines to promote British fashions available to all classes for purchase so that every American woman could participate in the celebrations. Even French designers got in on the act, using the coronation as an excuse to boost their own businesses. In its March issue covering the Paris collections, for example, Harper’s Bazaar fashion editors declared “the Victorian look is a must for this coronation season,” and ran a feature on “Paris’ great dresses for a Coronation Spring.”¹⁶⁰ Neither did American companies miss the opportunity to profit off the coronation. Maidenform Bras featured a special design that allowed its model to dream she “lived like a Queen in [her] Maidenform Bra.”¹⁶¹ Similarly, the American Textile Company created a “lovely lace


inspired by the regal splendor and traditional beauty of England’s Coronation Festivities.”

_Vogue_ fashion editors were also caught up in the coronation fervor, although the magazine’s staff covered the event more from a social perspective. But, the magazine did feature special coronation fashions that spread even to the names of colors of fabrics, such as those featured in the advertisement for the American company, Cotillion Formals, which made coronation worthy dresses in “coronation blues, coronation pink, and princess white.” The queen’s personal dressmaker, Norman Hartnell, a popular British couturier, created “fresh cotton” ready-to-wear fashions “for the Coronation year,” for sale in the United States. Notwithstanding Norman Hartnell’s collection, and even though American-made goods did not directly impact the British economy, all these products, whether American, French, or British-made, contributed to a spirit of goodwill among the two nations and encouraged American women to identify with their celebrating British cousins. In essence, by purchasing goods associated with the 1953 coronation, every woman could help the economy, own a bit of history, and at the same time, be like her upper class counterparts (even if she did not actually attend the celebrations as they might).

The event, finally, marked the British fashion industry’s triumphant reemergence onto the international fashion scene and a corresponding decline in coverage of British

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164 _Ibid._; Fashion Editor, “To a Queen’s Taste,” _Vogue_, 15 March 1953, Volume 121, p. 49.
fashion. Even though it still maintained a brisk business, particularly for men’s fashion, British couture would fade in popularity in the mid-1950s. Other industries were, by that time, up and running, and unlike in France, the economy was fairly stable by mid-decade, perhaps in part explaining the continued focus on France and corresponding interest in Italian fashions. Textile mills, however, still flourished because French couture dominated the fashion scene. American women fell in love with the couturier(es) Christian Dior (and after his death, Yves Saint Laurent) and Coco Chanel in the mid-1950s, with the popularity of their designs overshadowing almost every other couture house. Despite this, British women’s fashion would again see an incredible spike in popularity in the 1960s when London, at least for the decade, became the center of youth culture. Because of what Vogue editor Diana Vreeland termed the “youthquake” taking place in “Swinging London,” the city became, for that decade, the center of everything young, cool, and hip. Throughout the 1950s, however, French fashion received the most magazine coverage.

After the coronation, and when the British economy and relationship with the United States were somewhat stabilized (until the Suez crisis in 1956), American women started turning their attentions toward Italy, because its luxury goods industry was by that time emerging as a force in the fashion world. Although not part of the wartime Grand Alliance, Italy soon became a critical postwar ally to court for a variety of reasons. First, by 1948, the Italian government was in turmoil, and similar to France, seemed in danger of being dominated by Communist forces. Second, Italy was located strategically in the Mediterranean between the Middle and Far East, on the edge of the U.S./British/French
zone in Austria, near Turkey and Greece, and of course, along a French border. The only problem with cultivating Italy as an ally was its role as an Axis power in the war. Even though Southern Italy joined the Allies in 1943 and the country had a strong anti-fascist resistance movement, Americans might not be ready so quickly to accept former enemies as friends. Therefore, Italy’s reputation needed polishing, and fashion, and particularly luxury goods, was a way to help rebuild its ravaged economy and advance internationally its new character. Magazines played a role in this task when editors consistently ran articles promoting Italian products and supporting the re-emerging, fashionable noble class. Italy’s resurgence took longer than France or Great Britain, but was ultimately successful, at least in the fields of fashion and culture.

Unlike France and Great Britain, the Italian economy was slower to revive, and refining Italy’s postwar image was a longer process that lasted throughout the late 1940s and into the mid-1950s, when Italian movies, art, and fashion exploded onto the American scene. Even though Italy joined the war as an enemy, it did switch allegiance midway through, had a successful wartime resistance movement, and more importantly, by the late 1940s, had a shakily democratic government the United States was desperate to bolster. Italy also had a resurgent film industry, a population of wealthy nobles reestablishing social predominance, and finally, an emerging luxury goods market centered around leather goods and later, couture fashions. All of these factors gave American women ample opportunity to support Italy economically, newly popular with the U.S. upper class.
Right after the war, fashion magazine editors began rehabilitating Italy’s image. In 1946, Italy was already “reviving” partially because its nobles survived the war with fortunes intact, the poor persisted in trying to better their lives, and “despite having every reason to be down,” Italians were “putting themselves together” because of their “eternally happy” nature.\textsuperscript{165} In a postwar report from Italy, a \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} news editor noted that “Rome (was) intact,” although its “people were broken.”\textsuperscript{166} Milan, on the other hand, “was destroyed,” but its “people whole.”\textsuperscript{167} In either scenario, Italy needed help, and by 1947, there was a “new Italy,” that “despite inflation and wartime damages” enjoyed a “new resurgence and vitality.”\textsuperscript{168} Its artists were “vigourous” and “skillful,” its authors, actors, and painters had all participated (like the French) in the resistance against fascism, and the encouragement of the luxury trades was a chance for Italy to revive its economy and create a more democratic way of life.\textsuperscript{169} In the process, Italy might avoid communism and become a strategically important U.S. ally.

As a traditional center of arts like painting, filmmaking and opera, Italy after the war slowly underwent a “cultural and artistic rebirth” casting off the “tawdry” requirements of the Fascists, and refocusing on the “magical” elements of artistic

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\item[\textsuperscript{165}] Marya Mannes, Special Correspondent for \textit{Vogue} in Italy, “Italy Revives,” \textit{Vogue}, 15 September 1946, Volume 108, pp. 196-203, 324-25.
\item[\textsuperscript{166}] News Editor, “The Clean Wind from the North,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, August 1945, Volume 79, Number 2804, pp. 128, 164, 166.
\item[\textsuperscript{167}] \textit{Ibid}.
\item[\textsuperscript{168}] \textit{Ibid}.
\item[\textsuperscript{169}] Frances Keene, “The New Italy,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, July 1947, Number 2827, Volume 81, pp. 31-39, 88, 94.
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expression.\textsuperscript{170} The Italian film industry in the late 1940s and early 1950s was “a new challenge to Hollywood,” with its innovative directors like Lucino Visconti (The Bicycle Thief) and Roberto Rossellini, and grittily beautiful actors such as Anna Magnani, or later, the more classically lovely Sophia Loren.\textsuperscript{171} Italian films in the 1950s went far to bolster Italy’s reputation and were not just popular among sophisticated upper class viewers, but also reached mass audiences throughout the United States. The country’s films illustrated a country torn by war and left in almost unbearable poverty, but with an unquenchable spirit for life and a love of country that appealed to American audiences. In 1952, Italy’s films were so popular that the country’s filmmakers banded together to present their work in the first Italian film festival in America.\textsuperscript{172} In other arts like opera, the beautiful Italian-Greek opera singer Maria Callas had a passionate international following. Her popularity in the United States as one of the most talented performers of her era went far to generate positive cultural exchange between nations. Callas regularly performed to sold-out crowds at the Metropolitan Opera and her records topped sales charts. Later, Italy’s extremely favorable exchange rate made it a hugely popular tourist destination, pumping American dollars into the economy. Italy and its surrounding islands were especially popular vacation spots for women like the Bouvier sisters during the 1950s. Venice, for instance, was one of their favorite stopping points on their first trip


to Europe, and each enthusiastically sampled Italian culture, taking voice lessons and art lessons and endlessly visiting museums.¹⁷³

Like its arts, Italy’s dynamic fashion industry emerged with the potential to affect its economy as much as fashion affected France and Great Britain. Names like Gucci (leather goods), Emilio Pucci (sportswear and later, vibrant printed fabrics), and Simonetta (couture ball gowns) started rolling off American tongues as easily as the name Christian Dior. Jacqueline Kennedy, for instance, was especially fond of Gucci for leather handbags, and Pucci, for its colorful clothing. One purse she carried, with a bamboo handle, became so popular that it was copied all over the United States, and Gucci later named it the “Jackie.” By the mid 1950s, and with an eye toward helping support a shaky democratic Italian government, American women could bolster the Italian economy through spending on fashion, which “despite inflation and wartime damages enjoy[ed] a resurgence and energy “mostly due to little people – artisans, weavers, and designers.”¹⁷⁴ By the end of the decade, the country’s fashions, designed with “a head-on dash that twigs USA fashion thinking,” contributed to “the great American crush on Italy.”¹⁷⁵

In magazine editors’ eyes, fashion was as integral to the Italian economy as it was to the British and French economies. Purchasing Italian fashion, in their opinion, would also help build good relations in a shaky postwar country where socialism and possibly

¹⁷³ Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier, One Special Summer, (New York: Rizzoli, 2005).


¹⁷⁵ Ibid.
even communism exerted powerful influences on the government. In fact, diplomacy and fashion mixed well in the eyes of *Vogue* special correspondent Marya Mannes, because “diplomatic parties will always exist as an outlet for high fashion.”

Diplomatic parties were one of the few social outlets for the reemerging Italian upper class, and “real excitement was brought in by visiting (and very much welcome) Americans and French, diplomats and on-tour foreigners,” who presumably, contributed to Italy’s political and economic resurgence. Mrs. Henry R. Luce (Clare Boothe Luce), the U.S. ambassador to Italy, even began her career as a captions editor at *Vogue*, providing a small, but direct link between fashion and diplomatic circles.

Beginning in March 1948, just a month before the critical Italian general elections, magazine editors enthusiastically started highlighting Italian fashions in a manner similar to the French and British, with articles like “Italy’s Bid for Export is the Work of Her Skilled Craftsmen.” In the same spirit as Lady Reading’s business to promote British handicrafts, Americans Nelson Rockefeller and the former American ambassador to Italy, William Phillips (profiled in the article), teamed with Italian industrialist Max Ascoli to form Handicraft Development, Inc. This non-profit agency fostered cooperation between Italian artisans and U.S. buyers to help “Italy’s bid for

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178 Staff Editor, “People are Talking About,” *Vogue*, 15 March 1953, Volume 121, p. 105.

179 Staff Editor, “Italy’s Bid for Export is the Work of Her Skilled Craftsmen,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, Volume 82, Number 2835, pp. 296-97.
export” by promoting “the work of her skilled craftsmen.”

Also highlighting the “work of skilled craftsmen,” in 1953 John Steinbeck wrote a travel diary for Harper’s Bazaar about a driving tour of Italy, where he visited a factory where crafts women were paid to make lace which was exported to support a local school, and “incidentally, the local children.”

Italian couture, which did not exist as a coherent industry before the war, began when a select few designers showed collections not long after the war. By the early 1950s, Italian couture “was interesting growing numbers of Americans,” and Vogue editors “believed the market” there could “develop if buyers could come to Italy.” In November 1951, formal Italian collections were shown, with clothes “ideal for American resorts,” made with “Italian bravura.” By 1952, “the exciting new Italian couture” was “a reason in itself for visiting Italy.” In that same year, Vogue fashion editors deemed Italian ready-to-wear and couture fashion companies “capable of producing excellent, well-made sportswear for American women…by Italian-American agreement.” The sportswear label GabriellaSport and the couture house of Simonetta established favorable

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180 Staff Editor, “Italy’s Bid for Export is the Work of Her Skilled Craftsmen,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 82, Number 2835, pp. 296-97.


182 Fashion Editor, “Italian Collections,” Vogue, 1 September 1951, Volume 118, pp. 188-89, 248.

183 Ibid.


reputations based on their sportswear collections and the designers’ personal reputations in the United States.

The couturière Simonetta in particular was an excellent advertisement both for her own and other Italian lines, because she, like other Italian women (always described as lovely) who wore their country’s fashions was “beautiful” and “elegant,” with wonderful legs and well-turned ankles. In a later effort to “excite American interest in Italian design,” *Vogue* staff featured “four Roman beauties, in dresses from the new Italian collections.”186 The clothes were shown at a party on the Italian Line ship the Cristoforo Colombo and on television, with the Countesses Consuelo Crespi, Mila Corti, and Giovannella Ceriana Mayneri, and Princess Laudomia Herculani as models.187 Italian women were so well-dressed, in fact, that the upper class played a game “in the European resorts – guessing how many of the well-dressed women were Italian.”188 Magazine articles implied American women who helped the Italian economy by purchasing its fashions might also, if they wore them correctly, be able to capture some of the Italians’ innate flair, just as wearing French fashion might give them a spark of French chic.

And, similar to other European nations, Italian and American businesses teamed together to promote Italian style (and by extension, the country’s goods and travel). These types of deals were limited at the beginning of the 1950s, as the Italian business revival took a number of years, but one good example involved the U.S. company


187 *Ibid*.

Jantzen Swimwear. When the luxury liner the Andrea Doria was built, the Italian Line (its parent company) worked with Jantzen to create a series of swimsuits inspired by the magnificent new ship.\(^{189}\) These were featured in a series of photos taken of models on the liner in Jantzen suits and of real women in the brand’s suits traveling on the Andrea Doria.

Later, like in Great Britain, Italian ready-to-wear businesses branched out, exerting an “influence on men’s clothes,” and especially men’s summer clothing.\(^ {190}\) Italian menswear by the 1950s was so successful that it was regularly featured in a regular series *Vogue* ran, highlighting “men we like.”\(^ {191}\) This series focused on upper class men and their wardrobes for the golf links, the tennis court, the hunt, or other such activities. Again, since women made most of their husbands’ clothing purchases, buying Italian menswear was one more way to help bolster that economy.\(^ {192}\) Just as in France or Great Britain, all facets of Italian fashion might have helped promote good United States-Italian relations at a time when the United States wanted to bolster that country’s democratic government and maintain excellent relations with a strategic nation.

**Conclusion**

After the war, when fashion houses reopened their doors, spending money on clothing in Paris, London, or Milan (the three reigning fashion capitals) served two major


\(^{191}\) Fashion Editor, “Men We Like,” *Vogue*, 1 April 1956, Volume 127, pp. 102-103.

purposes. Clothing purchases helped reinvigorate the French, and by extension, British and Italian postwar economies, and may have allowed upper class women to act as informal cultural ambassadors, building good Cold War relations with those nations. In turn, upper class women acted as role models to middle class American women, who spent, if in smaller amounts, on European clothes or luxury products. Reinvigorating these nations’ economies fulfilled another diplomatic mission, because Americans and Europeans may have used fashion as one tool to smooth relationships, especially during difficult times when friendships might otherwise be jeopardized.

If magazine articles accurately reflected their readers’ beliefs, women like Susan Mary Patten, Marietta Tree, and Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier recognized a duty to purchase goods overseas and the role their support of the French, British, or Italian economies had in good foreign relations. Susan Mary Patten made a point of cultivating friends among Paris’ elite designers, and wearing their clothes to diplomatic functions made a good impression on her French hosts while helping promote the country’s fashions. Her friend Marietta Tree followed Patten’s example when she moved to Great Britain, where she moved in circles that included people like Winston Churchill, who often visited her home. When the Bouvier sisters visited Europe, they not only purchased French and Italian fashions, but made a point of wearing them to parties whose guest lists included members of the government and diplomatic circles. All four made notably favorable impressions on their host nations while at official and unofficial functions. If their actions were emulated by other upper class women, one of the cumulative effects
might have been leveling relationships between nations on at least a personal level when the friendship was otherwise rocky.

Fashion magazines played a substantial role in both promoting couture from the three fashion capitals and in encouraging audiences to help reinvigorate those economies by spending what they could on these nations’ products. The clothing industry was so important, both the British and French governments formally recognized American fashion editors’ influence in promoting international understanding and goodwill with prestigious awards like the Legion of the Chevalier of Honor or the Order of the British Empire. That the French and British governments went out of their way publicly to recognize Americans who helped promote their fashions attests to couture’s importance to their economies. In Italy, magazine coverage of the couture (along with Italy’s own artistic resurgence) may have even played a small part in helping transform a former enemy into a trusted ally.

Editors and their readers were politically aware, stepping up coverage of a particular nations’ products at critical times, when American relations might be especially rocky, such as during the French wars in Indochina or Algeria. American businesses too, got in on the act, promoting not just French, British, and Italian fashion, but also going to great lengths, similar to fashion magazines, to educate shoppers about those nations or to conduct mutually beneficial business agreements. Even if the United States and France, Great Britain, or Italy had divergent political agendas, commerce kept those relationships functioning on at least a business level. The powerful triumvirate of fashion magazines, business, and upper class readers and consumers as informal cultural diplomats may have
proved an extremely effective weapon in the Cold War arsenal. Dollars, however, were just one Cold War diplomatic tool - the next would be travel to introduce other nations to the postwar cultured, refined, and elegant American woman. She not only dressed well in European fashions, but would also learn ways to behave in each nation to present the United States in the best possible light. An American woman with dollars was a fabulous asset – one with dollars, style, and class was even better.
Chapter V
“A Blueprint for Good Behaviour”

“It’s funny how much alike people from different countries are,” wrote Lee Bouvier to her mother in 1951 when she joined her sister in Europe for her first grand tour of the continent.¹ Spending the summer “visiting counts and ambassadors in Paris,” Lee and Jacqueline took art and voice lessons in Venice, and traveled to London, Rome, and Florence.² Keenly aware of their role as American informal ambassadors, both took care to be on their best behavior in accordance with their mother’s wishes. While in Venice, Lee wrote home to reassure their mother that she “knew [her mother] was right about us representing our country and that we must never do anything that would call attention to us and make people shocked at Americans.”³ Both girls, she informed her mother, made sure to “sew on all our buttons and wear gloves and never go out in big cities except in what we would wear to church in Newport on Sundays.”⁴ The Bouvier sisters took seriously their duty to bolster America’s image in Europe.

¹ Lee and Jacqueline Bouvier, One Special Summer, (Rizzoli: New York, 2005), p. 27. One Special Summer is a recently published facsimile of the travel diary both girls kept, with photographs, letters, and poems Lee Bouvier wrote about their trip that accompanied Jacqueline Bouvier’s drawings.

² Ibid., p. 1.

³ Ibid., p. 28.

⁴ Ibid.
Furthermore, neither was “just having fun,” but were “getting a lot out of [their] trip,” making important social contacts, learning about art, practicing their French and Italian, and visiting cultural landmarks. Hyper-aware of their role as “representatives” of the United States, both girls made sure to be on their best behavior, dress well, and understand the culture and at least attempt to speak the language of each nation they visited. In the end, learning that people were all alike no matter what nationality put each in good stead later to represent the United States in more important capacities. The Bouvier sisters, like friends Susan Mary Patten and Marietta Tree, were typical of a generation of young, upper class women who accepted the responsibility of acting as informal cultural ambassadors overseas, using their best manners, education, and style to help foster friendly international relations. While some historians point to the early Cold War as an era dominated by the middle class, in reality, culture and fashion innovators came from the upper class. A small, select, but nonetheless highly recognizable group of upper class women presented a refined, intelligent image at odds with popular culture’s stereotypical “ugly American.”

Like Lee and Jacqueline Bouvier, Susan Mary Patten, and Marietta Tree, upper class women acquired a solid foundation in the issues and history of the world’s major political players, and went on to utilize that knowledge in everyday life, especially when traveling. Since Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar appealed to a cosmopolitan and peripatetic audience by carrying significant news and travel information from around the world, it follows that readers might perceive going abroad during the Cold War as at least in part a political mission. Because “the essence of democracy is that the people decide on foreign
policy, but the peril of democracy, that they decide in ignorance,” women, as a majority of the population, needed to be as well-informed as men about foreign affairs, using education and breeding to make good decisions at home and better represent the nation overseas.\(^5\) Women’s “first role, in the present age…was that of exerting her vast, almost unassessable influence for peace,” and upper class women like the Bouvier sisters or Patten and Tree were well aware of their duty to promote international accord and act as instruments of peace.\(^6\)

After the war, international travel almost immediately resumed (and indeed, was encouraged, although travel was not without difficulties). The numerous features in each magazine indicate travel was a regular part of their readership’s lives. Travel was important, in many magazine writers’ opinions because Americans had a duty “imposed by advancement in science and ideals in health” to share their knowledge with the rest of the world.\(^7\) Senator J.W. Fulbright called for “each American to be fully informed of the country’s stake in the peace and…above all understand the proper role which the nation must play in the modern world.”\(^8\) Furthermore, Americans now had to exercise “the knowledge that they now must choose not only to be free, but to be good,” a serious


mission increasingly thrust upon women. Being “good” for upper class women, at least, involved supporting other nations in need through volunteer or charity work, appropriate dress and manners, and respect for foreign sensitivities. Upper class women met all these requirements through presenting a refined, well-educated, and cultured view of Americans to counteract growing international distaste for lowbrow American mass culture. Eventually, because their efforts were so successful, using upper class women as informal cultural diplomats may have become an unacknowledged foreign relations policy that peaked when Jacqueline Kennedy served as First Lady.

The tone and content of foreign policy articles in fashion magazines indicates that upper class women sought out a sophisticated, intellectual, comprehensive, and global understanding of foreign policy. Such a world view could be gleaned from a number of sources like popular television shows (especially Professor John Hoessinger’s popular and highly rated show “American Foreign Policy 101”), and through reading extensive magazine coverage of diplomacy.10 Outside of political articles, to present another more personal side of public servants, magazines featured leaders from England, France, the Soviet Union, and the United States in their social pages (such as Vogue’s regular feature “People are Talking About,” or Harper’s Bazaar’s “Above the Crowd”). These more “gossipy” types of articles put a more human face on political figures.

Articles like those featured in Vogue or Harper’s Bazaar also placed readers in a world readers understood and inhabited – attending parties, picnics, the theatre, ballet,

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10 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 131, 15 April 1958, p. 71.

Understanding the intricacies of foreign policy and diplomacy could help an upper class woman be an informal diplomat anywhere she traveled, or even at social functions she attended. Certainly for a foreign service wife like Susan Mary Patten, understanding international politics was simply a part of her job, but for her friend Marietta Tree, or for Lee and Jacqueline Bouvier, a broad education in foreign policy may have helped them to properly represent their country and avoid saying or doing anything to make their hosts “shocked at Americans.”\footnote{Lee and Jacqueline Bouvier, One Special Summer, (Rizzoli: New York, 2005), p. 27.}

According to both magazines, the new upper class woman immediately recognized that the postwar era brought about a different world order and changed her outlook to face its unprecedented challenges. No longer could she rest on privilege and depend on others to shape foreign policy, but now often took a more active and conscious role in understanding and molding the world around her. Women took on multiple responsibilities in the new era, like helping eliminate international gender discrimination, promoting better educational opportunities for women, and pressing leaders to join the
United Nations.\textsuperscript{13} Some, like Marietta Tree, actively worked for political campaigns, in local politics, or eventually even in the UN, although she felt she only had experience with “charity work and low-level office skills.”\textsuperscript{14} Others like Susan Mary Patten or Jacqueline Bouvier supported their husbands’ careers, exerting diplomatic influence behind the scenes before moving to their own careers later in life. Finally, women like Lee Radziwill campaigned with her husband, Polish Prince Stanislaw Radziwill, for John Kennedy’s presidential election. She and her husband “stumped in Polish hustings about the U.S.,” engaging reporters who jokingly attempted to convince the multilingual princess to “take over the talking for the U.S. broadcast Voice of America.”\textsuperscript{15} Additionally, all felt it was their duty to improve international relations simply by refuting commonly held stereotypes of Americans abroad.

Calling attention postwar changes in upper class women’s roles, \textit{Vogue} editors declared, “henceforth, the relationship of any single American with the people of the other countries is going to be different, be it an ambassador in his salon, a G.I. visiting a working-class family in Naples, the American youth entering a classroom in an Oxford college, or a correspondent ordering a drink on the Champs Élysées.”\textsuperscript{16} To make that difference a positive one, women had to first be well-informed about the international


\textsuperscript{15}Staff Editor, “News Bites,” \textit{Time Magazine}, 24 October 1960, p. 3.

\textsuperscript{16}Eric Sevareid, “We are Responsible to the World,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 109, 1 February 1947, pp. 180, 224, 226.
politics and American diplomatic interests affecting change at home and in Europe.
Senator J.W. Fulbright eloquently argued for a new and better-rounded understanding of
the postwar world in his Vogue article “The Price of Peace.” If women were “interested
in almost anyone and everyone and everything,” their international curiosity and open
minds might assuage the “suspicion and distrust of practically all the peoples of Europe
and Asia.” Conversely, the “price of excellence,” as elaborated by French historian
Jacques Barzun, meant improving schooling and national intellect at home, creating a
society of citizens with “character, citizenship, health, social and individual adjustment,
cultural assimilation, profitable friendships…and a national resource of
intelligence…with schools not independent of the surrounding world.” Cord Meyer, Jr.
echoed both sentiments in his Vogue article “What the Future Holds for Us,” and warned
that “the shadow of another war [was] too dark to be ignored,” unless the “ignorance and
hold of habitual belief[s] were removed.”

Removing ignorance, according to Meyer, was only possible through a complete
understanding of the rest of the world. According to Dr. G.B. Chisholm (C.B.E.), the
Deputy Minister of National Health for Canada and representative to the United Nations
Health Assembly, Americans (interestingly, similar to Germans and Japanese), needed a

1945), pp. 80-81.
18 Fulbright, p. 80; Beauty Editor, “When to Remake Yourself…and When Not To,” Vogue, Volume
133, 15 January 1959, p. 20.
138, 141, 186, 188.
20 Lieutenant Cord Meyer, Jr., “What the Future Holds for Us,” Vogue, Volume 197, Part One, (February
1, 1946), pp. 126-7, 200, 204. Cord Meyer, Jr. gained prominence as an up and coming government official
when he served as assistant to Harold Stessen at the San Francisco conference.
complete postwar re-education. Education could “produce a generation of mature citizens…ready to be “citizens of the world, whether sufficiently mature adequately to carry that responsibility or not.” Education might also correct American “reluctance to take its place in world affairs, an indication of national neurosis, a refusal to take responsibility for enormous decisions,” which led to an unhealthy, intense anti-Communism. Americans could not reestablish the pre-war order, and therefore had to “take sure steps to prevent wars in the future…developing the race along lines of its inherent destiny without wars.”

To prevent future wars, Harper’s Bazaar’s political editor went on to declare that women had to become “a new type of international citizen, responsible to…people for the state of the world.” They had to have a “deeper consciousness of the cords that pull at our national life inside and outside the shores of the U.S.A.,” and a “new awareness of the world’s shifting circumstances.” Integral to that duty was good behavior, attractive and appropriate dress, and most important, cultural sensitivity. In turn, other countries needed to perceive American culture and international security interests in the best possible light. With all this in mind, editors at both magazines explored American


international prestige through human interest stories, political and economic reports, and opinion essays investigating the timbre of thought in major U.S. allies and smaller powers shaping the post war world. In response to an often less than favorable image (particularly in France, but also in other countries), magazine editors and contributors then turned to counseling readers better to represent the United States abroad through charity work and proper behavior and dress overseas. Their priority was encouraging upper class readers to become “free of prejudices or prejudgment,” and “profoundly interested in bringing the benefits of culture to all his fellow man, regardless of their physical or psychological characteristics,” because the “sound thinking of the cultured contributed to the well-being of society.”26 Without proper comportment, however, effectively communicating American ideals was impossible.

Americans constantly remained conscious of presenting the most favorable, cultivated image they could overseas, especially at the beginning of the 1950s, when President Eisenhower took office. Because their reputation was not always solid, “the present preoccupation of Americans with their prestige abroad, and ready acceptance of public opinion polls conducted in foreign countries to estimate how it stood,” unfortunately “created ultimate doubts about its [prestige’s] overall existence.”27 According to Susan Mary Patten, President Eisenhower struck neither the French nor the British as a particularly serious-minded figure. In fact, they thought he was a “genuine phony, with accent on the genuine,” and his choice of Secretary of State alarmed both

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27 Ibid.
nations.\textsuperscript{28} When Dulles and Eisenhower introduced a more aggressive-seeming “New Look” for 1950s foreign policy, \textit{Vogue’s} social editor reported “people were talking about…the state of American popularity, undermined by strident Communist propaganda and awaiting the meaning of the new U.S. foreign policy.”\textsuperscript{29} Just a few years later, in 1956, Susan Mary Patten “wondered what (the French) thought of Dulles’ bellicose article” on brinksmanship appearing in \textit{Life} Magazine. Her husband was stunned, and she worried that it would harm the Franco-American working relationship at the Geneva Conventions.\textsuperscript{30} Because of the newly discordant note in American foreign policy, American women, when traveling, might need to walk a fine line between offending their hosts and supporting their nation, a tricky task at best especially when anti-Americanism hit peaks throughout the 1950s.

Often discourse about America’s popularity centered on its newly dominant (and not always) popular culture, about which many in the nation were just as self-conscious. According to author Malcolm Muggeridge, “cultural operations on the Cold Front suggested that, with us (the United States), it was a question of searching for our culture when we hear the word gun, suggesting the United States was perfectly fine with its ostensibly inferior civilization until it came under scrutiny.”\textsuperscript{31} In 1962, a group of New Yorkers organized a “Round the World Press Club” where members could better examine


\textsuperscript{29} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 121, 15 March 1953, p. 72.


the “popularity” problem by reading international newspapers for “first-hand comments about American politics, economics, culture, and women,” in articles that “revealed us to ourselves, frequently in striking new lights.”

Correspondingly, the Russians were particularly “fond of talking about culture…but both (countries) were like hypochondriacs always taking a temperature, trying to find problems.”

The Soviets, however, inhabited an older, more culturally rich nation than the United States, so an American image overhaul might be well overdue. Constant self-examination could have made Americans conscious that if the nation wanted to spread democracy and foster good international relations, it needed quickly to change its image. Upper class women provided a more refined reflection of the nation that may have dispelled lingering doubts about whether the United States deserved and could live up to its newly powerful position.

**Ugly Americans**

As in so many other areas, editors focused the majority of their immediate attention on French perceptions of newly powerful Americans, and *Vogue* right away acknowledged a general distaste for the United States. Because the United States became more powerful than France after the war, its people worried about a cultural takeover, and upper class women in particular needed to be sensitive to that fear. In one article, *Vogue’s* social editor reported the latest Paris gossip which ran towards a concern with American

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tourists taking over the economy and indiscriminately imposing U.S. culture on the French.\textsuperscript{34} *Vogue* editor Bettina Wilson noticed that if good cultural relations between the two nations did not exist, maintaining peaceful diplomatic relations would be difficult at best.\textsuperscript{35}

Although subtly, Wilson intimated that upper class women, through social connections and behavior, might be able to counteract negative images and French fears during their trips overseas. Possibly with this thought in mind, Wilson (living in Paris at the time as a Red Cross worker) discussed complications for an American “civilian in Paris,” warning travelers to understand French postwar deprivations. Although a previous source of the world’s luxury goods, Americans should not expect the abundant hospitality that existed before the war or burden French hosts with too many impossible requests for treats like fine wine or cheese.\textsuperscript{36} Instead of taking advantage of their hosts’ traditions of “gracious serving,” upper class women needed to counteract poor images by offering to pay for meals or other items whenever possible, and purchasing as many luxury goods as were available on the market to give to their hosts.\textsuperscript{37} Being a good guest was one way to reassure French hosts that Americans were not taking advantage of postwar power.

French dislike for American tourists was not limited to small irritations with impossible American requests for luxury goods. In fact, their disgust often began at the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{34} Author Unknown, “In Paris, Conversation Runs Like This...” *Vogue*, August 15, 1945, pp. 148-9.
  \item \textsuperscript{35} Bettina Wilson, “Complications of a Civilian in Paris,” *Vogue*, September 1, 1945, p. 156.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} *Ibid*.
\end{itemize}
bottom, with soldiers stationed in France after the liberation. Bettina Wilson reported on troops’ image, noting that soldiers’ often boorish behavior created a poor impression of Americans in general, no matter what their class. American soldiers, she argued, did not respect French culture, did not bother to learn the country’s history, and made no attempts to visit cultural landmarks like the Louvre or the Tuileries. CBS war correspondent Eric Sevareid continued her idea when he observed American soldiers’ poor behavior not just in France but across Europe, commenting that local populations did not welcome their loud and rude manner. In fact, the negative view of Americans began immediately after World War I and continued through the end of the Second World War, only just easing after the liberation when Europeans desperately needed American aid. Because “the G.I. was not our best ambassador abroad,” through articles like these, readers, if not already aware, would know better than to misbehave in a foreign nation. (Of course, even at home, Americans could brush up their behavior, as one Englishman in Washington noted when “gently hinting that even Londoners in their fifth year of blitzkrieg still had their manners,” implying that Americans were rude even under the most fortuitous circumstances).

CBS War Correspondent Eric Sevareid’s “The G.I. Abroad” told readers what not to do overseas and explained why the French at times disliked their American “guests.” Sevareid explained that “to the French, we seem to have flooded their land. We choke

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39 Ibid.
their streets, fill up their café terraces, make worse their inflation, take over all their hotels and resorts, virtually ignore their army, and insist they speak our language while making little attempt to learn their own.”⁴¹ In taking a negative approach, clarifying what Americans did wrong, Sevareid effectively justified French animosity toward U.S. occupation forces while at the same time encouraging the type of behavior that might improve Franco-American relations. Sevareid did not ignore the American viewpoint, understanding that “most people find it hard to obey the Bible’s injunction that they love their enemies – and even the Bible doesn’t say a word about one’s allies,” but urged readers to put aside differences for the sake of postwar harmony.⁴²

*Vogue’s* Bettina Wilson felt that mutual ill will began with cultural misunderstanding at home, explaining that “soldiers brought home the impression that the French were robbers, and the French had an opinion of Americans as loud.”⁴³ The international situation was bad not just in France, and according to Ben Hecht, a *Harper’s Bazaar* travel editor “even the Italians…took a derogatory view of Americans…looking down on (them) as a grubby, infantile and pestiferous lot…thinking Americans were fools because of the way they threw their money away.”⁴⁴ Still, the French and the Americans “came from a position of little actual knowledge, and the war only

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⁴² Ibid.


exaggerated…American misconceptions.” Both authors further hypothesized that pride might have been at the root of international ill will. France and other European nations wanted to maintain their prewar status, but needed, while at the same time resenting, aid from the newly powerful United States. In the end, Sevareid and Wilson effectively rationalized both sides’ feelings, while placing responsibility for improving the postwar situation squarely on Americans.

When traveling abroad, good manners and self-presentation were important qualities for the ideal U.S. tourist because the United States was acutely aware of its negative image in Europe. If European nations were going to bond together in organizations like NATO or the UN and accept Marshall Plan dollars while fighting against Communist incursions in Central Europe, the country may have needed to become more attractive to potential partners. This meant countering resentment of U.S. dominance in atomic weapons development and production, which caused hostility among less scientifically advanced nations. France, for instance, begrudged U.S. resistance to its own attempts at beginning a nuclear program after the war. In a report on India, author Betty Willis was warned that other nations felt the United States might try to play God when an interview subject declared “it is not for you Americans to do God’s work; you Americans do not know that Lord Krishna will destroy the world in his own time – it is not for the Americans to propose to do God’s plan.” Americans “were not unkind,” but Eric Sevareid still wondered “how many Americans, who felt they have


saved the world [with atomic weapons], understood that the world was learning to detest them.”

Sevareid’s ideas crystallized one reason for American unpopularity, while also providing advice for changing the nation’s image. First, even though “history has few examples of one mass of people feeling affection for another,” if Americans remembered a few principles, they could get along well in their newly powerful postwar position. Picturing the world as a schoolyard, Sevareid noted that some negativity stemmed from the fact that “the rest of the kids generally disliked the strongest and richest kid on the block” and that “all of us were fonder of those to whom we give than of those who give to us.” In other words, if the United States wanted to assume political, economic, military, and cultural power, it needed to neutralize postwar international hostility and stop “bullying” the rest of its allies with its wealth and power.

Compounding the problem and in light of their newly powerful position, writer Josephine Johnson worried that Americans might be unable to accept the “discipline of peace,” wondering if the country would continue making the sacrifices necessary to keep a stable and peaceful international situation. Vogue contributor Gerald W. Johnson asserted Americans and their leaders were actually “afraid of responsibility,” a characteristic which could prove fatal in a world where France and England were

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48 Eric Sevareid, “We are Responsible to the World,” Vogue, Volume 109, 1 February 1947, pp. 180, 224, 226.

“crippled and too weak” to resume power, especially in former colonies that could potentially side with Communists.  

Accepting the responsibility of power included teaching international history, languages, and government to soldiers and other overseas travelers, and on a more personal level, continuing to be the world’s breadbasket, understanding that “every minute the need for the staffs of life were more piteously felt around the world.”  

Women, however, could not simply assuage any guilt about good fortune by donating clothes, money, or food, but must also “provide symbols of fulfillment as well as hope,” because “human responsibility transcended geography…but not time.”  

The most important sacrifice American women might make was to help increase American prestige and reduce its perceived attitude of condescension. If women did this, other nations might work peacefully with the United States to create a safer world while accepting the country as a friendly world power.

**Charity Begins at Home**

If, as the saying goes, charity began at home, then the best place for both magazines’ upper class readers to begin molding a good public image for the United States was, according to editors, through international charity work within their own communities, especially important before travel opportunities (and their corresponding influx of dollars) returned. Because the “U.S.A. was in the spotlight” after the war as the world’s “breadbasket, bank, factory, and arsenal…for the first time in its existence,”

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51 Staff Editor, “Red Cross: Bread, Money, Medicine, Clothing,” *Harper’s Bazaar*, Volume 80, Number 2811, March 1946, Front Cover.

women were instructed to foster an improved international image even before travel resumed.\textsuperscript{53} Magazine editors called them to be the “menders who go about the business as if it were natural, and as if readers’ generosity were natural, into flooded out Holland, earth shaken Iran, tackling loneliness in Boston, healing the world’s deepest gashes” in all parts of the globe.\textsuperscript{54} More directly, women, if they helped “human needs to transcend political differences, could be a potentially potent force for peace.”\textsuperscript{55} Additionally, monetary contributions like the Marshall Plan, although significant, might ultimately prove insufficient to completely feed the world, so charity work became critical to “fostering appreciation” among a new generation of children in war-torn nations, who, if doomed to hunger, disease and poverty, had the potential to foment discord (particularly in the form of Communist agitation).\textsuperscript{56}

Probably the most popular way to participate in charity work was through organizing fundraisers. In upper class society, belonging to the “right” or most fashionable charity as a chairperson or board member was a key to advancing a woman’s social cachet. Since women were supposed to “manage everything but facials and soufflés in the family car, serve on local boards,” “work on more committees than a Congressman,” and in the meantime, “somehow entertain constantly with exuberance and charm,” articles on entertaining (particularly foreign guests) increased throughout the 1950s probably because they went hand in hand with readers’ already multifaceted daily


\textsuperscript{54} Staff Editor, “Vogue’s Eye View of the Menders,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 121, 15 March 1953, p. 50.


\textsuperscript{56} Staff Editor, “Presents for the Top of Your List,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 114, 15 November 1949, pp. 58, 60.
Charity board members simply added one more duty to their already busy lives, raising countless dollars for Cold War allied nations suffering through difficult postwar reconstruction. As a side benefit, American charity targeted at allied populations may have built goodwill among the “not quite (but hurry!) disillusioned young,” who theoretically could start revolutions when they became adults in an inhospitable world.  

Fundraising was “a major industry, strongly propelled by women,” that helped gross over $2 billion in 1950 alone “all for the health and welfare” of the world.保持步伐与工作的挑战，志愿者不仅需要“青春、美丽、智慧和精神的活力”，也需要“政治活跃和问题导向”的智慧，结合他们投票和工作能力，形成对“政府的解剖学”具有决定性影响的“政治的活性与问题导向的智慧”。60 After the war, the most popular committees were, not surprisingly, involved in rehabilitating French and British economies, bolstering their governments, and re-entrenching the ruling class. The most influential charity committee in New York sponsored an annual “Paris in New York” (later the “April in Paris” ball) festival and dinner dance to benefit the American Library and American Aid Center in France, as well as the Student Center in Paris and the French Committee of Wives’ Welfare Projects. It was first held in 1953, and chaired by Countess


Jean de la Garde, the wife of the Minister Plenipotentiary in charge of the French Consulate General in New York. The ball’s success was such that it later attracted sponsors like Air France, Cartier, and Coty cosmetics to help underwrite entertaining costs. It also built considerable good will at a time when the French were embroiled in their own colonial struggles, particularly in Indochina, and perhaps needed a morale boost.

As the Cold War became more serious, charity work evolved into such a full time job that Vogue’s British publisher and chairman, H.W. Yoxall, wrote a special guidebook instructing readers how to conduct “committee work without tears,” and learn how to be good chairwomen with a light sense of humor and gentle touch. Not only would such an attitude help their work at home, it might also improve relations when women traveled overseas. As an added benefit, features on upper class women’s charity work created social pressure for readers to imitate the women profiled both to support specific causes and help their own social careers, in turn increasing foreign aid. Both magazines provided plenty of cogent models of the modern charity worker with a family, children, and now full-time volunteer responsibilities gracefully juggling her myriad duties. Women like Mrs. Courtland D. Barnes, for example, whose husband was with the American Embassy in Paris, worked with an organization called Secours Quaker, which ran the Quaker

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61 Social Editor, “Countess Jean de la Garde,” Vogue, Volume 123, 1 April 1953, p. 107; Social Editor, “Marvelous Parties: Spring Benefits,” Vogue, Volume 127, 15 April 1956, pp. 94-95. Corporate sponsorship of charity balls was very new in the 1950s, although most charity balls today have costs underwritten by large companies.

Relief Project to collect clothing for displaced French victims of the war. Mrs. W.A. Dunderdale acted as liaison to the Friends of French volunteers, working at a settlement house in Normandy to help families find homes after bombings. Mrs. Mark Clark (wife of the commander of Korea’s UN forces) began an organization to send blankets to Koreans orphaned in the war, working through the “Save the Children Federation” in New York City. Harper’s Bazaar editors ran a regular feature each year after the war (until the mid 1950s), called the “Gazateer for Christmas Giving,” listing a selection of charities to give to around the world. Vogue social editors similarly noted that “the world grows smaller with each new Christmas, and this year, your list includes not only your own children, but also children around the world, equally yours and all those who look to you for hope wherever they are,” because “the happy custom of Christmas giving creases its own path through the sad folding of international crisis and tension.” Finally, women of means could even go so far as to adopt children from overseas, similar to noted socialite Molly Lowell (an American who became Lady Berkeley through marriage). She adopted two war orphans from an Italian orphanage, making a film about her experiences called “Never Take No for an Answer.”


64 Social Editor, “Above the Crowd,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 80, Number 2812, April 1946, p. 241.

65 Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” Vogue, Volume 121, 1 April 1953, pp. 104-5.


Magazine editors recognized that aside from charity work, hosting a dinner party or other function was often a subtle way to exercise socio-political power. Susan Mary Patten, for example, was probably the most influential hostess in the Paris diplomatic set during the early Cold War, and through this, wielded considerable political power. Patten actively worked for causes she believed in, such as recognition of the Gaullist postwar government or providing aid to Great Britain during the Greek crisis in 1947. She did this primarily by befriending notables like Winston Churchill, charming him with her excellent French, her pleasant disposition, and keen intellect and good sense. From there, Patten introduced to him American politicians who might have influence in Anglo-American relations. Another diplomat’s wife, Mrs. William W. Schott, declared that she “almost by definition, had to be a good hostess,” later providing readers with a party diary full of helpful details on how to entertain in any situation. In addition to speaking six languages, Mrs. Schott kept an extensive entertainment diary for twenty-five years, which showed her great attention to detail and flexibility – she could even use commissary items to make a complete multi-course gourmet meal. Schott also made a point of collecting recipes from the countries where she and her husband were stationed so that when entertaining important guests from other nations, they might feel at home. In this same spirit, Mrs. Louise Hopkins chronicled in minute detail her trip to Russia, particularly noting even the smallest elements of menus served at diplomatic functions.

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with Stalin and Molotov. Other hostesses might imitate those dishes, or at least come away with a new appreciation for international cuisine, an important part of any culture.

While important, serving the proper foods was just one facet of an upper class woman’s innumerable social responsibilities. Equally significant was the subtle art of mixing people, proper seating arrangements, and smoothly dealing with a variety of sometimes difficult personalities. In this capacity, upper class women discreetly expanded their behind the scenes diplomatic influence, something Susan Mary Patten did with great skill. Patten also took special note of other hostesses talented at dealing with guests of all stripes, bringing home stories and gossip to her husband, and learning different personality quirks for use in making her own seating charts. At one Embassy dinner party she attended in 1959, Patten related to Marietta Tree a story about their “old friend Dottie Kidder, a superb diplomat’s wife.” Kidder was seated next to a guest “determined to unzip her (Kidder’s) dress and do appalling things with his hands under the tablecloth during dinner.” Patten admired Kidder’s skill in politely dealing with the congressman, turning his attentions to interesting topics and defusing a potentially embarrassing situation that might impact what other foreign guests thought of U.S. government officials.

Depending upon the hostess’ social skills, seating two political opponents together could cause fireworks, or conversely, a pleasant evening and a relationship later beneficial to both parties. Using upper class women as case studies, magazines chronicled

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70 Susan Mary Alsop, To Marietta From Paris: 1945-1960, p. 337.

71 Ibid.
their social functions in order to school readers in the fine art of constructing seating arrangements. To create a sparkling mix of guests, hostesses had to remember constant changes in social and political relationships, including the complex web of people in and out of power. So important was this type of information that Susan Mary Patten made a point of attending dinner parties when her husband was ill (he had severe asthma and emphysema) just so she could bring him the gossip, keeping him well informed when he returned to work. In order to aid readers in keeping up with the myriad Washington political and diplomatic relationships, Vogue periodically published articles detailing political protocol. With each change in international affairs, magazines discussed why and where certain political figures were seated, what types of place settings were needed for different events, and even what size and shape of table a hostess might need. With such guides, in addition to etiquette tomes like Millicent Fenwick’s *Vogue Book of Etiquette*, upper class women could be well prepared to take on any diplomatic challenge. A good repertoire of entertainment skills combined with a far-reaching foreign policy education may have empowered upper class women to act as effective leaders on the charity circuit or elsewhere, and as socially skilled partners and hostesses, able subtly to affect the surrounding international situation.73


Giving the “Ugly American” a Makeover: Goodwill, Good Comportment, and Good Clothes

Although important at home, understanding political causes and leaders was doubly useful when traveling overseas. As early as August 1945, General Eisenhower emphasized that the only way to avoid war was through a promotion of cultural and diplomatic understanding of nations around the world.74 Upper class women were already informal cultural warriors as they raised money and social consciousness at home about international cultures and crises. When travel resumed after the war, upper class women, because they had the means, could also help build a strong (and preferably) equal relationship that settled postwar issues to both nations’ satisfaction. Goodwill measures like supporting sending food or supplies to England, France, or other European nations would, in one editor’s opinion, go far toward helping this happen.75 So too would travel, especially if travelers made sure to present the best possible American image overseas, often in the face of considerable European distaste for U.S. culture. Upper class women had the taste, style, and exquisitely charming manners to accomplish this goal if they chose.

74 Dwight D. Eisenhower. “General Eisenhower Hates War - Excerpts from Eisenhower’s Speeches,” Harper’s Bazaar. August 1945, p. 69. Interestingly, Vogue also recognized that former allies like Great Britain also had their own Cold War concerns. In one notable feature on Ernest Bevin’s attempts to “balance between Russia and the Right,” Vogue recognized the delicate position nations like Great Britain were in - they had also to balance international Cold War interests with domestic concerns, paying close attention to not upsetting the United States. Kinglsey Martin, “Bevin of Britain,” Vogue Magazine, September 15, 1946, p. 230.

Generally, upper class women and their families counted on traveling to Europe at a minimum twice yearly, to a country house for skiing at Christmas (and later shopping) and for additional spring or summer clothes shopping trips. For especially fashionable women, two trips yearly to London and France (just for clothing) were a must. Lee Radziwill recounts in her autobiography yearly trips to Paris and London each spring to order winter clothing, and each winter to order spring clothing.\(^\text{76}\) Of course, on her first trip to Europe, her mother made sure Lee and her sister Jacqueline were appropriately dressed at all times so they could fulfill their duty to “look correctly chic in any capital of the world.”\(^\text{77}\) Since travel overseas was so frequent in this social set, the editor-in-chief at both *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* started monthly columns on prominent women’s overseas comings and goings. Keeping track of the “Travel Circuit,” as one *Harper’s Bazaar* columnist did, became an important project for both magazines. As early as 1947, *Vogue* began devoting an entire yearly issue to summer travel, focusing on resorts and fashionable destinations around the world. Throughout the next decade, magazines detailed fashionable places to stay, what to bring and what was appropriate to wear in certain nations, and which nations were safe for travel at particular times. Advertisements for new luggage, airlines, travel clothing, and other products steadily increased from 1945 through the early 1960s, particularly as air travel became more accessible and

\(^{76}\)Radziwill, *Happy Times*. Spring clothes had to be ordered in the winter (and winter clothing in the spring) because making couture clothing, which is constructed almost entirely by hand, took many months, and required at the minimum three fittings. Unless the customer stayed in each place, couture clothing would require many additional trips for these fitting sessions.

common for those with money.\textsuperscript{78} In the \textit{Vogue} travel editor’s view, “traveling was a sound international policy, with far better reasons for being undertaken than for refreshment alone…[it was] a contribution to the freedom of others,” but if it was to be successful, women had to walk a fine line of proper behavior and dress, because at least initially, European views of Americans were so contradictory as to be confusing to the most astute traveler.\textsuperscript{79}

Of course, dressing well could only go so far toward improving America’s image overseas. American politics and culture made a mixed mark on Europe in the 1950s that female travelers may have eventually had to counteract with other efforts. Outside observers alternately loved the United States for its modernity and idealism or hated it for its lowbrow popular culture. Professor H. Stuart Hughes wrote in the journal \textit{Daedalus} that while he “found U.S. mass culture more tolerant, gentler, and more humane than anything the Western world knew before,” the American public was at the same time quixotically “quite satisfied with the ugliness of their cities, the waste in the economy, the cheerful incompetence of leaders, the meaninglessness of public discourse, and the general insensibility to the overwhelming danger that threatened” the world.\textsuperscript{80} Susan Mary Patten could not say how “strongly she felt about the harm McCarthy (and his rabid anti-Communism) has done us abroad,” but one British author felt Americans were

\textsuperscript{78} The main travel column for \textit{Harper’s Bazaar} was “Travel Circuit,” which appeared monthly beginning in 1946, and for \textit{Vogue}, the column was “On Your Flight Schedule,” which appeared monthly, or at times bi-weekly beginning at the end of 1945.


\textsuperscript{80} H. Stuart Hughes, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 136, 15 August 1960, p. 87.
continually “open to new ideas.” Other Europeans acknowledged American importance in the world of ideas, but also felt they were uneducated and lacked culture. The nation was the “bulwark of capitalism…the hope of those opposing socialism and communism,” and offered the only “promise of stability” in a turbulent new world. European socialists and communists saw the United States as the “chief wall in the way of their hopes,” but perversely, Americans mistrusted and believed they were “naïve enough to constantly be ‘taken’ by Europeans.”

American women went to great lengths to counteract image issues, particularly when they were compared with Europeans. As the primary “keepers” of the world’s culture, European women were “mannered, with gaiety, candor, awareness, and completely modern; alive, informed, with tremendous vitality and exuberance and utterly charming and natural.” American women, on the other hand, even though modern, had a “morbid preoccupation with youth” that made them obsessed with weight, cosmetics, and other superficialities. Obsession with youth aside, some Europeans vocally supported Americans, admiring the “average” woman, whose “ceiling was higher

83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
because she got more and gave more in the world."\textsuperscript{87} Susan Mary Patten’s friend Kathleen “Kick” Kennedy (Marchioness of Hartington and John F. Kennedy’s sister), for instance, exemplified American generosity and was one of “the most popular widows in London…for her warmth and charm,” and for the fact “that she remained so American.”\textsuperscript{88} For every European who “thought American women were excessively expensive, aggressive and demanding, materialistic, and unfeminine and uninterested in sex,” there were others who argued that “nowhere else did women do as much, earn as much, and hold as many positions” as in the United States, giving them boundless opportunities for reshaping the world.\textsuperscript{89} Susan Mary Patten wondered at the contradiction, asking her friend Marietta Tree “you know how we are always reading in Europe about how materialistic Americans are? The thing that strikes me is how unmaterialistic we are.”\textsuperscript{90}

One British author, Malcolm Bradbury (\textit{Eating People is Wrong}), went so far as to write an entire essay about what the British thought Americans were like, because he was tired of the “tradition of complaining that all Americans were ill-mannered, spit, or kept hats on inside,” (among other faults).\textsuperscript{91} Bradbury liked that Americans were polite,


\textsuperscript{88} Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 91.


\textsuperscript{90} Alsop, \textit{To Marietta from Paris: 1945-1960}, p. 140.

“nice to people who don’t deserve it,” were charmingly neurotic, had nothing to hide, were unselfish, and generous.\textsuperscript{92} Susan Mary Patten’s experience with the British confirmed that his attitude may have been the popular one, and she commented that when she visited Great Britain, “with their country barely surviving, and possibly slipping into total economic collapse…they worried about us too.”\textsuperscript{93}

Given the range of contradictory European ideas about them, then, women had a tall order to fill if they were going to follow editor recommendations for changing the American image overseas. A \textit{Vogue} editor added extra pressure, remarking that “in all of us, there’s a deep desire to be different women in this respect: to be women who inhabit a world at peace – a statistic that will be, \textit{Vogue} hopes, 100\% reality by 1955.”\textsuperscript{94} To help readers improve their image and thereby promote peace, magazines provided plenty of role models to answer any questions about exactly what types of characteristics they needed (if that was a goal) to become the ideal upper class American woman. Evangeline Bruce, for example, long the doyenne of Washington D.C. society, married U.S. Ambassador David K.E. Bruce (Ambassador to France, 1949-1952; West Germany, 1957-1959; Great Britain, 1961-1969), and became a world renowned hostess and Washington saloniste. Close friends with Susan Mary Patten and Marietta Tree, Bruce married her husband in 1945, after interviewing with him for a secretarial position. Upon


\textsuperscript{94} Staff Editor, “\textit{Vogue’s} Eye View of 1954: A Different Kind of Woman,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 123, January 1954, p. 89.
finding out she fluently spoke five languages and had an in-depth knowledge of history, art, and design, he asked her to lunch and promptly proposed. Mrs. Bruce had an enormous impact in all of her husband’s postings, not just because she was multilingual, but also because she was “deeply charming, a good listener, beautiful, educated on German porcelain and a scholar of the French 18th century.”  

Bruce was “a natural asset on which Americans might well congratulate themselves, and many who knew her, did,” and she had a “lively and informed appreciation of the national genius of other countries,” with a personal touch that made her a particularly “successful and beloved” diplomatic figure. She set standards for how other upper class women might behave overseas, and made such an impression on Jacqueline Kennedy that she sent Bruce a thank you note proclaiming "One was so proud as an American to think that other countries recognized you as our very best."  

Following in this type of role model’s footsteps first and foremost involved looking the part. Clothing potentially conveyed any number of messages, many of which could be negative. One British writer felt all American tourists came to Britain “in dresses better suited for the Bahamas,”…or wearing “extraordinary numbers all in

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Dress, in this instance, communicated that American tourists could be unforgivably tacky and potentially even obnoxious. According to magazine editors, Europeans, on the other hand, always managed through their clothing to “express an indestructible gentility” in the face of every challenge. With this in mind and to expurgate negative expectations, women should at all times, have “good skin, clean, nice clothes…and an easy, democratic smile” to portray an open, welcoming image. Jacqueline Kennedy’s expertise in choosing a wardrobe did not fail to impress Europeans, especially the French. A French artist on her tour of India noted that Mrs. Kennedy “must have studied very carefully” because “every dress she wears becomes a marvelous spot of color, like the bright spot that holds your eye in Persian miniatures.” While using appearance to improve American image abroad did not begin with Mrs. Kennedy, her cleverness with wardrobe, hair, and cosmetics certainly epitomized the skill of using dress to send a particular message.

Probably the easiest aspect of appearance to modify was cosmetics, so beginning their makeovers at the top, beauty editors at Harper’s Bazaar began writing a regular

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“Beauty Briefing for Travelers.” 102 The magazine’s beauty editors reminded readers that “wherever you go, you will usually be recognized unhesitatingly as an American, and if your make up is well and neatly applied, you won’t raise eyebrows, provoke bold stares, or any but the most flattering” opinions. 103 If truly well-made up, women could be pleased with themselves and “make the sight of her a pleasure for other people – and that’s a compliment to society that no one should feel guilty to pay.” 104 Indeed, in a Vogue beauty editor’s eyes, “everyone was healthier when a woman’s urge to look her best was appreciated.” 105 By the late 1950s, beauty advice seemed to be working admirably, as evidence by Italian film director Vittorio de Sica’s high opinion of American women. They had lovely complexions, almost every American woman was beautiful, and it was hard for him to understand why they “weren’t all in Hollywood.” 106 Their “long legs and sculptured figures” created a new international standard of beauty that put them pleasantly on a pedestal for European men. 107

Cosmetics were just one aspect of being well dressed, and Americans also grew to be recognized by their clothing, which conveyed a particular spirit attractive to Europeans “of open-eyed interest…a blithe and buoyant attitude extending right down to


103 Ibid.


107 Ibid.
her clothes.” But because travel made packing to keep up an image difficult, airlines like Trans World Airlines (TWA) began employing personal women’s travel advisors and printing pamphlets like the “Basic Wardrobe for the Traveller,” telling women exactly what to pack for every nation and social situation. Aside from TWA, the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) produced the most well-known guides designed to entice American tourists to Great Britain. The BOAC clothing advisory board led by consultant Ouida Wagner not only wrote an instructional clothing pamphlet, but went a step further by offering personal consultations for “advice on flights feminine.”

BOAC, in conjunction with Vogue, even helped women plan an around the world trip (conveniently to British interests), mapping out the itinerary and suggesting outfits for each location modeled in Vogue. If they utilized guides like these, upper class American tourists would have had to make quite an effort to be ill-dressed.

Pamphlets like TWA or BOAC published also indicated being well-dressed was a more difficult task that it seemed, because “at all times, in the eyes of all people…[women] must appear lively but dignified, modish yet modest, charming but indestructible,” not wear “too much expression in the face…or live like an army with all

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reserves engaged in action.”112 A short story by author Stanley Baron, even reminded women, through the male protagonist’s clothing, that if they were “well-dressed and carefully dressed,” they could become “a rarity among Americans,” a woman who passed for being British (or another nationality).113 Ultimately, if a woman dressed well, she could inspire “unabashed admiration wherever in the world she happened to be, wherever she goes.”114 In dress and later, in behavior, there was no room for mistakes, because errors potentially affected international relations through creating a poor image of Americans abroad.

Because dress was so important, editors naturally filled most magazine pages with models wearing the couture suits, cocktail dresses, and gowns upper class readers needed for social obligations during travel. Magazine fashion editorials showed clothing from prominent designers around the world (even the Soviet Union, not normally known for its fashion industry), which indicated that readers attended a variety of social functions requiring more formal dress. Appropriate attire for evening included dinner suits and gowns, and purchasing clothes from a country one visited showed a certain deference for that nation’s industry and well being. Wearing a particular nation’s designers at a social or diplomatic function was a noteworthy compliment to its leaders. Jacqueline Kennedy, for instance, took her role as a style setter so seriously that she often “studied the culture


and history of her guests and destination before having one of her couturiers, usually Oleg Cassini, create her unique ensembles.”\textsuperscript{115} Her dresses so charmed the French that she upstaged her husband on their first trip to France together after his presidential election, even catching the eye of the notoriously difficult Charles de Gaulle at a dinner he hosted at Versailles.\textsuperscript{116}

But, even if “not every woman could BE a beauty…every woman could behave like a beauty” to impress Europeans when traveling,\textsuperscript{117} Vogue beauty editors continually repeated “the rule that absolutely nothing can do more for your looks than the nurtured habit of behaving like a beauty.”\textsuperscript{118} Charity at home, travel abroad, and an impeccable, appropriate wardrobe, followed with exemplary behavior potentially could help make a good impression in allied nations. When travelling, magazine editors advised American women to be “ambassadresses of goodwill on their own,” with “lively charm…and delicate good looks,” in order to begin changing European opinions.\textsuperscript{119} A common thread in articles in both magazines indicates that even upper class women needed to polish their behavior by improving knowledge about foreign relations, unfamiliar cultures, and proper behavior in a manner to best represent the United States in an unfamiliar world.

\textsuperscript{115} Sarah Cristobal, “The Dress that Gets Results,” Harper’s Bazaar, November 2008, pp. 139, 140, 142.

\textsuperscript{116} Barbara Perry, Jacqueline Kennedy: First Lady of the New Frontier, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), p. 86.

\textsuperscript{117} Beauty Editor, “How to be a Beauty,” Vogue, Volume 114, 1 February 1950, pp. 140, 214.

\textsuperscript{118} Beauty Editor, “Looks that are Better than Beauty,” Vogue, Volume 136, 1 October 1960, p. 225.

\textsuperscript{119} Social Editor, “Mrs. Barry Bingham: Husband was Chief of ECA Mission to France,” Vogue, Volume 115, 15 April 1950, p. 80.
Because the United States was newly powerful, socio-cultural mores shifted. Better education about not just American, but also European concerns, would not only help readers become better citizens at home, but more importantly may have aided the United States with its larger goal of building better relations around the world. An informed traveler, “equipped and knowledgeable,” was simply fulfilling her “duty of good manners as a visitor.”

Manners meant behaving like a guest who enjoyed and adapted to the unfamiliar and tried to always be pleasant. Polished manners that respected a nation’s culture ensured that “good travelers [would] always feel at home,” wherever they might sojourn. Being a good traveler became more important by 1949, when “there was a great and good and welcome American invasion of the world,” making behavior critical to maintaining favorable international relations.

British writer Michael Astor made some specific recommendations in Vogue for how women could better encourage good relations between the United States and Great Britain. His “prescription” included more travel so American women could analyze differences between their nation and the British to better understand one another. Then, travelers might make sure to use that understanding to allow the British to maintain their own individuality and not judge Britons by their own national standards. According to

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120 Travel Editor, “Briefing on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 109, 1 January 1947, pp. 92-3.
122 Travel Editor, “Good Travelers Always Feel at Home,” Harper’s Bazaar, Volume 81, Number 2822, pp. 214-17.
Astor, the British in particular felt their nation and the United States were “allies in a struggle where ideologies and human values counted for as much as human preparedness,” so both nations needed to let go of misconceptions, practicing “reciprocity and recognizing that we are different, but that we live in one world.” \cite{Astor} In his eyes, the British felt Americans were too idealistic, while the United States felt that Europeans were “an ungrateful lot of beggars.” \cite{British} If both nations drew on their similar social structures, shared traditions and heredity, Anglo-American relations would benefit, especially because “to travel was to learn and reflect, perhaps even a little to understand.” \cite{Travel}

Right after the war’s end \textit{Vogue} editors provided readers with a “Blueprint for Good Behaviour,” as well as a revised book on etiquette (published in 1948), both of which instructed women how to practice manners overseas. \cite{Vogue} For instance, when in Paris or London, complaining of a shortage of food or of its poor quality was considered ill mannered, because the British and French had to endure such awful privations. To help remedy the situation in a small way, \textit{Vogue} travel editors counseled readers to bring as gifts necessities like soap, towels, chocolate, dried milk and other provisions so the hostess would not suffer too much from serving her guests. Before she moved to Great Britain, Marietta Tree helped Susan Mary Patten follow that advice, regularly sending

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\item \cite{British}: \textit{Ibid}.
\item \cite{Travel}: Elizabeth Bowen, “Mental Acuity,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 120, 15 August 1955, pp. 108-9.
\item \cite{Vogue}: Both magazines used the British spelling of words like behavior, favor, or the like in their issues.
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soap, nylons, chocolate bars, and cans of evaporated milk for Patten for use as gifts when she traveled or to donate to dinner party hosts low on goods. Travelers should also “pack lightly and thoughtfully,” perhaps “bringing stockings [or other little luxuries] for gifts,” in order to make a good impression on their hosts, and not “strain finances, which were probably less able to stand a strain than [the traveler’s own finances].”\textsuperscript{129} Vogue staff even went so far as to provide a primer on British titles so Americans would not be guilty of social gaffes with upper class British hosts.\textsuperscript{130} Even if the British were no longer the world’s greatest power, Americans still held respect for titles, no matter how insignificant.

\textit{The Innocents Abroad: Raising Internationally Minded Children}

Just as increasing numbers of adults traveled, so too did their children, either with parents for vacation, or independently for educational purposes. Boarding schools in Great Britain, France, and Switzerland carried an imprimateur of good breeding, but also exposed children to a more international set than they might meet at home. Education abroad expanded social and educational opportunities, and children were prepared to behave properly and respect the cultures of the nations they visited. Since “all children lived happier within a rigid fence of manners,” Vogue contributors tutored parents to raise children with the kind of good manners that would serve them well in a variety of social situations. While adults needed to make concessions to the needs of children, a “handful


of manners” made the difference between an attractive and an unattractive child, especially overseas, and children would in turn be more comfortable with themselves and others. There even existed special camps that brought together (in the United States) children from all over the world, and where Americans could “park their children safely for a time” while they traveled. Children learned different languages and how to get along with others of all nationalities at these camps, and hopefully understand their points of view.

The best way to create young cultural ambassadors was to begin training them early to appreciate other cultures and behave appropriately overseas, because “young people were our best salesmen of friendship” to other nations. Women could also learn what not to do in their own behavior by studying observations of typical parent/child interactions overseas. Harper’s Bazaar’s travel editor advised women to ensure their children did not turn “into monsterinos [sic] who go into a tantrum or a stupor whenever a historic site is approached, or come to life only to forage on such non-European nourishment as gum, Coca-Cola, and comic books.” Many parents, according to the magazine’s travel editor, “handled their children as if they were rolls of film to be

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exposed to every church, museum, and monument in the Baedeker.”

Instead, parents should expose children to culture in small doses while emphasizing proper manners and respect for their host nation.

Eleanor Porenyi, a travel writer at *Vogue*, recommended that when “taking the innocents abroad…[parents] should let them be tourists,” and that children could “be more of a delight than a duty” if parents followed some simple rules. First, parents could make clear that they would have fun with their children and do things young people enjoyed. In the process, parents should also attempt to have their children adapt to local customs, sample the local food, and be on their best behavior. The three European countries most amenable to children included Italy because Italians “loved children,” and France and England since both had wonderful amusements for small visitors. Of course, parents should not get so caught up in “forcing culture” upon their children that they neglected to let them be children, rather, they should allow them to buy things like “trinkets” or “tacky souvenirs” because childhood was the last time they could do this.

The main benefit of exposing youth to travel was that “traveling abroad for a youngster could add up to the faint beginnings of a world point of view, the groundwork for an understanding of the humanities.”

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Taking children overseas to educate them seemed to work, and as they grew, American youth went to great effort to present a good image of their country overseas. Noting this trend, Caroline Bird of Harper’s Bazaar remarked that “more young people than ever before have been exposed to the influence of foreign travel, but they did not go abroad as rebels, protesting the cruelty of America. On the contrary, they were going to spread the American way as [future] employees of oil companies, airlines, construction firms or government agencies; as servicemen or exchange students or grantees from foundations fostering international understanding.”\(^{140}\) Actually, taking children abroad could also benefit their parents. Not only would children take home “a set of agreeable European manners,” because in the United States (in the words of one child interviewed), children “were allowed to DO a lot more…but in Europe, they had much better manners.”\(^{141}\) They would also learn to deal with differences in culture without “injudicious patriotism and hostility” toward their hosts.\(^{142}\) Since “to gander and to learn were considered the marks of the sophisticated,” taking children overseas made them more cultured at home.\(^{143}\) Furthermore, children would “retain for keeps the knowledge” they brought home.\(^{144}\) Lastly, children could “exclude you from a tiresome and increasing


\(^{142}\) Ibid.

\(^{143}\) Ibid.

\(^{144}\) Ibid.
anti-Americanism (although not in Great Britain),” since most people enjoyed the company of children, no matter what nationality.\textsuperscript{145}

The Fulbright Program, established in 1948, formalized exchange programs to encourage youth to study overseas during and after college, and UNESCO followed with a study abroad program that had over 74,000 scholarships and fellowships available for study around the world, especially in Cold War hot spots like Southeast Asia, or Africa and Europe.\textsuperscript{146} But, a cultural education begun earlier through study abroad in grammar school became increasingly fashionable in the 1950s, especially for young women. While a foreign boarding school education for boys had long been popular among the upper classes, traveling abroad before the war for young women amounted to little more than a finishing school experience. Marietta Tree, for example, attended finishing school in Italy and Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier considered their trip abroad as a sort of similar experience. During the Cold War, as adults sought solutions to the Soviet-American standoff, parents were encouraged to send children overseas through programs like the “Experiment in International Living,” since “one of the best ways to learn about a country was, of course, living there.”\textsuperscript{147} A travel editor at \textit{Vogue} explained “the name was exact, for you lived with a foreign family… and you will be on a kind of ambassadorial

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\footnotetext{146} Travel Editor, “Mrs. Harwood Kammerer,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 130, 15 August 1957, p. 138.

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\footnotetext{147} Travel Editor, “Travel Bazaar: Young and Footloose – First Trip Abroad,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 91, Number 2949, August 1957, pp. 29-30, 173.
\end{footnotesize}
mission, combating misconceptions about Americans, and perhaps a few of your own about Europeans.”

An added benefit to education abroad was the possibility of keeping up with or surpassing the Soviets, who were presumably surging ahead in science and math educational programs as evidenced by the 1957 Sputnik launch. For upper class American women who felt the educational system in the United States seemed to be falling behind, sending children abroad to boarding school for a challenge made sense. Susan Mary Patten, feeling that the American school in France was too easy a program, sent her son Bill to boarding school in England (Beachborough), and her daughter Anne to French schools because the education was, in her opinion, so much better. Particularly in the “Great English public school system,” a more rigorous education allowed students to “gain strength from the past, character in the present, and faith in a strong and idealistic, happy America in the future.” Children potentially might come away from their experience “happy, courageous, responsible, and inspired, leading harder lives, but with a spark of the divine about them,” rather than “happy, adapted, irresponsible, secure, and like cows in a field” (like the American masses).

Education abroad made up for deficiencies in the school system at home and produced better citizens not just because it exposed children to other nations. In-depth

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150 Ibid.
education abroad exposed students to foreign nations in a way that possibly could foster better cultural understanding. One student, who lived with a family of deposed Russian nobles in Paris, not only learned about France, but also came to feel sympathy for Russians imprisoned under Soviet rule.\textsuperscript{151} Aside from sympathy for other nations “even parents with no overseas affiliation were conscious that international understanding could only come through international association, and that languages would be a great asset in the careers which have opened up to Americans in the postwar world.”\textsuperscript{152} A foreign education might materially and culturally benefit its recipients.

Daughters, especially, could “be improved by a year in Paris,” and because “none fit in so well or so quickly as the Americans,” they would make a good impression on Europeans because of their “all-American” warmth and charm.\textsuperscript{153} This was especially true if young women learned French and an appreciation of its culture and art, because such knowledge served them well socially, internationally and at home.\textsuperscript{154} Even though at the time, she resented being away from her friends, Susan Mary Patten grew to love her semi-annual trips to visit an aunt in Paris, and came away speaking fluent French, and more importantly, understanding the workings of the nation’s government. Marietta Tree felt that her year in Italy attending finishing school helped set her up for a lifelong love of


\textsuperscript{152} Staff Editor, “They’re Going to School in Europe,” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 84, Number 2861, April 1951, pp. 141-43, 203.


\textsuperscript{154} \textit{Ibid}. 298
international politics and interest in other peoples. Jacqueline and Lee Bouvier clamored for years until their parents gave in to their requests for a summer abroad to study art and music, something they wanted for fun, but also to further their educations.

Taking matters into their own hands (and to make certain their young ladies did not associate with inappropriate foreigners), upper class women themselves began organizing European tours for the daughters of their friends, such as a popular program run by Mrs. Howard Kammerer. Her five-month excursion took girls to Paris, the Alps, Rome and Florence, and to England, emphasizing art, languages, and “above all, meeting the people,” (mainly Mrs. Kammerer’s many European friends).¹⁵⁵ Both Susan Mary Patten and Jacqueline Bouvier participated in somewhat similar programs, and Bouvier in particular perfected her French while studying at the Sorbonne during her senior year of college, falling in love with the nation and its culture.

To further their children’s education, magazine contributors felt parents also had to take a more active role in broadening their own horizons by learning the language of the nations to which they traveled. Because “nations and languages were so bound together,” and language “meant understanding another country’s concepts and culture,” learning to speak a nation’s tongue by extension might help improve international relations.¹⁵⁶ Even the French, notoriously snobbish about their own language, respected American women who simply attempted to speak the tongue. In fact, according to one French contributor to Vogue, the French appreciated Americans who “only tried, but

¹⁵⁵ Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” Vogue, Volume 126, 15 November 1955, pp. 154, 168.

didn’t aim too high, retaining a whiff of foreign flavour; a dash of American whimsicality.” In such a spirit, Mrs. Harry Truman organized “White House Spanish classes,” where along with the wives of fifteen Senators, she was “sweetly studious,” trying to improve her own international behavior. An increasingly popular way to learn to speak a foreign language was through records, where readers could “learn at home,” and then when traveling, “see the country and practice their newly acquired languages.” For the younger set, in 1960, a magazine called Top began publication with the express purpose of “encouraging teens to learn about French culture, movies, and language,” ostensibly so they would become better travelers. Their mothers could purchase French Vogue or French Harper’s Bazaar as a “nifty device for keeping one’s ear attuned to current French usage.” Since “Americans were so famous for their nonability with foreign languages that most of the world had had to learn English to accommodate them,” or, Americans simply “spoke more loudly in an effort to be understood,” American women might be good ambassadors by making an effort to learn to speak a variety of languages. Susan Mary Patten exemplified this quality with her

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161 Staff Editor, “Buy French Vogue,” Vogue, Volume 134, December 1959, p. 188.
“flawless French and fresh good looks that made her one of the most popular hostesses in France.”

Jacqueline Kennedy was able to translate French and Spanish for her husband when the two went on official state visits, helping generate goodwill around the world.

In addition to language, parents too could use lessons in how to be good tourists overseas, remembering a few of the Harper’s Bazaar travel editor’s rules for travel to make a good impression in Europe. First, women needed to have the appropriate letters of introduction and their calling cards. In all countries, promptness and punctuality were two qualities that could not be left at home. Next, being a tourist was not a crime, as long as one did not act like an expert on the host nation. Rather, visitors should “never feel embarrassed to ask questions about local customs,” they should just “never be conspicuous” about their lack of understanding of the place they were visiting. On the other hand, Americans should always avoid looking like tourists, attempting as best as possible to blend in, but also to make a good impression because they would inevitably be recognized as Americans. In other words, “to be an American was fine, but to be taken for one [while traveling] was insupportable, as all American tourists agree.” In this spirit, the travel editor at Harper’s Bazaar warned readers that it was “not enough to

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166 Ibid.
throw a penny in the Fountain of Trevi or call ‘Sank Roo Doh-Noo’ for the taxi driver in order to arrive at Harry’s Bar.”\textsuperscript{167}

Rather, travelers needed to “cultivate an awareness of climate, of mood and atmosphere…to travel gracefully and seem at home away from home.”\textsuperscript{168} Author Stephen Potter warned American travelers not to play “the stupid American” (particularly in England), because good behavior could help soothe feelings that led to postwar “mangled feelings in the Anglo-American relations.”\textsuperscript{169} There were a number of tricks to avoid looking like the typical American tourist, such as traveling off season, which “allowed travelers to avoid the clutter of determined tourists, bent on photographing Beefeaters and obscuring the Englishness (or Frenchness, or Italianness) of things in general.”\textsuperscript{170} One wanted to avoid at all costs being like the tourist who reportedly said to a \textit{Vogue} reporter, “it’s all so wonderful, I can’t wait to get home to sort it all out.”\textsuperscript{171} Author James Michener summed up what women should not do, commenting, “whenever I read that a million American tourists are travelling to this country or that, I shudder. I see each of them galloping through markets and bazaars, buying God knows what, and shouting to each other, ‘here’s a lovely present for Aunt Bessie.’”\textsuperscript{172}

\textsuperscript{167}Travel Editor, “When in Rome…Do as the Romans Do (or the Venetians or the Parisians),” \textit{Harper’s Bazaar}, Volume 84, Number 2863, June 1950, p. 47.

\textsuperscript{168} \textit{Ibid.}


\textsuperscript{170} Travel Editor, “Gossipy Memo on Travel,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 128, 15 October 1956, p. 112.

\textsuperscript{171} Social Editor, “People are Talking About,” \textit{Vogue}, Volume 128, 1 November 1956; p. 111.

The news was not all bad, though, and many Europeans liked Americans very well, if they disliked the country’s newly powerful position, indicating that tourists might be successfully changing European impressions of Americans. Jacqueline Kennedy’s 1961 visit to Queen Elizabeth helped improve not just her own but also the Queen’s image in Britain as a loving mother at a time she was under attack for being too cold. The two mothers shared a common bond in attempting to shield their children from the spotlight. Almost seventy-five percent of the television viewing public saw Kennedy’s February 1962 televised tour of the White House, which went far to improve America’s cultural image in the eyes of the world. Aside from culture, within the United States, author P.G. Wodehouse especially admired postwar changes within the population in the States that they brought with them when traveling overseas. He “thought if he were returning to New York…after a lengthy absence and was asked by reporters what changes he had noticed since his last visit,” Wodehouse “would single out for special mention the extraordinary improvement…in the manners of the populace.” Wodehouse saw the “new courtesy everywhere,” even in “criminals and boxers,” attributing it possibly to “the advice on deportment in the daily papers that has brought about this change for the better.”

In addition to manners, Europeans especially admired American style and looks, indicating that magazine’s lessons on cosmetics and dress might be working a certain

175 Ibid.
amount of magic. According to a *Vogue* beauty editor, “if American women could be summed up in a single look, it would probably be like this: lean, scrubbed, shrug of the shoulder chic, living with more dash than any other woman in the world,” with “a trait of character evolved from a continuing subconscious search to understand another point of view.” The look was so popular, in fact, that “Parisians suddenly embraced the scrubbed-American look,” with an “effect that was international, and dazzling.”

American women had an “elegance uncorrupted by opulence, combined with free and easy ways,” as well as an eagerness to talk about the faraway world of the East and Europe.

Cultural exports like jazz served as an additional “lively example of the kind of American export Europeans loved Americans for,” because it symbolized an openness to new attitudes and ideas. According to magazine writers, Europeans loved American qualities like “breadth of mind,” “confidence in the future,” their kindness and considerateness and lack of pretense or mystery. In the same vein, British students studying in the United States reportedly liked Americans’ rationalism, practicality and hopefulness. Women seemingly made a favorable impression on British travelers

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because they were “more intelligent (that women in Europe),” “equal to men,” and more interested in the arts.\textsuperscript{182} Author Cyril Connolly, who used to “love escaping from American tourists” when he was young, had a change of heart by the early 1950s, when he wrote an article in praise of the United States.\textsuperscript{183} When he was young, Connolly described American tourists just “another Buick-load…with Poppa, Mamma, Lois, and Junior, and their cameras, dark glasses, airplane luggage, and dust coats,” before he made the connection between American tourists and money for the British economy.\textsuperscript{184} Afterward, when he began getting to know Americans, Connolly realized that they “contributed so much more generously” than even he did “to the revenues of the countries he loved.”\textsuperscript{185} Connolly was mostly worried about Americanization, but decided even that was a positive development; “something to go through, like nationalism, in order to find something better, as so many Americans were trying to do.”\textsuperscript{186}

Celebrating Americanization and cultural exchange rather than lamenting the development, Vogue’s editor-in-chief ran a piece charting out the “French/American Swaps,” in the language, art, and music that had influenced each other throughout the 1950s, hailing cultural exchange as a positive event.\textsuperscript{187} If they were worried about these

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\item[184] \textit{Ibid}.
\item[186] \textit{Ibid}.
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developments, Europeans (according to Vogue’s writers) simply needed to be more rigorous about letting only the good from America into their country. Interestingly, Connolly felt that Americans criticized themselves about Americanization far too much, and that Europeans were to blame for the trend in the first place, because they had started all the wars bringing it about. But after all was said and done and despite concerns of cultural domination, the French still liked the fact that America was “modern, optimistic, and for what was right,” as well as an “international melting pot.”

Concurrently, Vogue published pieces counseling readers to discard common misconceptions about other nations when traveling. Film critic André Maurois warned that if the British seemed “closed and reluctant to express emotions or satirical and dry,” those qualities were a part of their culture, and readers should dig deeper to find out about the personalities behind the stereotype. Maurois also made sure to let readers know that not all French were “poetically sensual,” with a “love of perfection,” or that not all Russians were “propagandistic and functional.” Tutoring in behavior even reached to the embassy level, when Vogue’s social editor compared the American and Soviet embassies, and the Americans came up lacking. Ambassadors did not have the salary to entertain appropriately, giving them an “image of uncaring about human relationships,” which could be rectified if Congressmen did not shut their eyes against the blaze of

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190 Ibid.
191 Ibid.
Soviet gold plate” at their lavish embassy, or if Americans began facing the “expensive facts of diplomatic life.”¹⁹²

In the end, the glamorous Kennedys may have solved the cultural conundrum. Jacqueline Kennedy was probably the best example of an American woman who combined beautiful manners, exquisite style, and culture with diplomatic acumen. During her husband’s first year in office, the couple traveled to Paris on a state visit to discuss the French nuclear weapons program. Although President de Gaulle refused to back down on his hard line stance, the First Lady personally enchanted him. De Gaulle’s Minister of Culture, André Malraux, was similarly smitten, even going so far as to offer the Mona Lisa for loan to the Washington National Gallery. Malraux visited the Kennedys on an official trip in May 1962, and was honored at an enormously successful state dinner that went far to improve Franco-American relations. According to author Margaret Leslie Davis, who chronicled the visit and subsequent painting loan, “the gathering of the most accomplished men and women of the American cultural scene not only underscored the Kennedys’ support for the arts, but also demonstrated how adept Jackie was at employing the arts” to improve relations between the two nations.¹⁹³

The Mona Lisa’s 1963 exhibition at the National Gallery was so successful it began a craze for all things artistic dubbed “Mona Mania” and cemented at least a solid cultural relationship between the United States and France. Jacqueline Kennedy and


women like her “represented all at once not a negation of the country but a possible fulfillment of it…that America could achieve a dream of civilization and beauty” to put the nation on par with the most civilized countries in Europe.\(^{194}\) After her success, that she and her sister Lee Radziwill were appointed to visit India on behalf of the United States could be no coincidence. That Susan Mary Patten and Marietta Tree also worked their way into more official roles as informal cultural diplomats also attests to the influence of style and manners as methods toward building better international relationships.

**Conclusion**

In a variety of ways, then, such as understanding world affairs, exhibiting good behavior overseas, and being a good partner or hostess, fashion magazines suggested that women subtly could influence international affairs in the immediate postwar era. Magazines during the first years of the Cold War swiftly shifted gears from advising wartime work and issuing wartime progress reports to urging readers like Susan Mary Alsop, Marietta Peabody Tree, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, and Lee Radziwill to form new personae as educated, active, and interested informal foreign policy workers. These four, at least, fulfilled and even exceeded magazine contributors’ expectations, going far to improve relations on a small, personal level, with key diplomatic players in Europe. Throughout Susan Mary Patten’s marriage, she was a skilled hostess and political thinker, charming the French public and British leaders like Winston Churchill and Ambassador Duff-Cooper alike. Marietta Tree lived in Great Britain, overcoming a controversial

marriage to become one of London’s most celebrated hostesses, befriending Winston Churchill and supporting Adlai Stevenson for his liberal, internationalist leanings. Tree worked on both his campaigns, becoming such a valued confidante and advisor she was ultimately appointed as a representative to the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Ultimately, she became “one of the best-known and most admired women in public life in the United States.”

Tree served as Member of the Board of Commissioners of the New York City Commission of Human Rights from 1959 to 1961; United States Representative to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, United States Delegation to the United Nations from 1961 to 1964, and as United States Representative to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations with the rank of Ambassador from 1964 to 1965.

Lee Radziwill, after her marriage to Prince Stanislas Radziwill, was a style icon of international renown, accompanying her sister on her goodwill tour of India. Later, she brought together in her social set such diverse personalities as dancer Rudolf Nureyev and shipping magnate Stavros Niarchos to help create what today is termed a “jet-set” of international movers and shakers. From then on, informal cultural diplomacy was formalized, even if not all of its practitioners had official positions or titles.

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196 Ibid.
CONCLUSION

“The Paris couture has ratified the EDC: E for elegance, D for distinction, and C for charm. The program for winter has been drawn up by the French fashion designers with fashionable women as treaty partners.” -- Nora W. Roberts, Fashion Editor, The St. Petersburg (FL) Times, 4 October 1954.1

In her depiction of women as Franco-American “treaty partners” through fashion, the fashion editor for The Saint Petersburg Times, although appealing to a more mass readership, seemed to echo a message often aimed at another, more rarified audience. High fashion magazines like Vogue and Harper’s Bazaar, among other “class” targeted publications, presented upper class (and other) female readers a number of social roles they might fulfill to help fight the developing Cold War. Whether readers were wives helping husbands’ careers, mothers raising internationally-minded, well-mannered children, volunteer and paid workers, or possibly even unacknowledged “treaty partners,” magazine writers believed that upper class women held the potential to influence the course of international relations on a personal level as informal cultural diplomats.

The manner (and the motivations behind the manner) in which American middle class women or upper class men were expected to behave during the Cold War is extensively studied. Upper class counterparts to both groups, however, also played a

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specific part in advancing American interests during the Cold War. This close study of
magazines aimed at their class provides clues about how women fulfilled and shaped
their prescribed postwar roles. Indeed, a belief in women’s duty to act as informal
cultural diplomats during the Cold War may have been a determining factor in most
ditorial and publication decisions. The myriad foreign policy articles in upper class
women’s fashion magazines offered in-depth coverage of world affairs from top
government officials, literary figures, and news writers in political hot spots. The
message those articles sent out was clear, consistent, and marked by high expectations for
readers to remain culturally aware, educated, and broad-minded. Magazine staff felt
women should have an in-depth knowledge of the news in Allied (and former or newly
allied) nations, and then use that knowledge abroad to help create a favorable image of
Americans. If women presented themselves as cultured, refined, and elegant, their
behavior might go far to counteract the “ugly American” stereotype. Then, if Europeans
took a better view of upper class women, they might, in editors’ eyes, be more inclined to
see all Americans as potential friends in the new Cold War world. Since they had the
money and leisure time to travel, upper class women in particular may have had
exceptional pressure to behave well overseas; while their middle class counterparts were
fighting the Cold War in a certain fashion at home, some forms of media could have been
an encouraging force behind upper class women taking the battle abroad. Because writers
and editors at both magazines were also drawn from their actual readerships, upper class
American women may actually have had a role in placing pressure on themselves to act
as informal cultural diplomats. As editors, they helped create or interpret social mores for
their own group, and as readers, may have accepted prescribed roles and shaped them to fit their own needs and beliefs.

Certainly, such was the case for Susan Mary Patten Alsop, Marietta Peabody Fitzgerald Tree, Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, and Lee Radziwill, all of whom strongly believed they could help smooth international affairs in a small way on a personal level. Each of these four women not only read the messages fashion magazines like *Vogue* and *Harper’s Bazaar* printed, they also helped advance certain social, or at least media, expectations for their own class (and women of other classes). Each modeled and wrote a variety of articles for both magazines, and their lives were in turn chronicled in social pages or fashion spreads. They lived up to, but also shaped, editorial calls for upper class readers to understand international affairs, promote the economies of key political allies, and behave well overseas. Admittedly, because neither magazine printed letters to the editor, it is difficult to determine to any exact degree how readers felt about their staffs’ editorial agendas. There seems, however, to be a link between what at least these four women believed, and the role for women fashion magazines promoted within their pages throughout the 1950s.

Even if their motives were unclear or unintentional, Patten, Tree, Kennedy, and Radziwill were excellent role models of informal cultural diplomacy for women inside and outside their class. The four were married to men with varying degrees of government or diplomatic power and actively worked for causes they supported using whatever means were available – most often, marriage or volunteer work. An advocate for a strong U.S./European alliance throughout her first husband’s career, Susan Mary
Patten went on after his death to marry the newspaper columnist Joseph Alsop and even gain the John F. Kennedy’s confidence as his favorite hostess. Indeed, hers was the only private home he and his wife visited after his inauguration balls, and the Alsops’ dinners gathered the most powerful men in the nation together around the table. Marietta Tree was a top aide in both of Adlai Stevenson’s presidential bids, and went on to work as a representative to the United Nations, all while serving on the boards of a variety of civic programs promoting social justice and creating a New York home that was a meeting place for key government players. Jacqueline Kennedy, of course, had access to the highest reaches of power through her husband’s position, and she used her interest in art, language skills, and culture to become an “official” informal cultural diplomat during her term as First Lady. Kennedy achieved particular success helping smooth relations with the French, but was even able to charm Khrushchev where even her husband was singularly unsuccessful at getting along with the leader. Her sister Lee Radziwill never held a formal government role, but campaigned during her brother-in-law’s presidential bid, was an activist, and of course, helped promote a good image of Americans, beginning with her very first trip abroad.

The four, along with other upper class compatriots, acted as informal cultural diplomats in specific and similar fashions. They were actively engaged in learning about foreign affairs and worked to promote their beliefs when traveling, writing friends, helping husbands’ careers, at work, or even shopping. The four felt a conscious need to help stimulate the postwar economies of Allied nations, typically through purchasing luxury goods like French, British, or Italian fashion, textiles and perfume. Susan Mary
Alsop, for example, modeled for the couture houses of Balmain and Dior, and Jacqueline Kennedy’s fashion choices (generally French), were almost obsessively chronicled in fashion magazines. Each was careful when traveling to represent Americans well by being elegantly and appropriately dressed, intelligent while speaking, multilingual, and raising internationally aware children. Most importantly, women like Alsop, Tree, Kennedy, and Radziwill were popular inside and out of their social circles – they became fashion icons, were well known fixtures of the social pages, and had their lives covered in detail in photographs, articles, and fashion features. Other women might recognize these four in fashion magazines and be spurred to follow their lead.

Expectations for upper class women acting as informal cultural diplomats were quite clearly outlined in the plethora of magazine articles devoted to the subject. What is not immediately evident, though, is how, or if, readers took media messages to heart and acted on them. Personal letters and papers give a good indication that at least these four women were aware of, and accepted a duty to represent well Americans overseas in the interests of Cold War foreign policy. Their own actions attest more strongly to the fact that the group and presumably by extension, their upper class counterparts, felt promoting American interests through action was of paramount importance. That idea may have been driven by magazine articles, or editors may simply have been chronicling and reflecting an already existing movement. Regardless of which is true, foreign policy coverage in fashion magazines is valuable at helping flesh out and trace the development of the evolving roles of all women during the Cold War.
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The majority of magazine articles I used were drawn from:


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