

Clare Boothe Luce's Crusade through the North-Atlantic Landscape: American  
Foreign Relations Shaping a Religious Cold War

by

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## Introduction

On April the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1953, Clare Boothe Luce (CBL) arrived at the Palazzo Piombino Margherita in Rome. Awaiting a meeting with Luigi Einaudi, the President of Italy, which would mark the official commencement of her career as a U.S. Ambassador, Luce did not hesitate to introduce herself to her future employees, which in total consisted of five hundred staff members present at the Palazzo, and a thousand more stationed around the rest of the country. Afterwards, she started decorating her corner office. Centrally positioned on her desk, the famous battle-prayer of English military commander Lord Jacob Astley conveyed a glimpse of her personal beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

*O, Lord! Thou knowest how busy I must be this day*

*If I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me<sup>2</sup>*

Right next to this prayer, French diplomat Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand's quote and advice to beginning diplomats "Et surtout, point de Zèle", which literally translates to "And above all, not the slightest zeal", would have contrasted with Astley's prayer. Yet, she framed her own, loosely translated version instead: "Above all, not too much zeal". Clare's spiritual alignment with the Catholic faith could appear to be a trivial detail of her private life.

However, as Morris, her biographer states, "religion was already impinging on her political thought" a decade earlier during her time as a congress woman for the Republican Party.<sup>3</sup>

Luce's ambassadorship came at a critical moment in U.S. history. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the U.S. arose as a dominant power, but was rapidly

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, Sylvia. *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*. New York: Random House, 2014: 333.

<sup>2</sup> "Astley's Prayer", Studio88.

<sup>3</sup> Morris, 153.

confronted with the opposing geopolitical influence of the Soviet Union.<sup>4</sup> The assertive discourse of ‘The American Century’, derived from an article written by Henry Luce in 1941, Clare’s husband and founder of *Time* and *Life* magazines, was contested by communist ideology. Luce’s notion that opportunity and prosperity would be centralized and globally dispersed by the U.S. through democratic values or “American principles”, was limited by the increased military strength of the Soviet Union.<sup>5 6</sup> Hence, the U.S. Foreign Service was uncertain to which extent the Soviet’s substantial military presence in Europe would be used to enforce communist ideology.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, a post-war communist sphere of influence out of the Soviet Union would become the most significant challenge to U.S. dominance, and American efforts of cultural ‘image’ promotion arose. The Roosevelt administration had already altered the Foreign Service by incorporating a ‘Committee on Cooperation with the American Republics’ within a newly established Division of ‘Cultural Relations’ during the 1930’s ‘Good Neighbor Policy’ in Latin America.<sup>8</sup> However, only since the early 1950’s, multiple drastic changes signified a shift in diplomacy. After the implementation of the European Recovery Program between 1948 and 1952, the Eisenhower administration expected cooperation from allied nations in pursuing a political pushback of communist parties, which had become more popular in countries like Italy and France, and began investing in tactics of ‘soft war’ in Europe, in order to halt this insurgence of communism<sup>9</sup>. Herzog argues that a post-World War

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<sup>4</sup> Cardwell, Curt. *NSC 68 and the Political Economy of the Early Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011: 29.

<sup>5</sup> Luce, Henry R. “The American Century”, *Society* 31, 1994.

<sup>6</sup> Cardwell, 29.

<sup>7</sup> Dizard, Wilson P. *Inventing Public Diplomacy : The Story of the U.S. Information Agency* (2004): 40.

<sup>8</sup> Cherrington, Ben M. "The Division of Cultural Relations." *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1939): 137.

<sup>9</sup> Brogi, Alessandro. *Confronting America : The Cold War between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy*. New Cold War History (2011), 151; Brogi, Alessandro. "Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce and the Evolution of Psychological Warfare in Italy." *Cold War History* 12, no. 2 (2012), 280.

II era of modern communication required more complex persuasion of both domestic and international support: thus, “carefully managed use of government rhetoric and corporate resources to stimulate a religious revival in the late 1940s and 1950s” was used in a ‘spiritual-industrial complex’ (SIC), in order to enhance a cultural contrast between the U.S. and a non-religious communist ideology.<sup>10</sup> To what extent was Clare Boothe Luce, politician and ambassador in this timeframe, involved in the promotion of this contrast? Nuti, who studied Italian politics and the influence of U.S. Foreign Policy from 1953 to 1963, briefly discusses the ambassadorial reputation of Clare, and he points out that the controversial ambassadorial decision-making of Luce has mostly been connected to her personal unpredictability, as he states: “The question that the historiography of this period has failed to address is whether her political choices were the product of her own whims and of makeshift decisions, or of the precise implementation of the strategic guidelines approved in Washington by the Eisenhower administration.”<sup>11</sup>

This thesis, will examine Luce’s personal “makeshift decisions” and political “implementation of strategic guidelines” in the context of Herzog’s SIC: a revival of the divine as a collective and government installed effort. To what extent did Luce act as a ‘producer’ and ‘product’ within a top-down application of religious policy? I argue that religion, and more specifically, the spiritual-industrial complex was not only a crucial aspect of Clare Boothe Luce’s political career within the U.S. Congress and U.S. Foreign Service, it serves as a reflection of the role of Christianity and more specifically, Catholicism, during the early Cold War. It therefore not only intertwined with political motivation and policy, especially during the 1950’s, it also trumped gendered limitations on female diplomatic

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<sup>10</sup> Herzog, Jonathan. "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex and the Policy of Revival in the Early Cold War." *Journal of Policy History* : JPH 22, no. 3, 2010, 338.

<sup>11</sup> Nuti, 39.

careers in selecting her for the position of ambassador. Hence, this analysis will add to previous historiographical research, exploring Luce's background, congressional career and conversion in the 1940's, and her ambassadorial term in Italy from 1953 until 1956 as a case study of covert foreign policy adoption, through the lens of a thorough conceptualization of the spiritual dogma within U.S. diplomacy.

Only in 2013, the State Department established the Office of Religion and Global Affairs (RGA), with the intention of creating more tolerance within diplomacy for the weight of spiritual thought on political, social and bureaucratic spheres in other countries. The understanding of religion and its embedded implications on social and individual motivations within culture remains vital and causes grave conflict when undervalued or misunderstood. However, during the Trump administration, the budget for the RGA had been cut, and Casey warns that within the past few years "the State Department has sidelined religion's role in diplomacy".<sup>12</sup> Hence, the RGA, which was the only governmental initiative next to the Office of International Religious Freedom, dating back to 1998, to explicitly include religious diversity into international relations, has been dismantled within the last 5 years. Therefore, while the impact of spirituality on political policymaking within diplomacy has both been underestimated in academic research and the actual Foreign Service, a comprehensive analysis of this field of study remains urgent.

In order to approach this subject, a constructivist framework will be applied. Within the context of diplomatic history, this methodological viewpoint begins from the notion that foreign policy enacted out of 'national interest' and 'security' is shaped by cultural constructs that, according to Herzog, formed a 'spiritual-industrial complex'. Furthermore, utilizing Geertz' framework, religion here acts both as a product and producer of culture, "because,

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<sup>12</sup> Casey, Shaun. "How the State Department Has Side-lined Religion's Role in Diplomacy" *Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs*, 2017.

like environment, political power, wealth, jural obligation, personal affection, and a sense of beauty, it shapes it.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the rhetoric of spiritual thought becomes a template of society. This thesis will also build on what Preston describes as ‘the manifestation of belief’ that stimulates both reason and emotion, and which can be found in the seemingly secularist decision-making of policy through analysis of religious motivation.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, a thorough examination of primary-source material is essential. The exemplification of covert religious rhetoric within foreign policy will be observed through an in-depth study of Clare Boothe Luce’s political career, and more specifically, both her term as a Republican Representative to Congress and her subsequent ambassadorship in Italy. Both as a writer and politician, Luce has produced articles, telegrams to Eisenhower and other politicians, speeches and interviews, and a book about her travels through Europe during WWII, “European Spring”. The Association for Diplomatic Studies & Training and The U.S. Department of State’ Office of the Historian, will be consulted as databases for her communication with the Eisenhower administration, and her congressional and diplomatic speeches and interviews will be retrieved from the academic libraries of Leiden University and the University of Antwerp.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, her own article about her conversion to Catholicism, “The Real Reason”, and the state of the Italian political landscape and ambassadorial speeches and interviews where she warns about the implications of an anti-communist absence of faith will be examined. Here, especially her texts “Italy in 1955”, and “Rome Remembered” will be consolidated in order to answer the question of this thesis: how did Luce’s ambassadorship to Italy in 1953 reflect a ‘spiritual-industrial complex’ in U.S.

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<sup>13</sup> Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973: 212.

<sup>14</sup> Preston, 294.

<sup>15</sup> Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952–1954, Western Europe and Canada, Volume VI, Part 2 - Office of the Historian; <https://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Luce,%20Clare%20Boothe.toc.pdf>;



diplomacy during the Cold War, and did her subsequent diplomatic decisions enable a strategic religious interpretation of democracy?<sup>16</sup>

In three chapters, sub-themes will form a thesis that examines public diplomacy, religion and the position of Luce within the early post-war period. Firstly, a theoretical framework is constructed that combines academic writings on U.S. Diplomacy, religion and gender during the Cold War. These will be employed to explain the position of communism within the USSR and Catholicism within U.S. history, and its impact on U.S. diplomacy. Secondly, a religious revival, will be linked to propaganda efforts domestically and abroad, and I argue that a spiritual-industrial complex was utilized by the Eisenhower administration in an effort to counter Soviet dominance during the 1950's. In the final chapter, this thesis illustrates how Clare Boothe Luce's personal background and beliefs fitted into the Eisenhower administration as a vital contribution to anti-communist rhetoric. Lastly, her subsequent ambassadorial career in Italy will be researched through primary sources, in order to understand her role in an American political 'crusade' of Christian democracy, and to what extent she contributed to utilizing "the sacred to legitimize the secular". The case study of Luce is divided in three chapters, first exploring her political shift from Rooseveltian liberalism to Republicanism. Then, I will examine Luce's congressional career and what led to her religious conversion. I argue that her Catholic beliefs made her a valuable contributor to Eisenhower's SIC. The final section analyses Luce's ambassadorial career, and concludes that in Italy, she actively promoted a SIC in her rhetoric.<sup>17</sup>

Although this thesis consists of extensive web-research, a full-scale review of Clare Boothe Luce's case study has been constrained by the timeframe in which this subject has

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<sup>16</sup> Luce, Clare Boothe. "The Ambassadorial Issue: Professionals or Amateurs?" *Foreign Affairs* (New York, N.Y.) 36, no. 1 (1957): 105-21.; Luce, Clare Boothe. "Italy in 1955" *Vital Speeches of the Day* 21, no 10 (March 1955): 1070.;

<sup>17</sup> Herzog, 358.

been examined. Under the current circumstances, where a global pandemic has caused extensive travel restrictions, visitation to and observation of some archival material had been drastically hindered. Nonetheless, the digital availability of Luce's writings, speeches and interviews is wide-ranging, and thus, for this paper I have had access to a substantial amount of primary-source material in order to produce coherent and adequate conclusions.

## Chapter 1

### *Clashing Ideologies: The Cold War and Religion*

In order to examine the Cold War, U.S. public diplomacy in Europe, and religion, and build a cohesive theoretical framework, this chapter will first provide a historical setting. It is valuable to discuss both Soviet and U.S. ideology and elaborate on their efforts to promote their political vision to society, in order to, subsequently, build a cohesive academic framework. When the Cold War ended, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union started investing in their public image, in a hegemonical stride for political power. Thus, I will examine both ideologies, and how they are contextualized in a post-WWII Europe. Hence, this chapter first provides a historical context of the Soviet discourse and U.S. culture promotion. Secondly, I will analyze existing scholarly research on U.S. public diplomacy, and I argue that religion has remained understudied in this field of research. I will examine the existing research that scholars have provided on the topic on religion, and I will build the framework for this thesis, based on the writings of Geertz, Preston and Herzog. Lastly, I discuss the research on Clare Boothe Luce, the case study of this thesis, and I clarify how the case study will be positioned within the theoretical framework.

Scholars have, in recent years, examined Soviet tensions and communist culture in Europe extensively. Lazar explains how a coherent political ideology was the pillar that would enhance and extend Marxian-inspired communist culture in Europe.<sup>18</sup> Thus, it was crucial to emphasize on American hegemonical tendencies in the form of post-war imperialism, and to create a narrative that condemned a capitalist economy, and protected

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<sup>18</sup> Lazar in Scott-Smith, Giles, and Krabbendam, Hans. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960*. Cass Series. 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX 14 4RN: Frank Cass Publishers (2005): 178.

nationalism.<sup>19</sup> Here, propaganda is the ‘means of distribution’ that enforces the notion that the USSR is the central governing body of a newly constructed form of communism: the Soviet Union drifts away from a historic class struggle shaped and dominated by the ‘bourgeoisie’ and overruled by the working class or ‘proletariat’. Rather, it claims to be the “sole depository of the historical mission earlier attributed to the proletariat”.<sup>20</sup> The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) then becomes the fundamental core of decision-making through ‘democratic centralism’. While Lenin had previously, in 1921, implemented this juxtaposing concept, where open discussion and voting was allowed within the party, but unity had to be preserved and thus, absolute control of and discipline within the party was necessary. During Stalin’s rule, more weight was put on the ‘centralist’ side, and the CPSU evolved to become a ‘supervisor’ over communist parties all over Europe and Asia. Between 1936 and 1938, during ‘the Great Purge’, every type of counter-revolution was suppressed through surveillance, killings of government officials and ethnic cleansings of civilians.<sup>21</sup> After this purge and post-WWII, it was stressed that American imperialism would, similar to the previous British Empire, only evoke war and poverty, and that ‘confrontation communism’ was required, where ideology needed to be overtly propagated in all facets of society, especially culturally.<sup>22</sup> Here, during Stalin’s regime, democratic centralism, as Boer stresses, became sacred, and the CPSU became a symbolic party, where ‘proleptic communism’ arose as a cultural myth, “pushing out of the stage of communism into an ever more distant future, so much so that it gains near mythical status.”<sup>23</sup>

Originally, this concept is derived from Christian theology, where the Parousia,

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Raymond Aron in Scott-Smith, Giles, and Krabbendam, Hans. *The Cultural Cold War in Western Europe, 1945-1960*. (2005): 178.

<sup>21</sup> Boer, Roland. "Stalin and Proleptic Communism." *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 17, no. 2-3 (2016): 164.

<sup>22</sup> Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, 179.

<sup>23</sup> Boer, 164.

Christ's return to living earth, was postponed, as Christ had a sense of predestination and was not rushed to come back to human life: knowing his future plans truly and fully made them already true and alive in the present.<sup>24</sup> Proleptic eschatology, the study of final destiny, thus is based on this notion, where the 'anticipated future' becomes a way of experiencing current events.<sup>25</sup> In Stalin's Russia, it was therefore crucial to create a proleptic idea of utopian communism, that could compete with orthodox and catholic religion within and outside of the Soviet Union, and with spiritual faith in a broader context.<sup>26</sup> "Religion was at a disadvantage in relation to Soviet Marxism: the latter possessed a means of coercion in the form of the Soviet government."<sup>27</sup> Domestically, Stalin had first ordered to dissolve religious organizations, and execute its leaders, during the 1930's. However, during and after WWII, he recognized the importance of maintaining cordial connections to the church, as religion did not disappear but rather became a covert experience within the Soviet Union, and was also still very present in other European nations. The Soviet Union was aware of the ideological barriers that anti-religious government proceedings would cause in Eastern Europe, where the Orthodox church was very active. Hence, in 1943, as the USSR was military and ideologically expanding territory to Eastern Europe, a 'concordat' was officialized between the Soviet government and the Orthodox church.

Additionally, Stalin's vision extended to the concept of a 'Vatican of Moscow', where bilateral alignment to Orthodox believes would evolve into asset that would enhance soft power control: "Through Orthodox parishes that existed in numerous countries, Stalin envisaged the expansion of Soviet influence throughout much of the world."<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Kuromiya, Hiroaki. "Stalin, Religion, and the Adventists of Bila Tserkva." In *Conscience on Trial*, 34-57. Toronto: University of Toronto Press (2017): 35.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Kuromiya, 37.

exercising similar forceful influence outside of the Soviet state remained challenging. Although Stalin's expansionist perspective, involving close ties to spiritual leaders, quickly intensified communist domination in countries such as Ukraine or Georgia, many other countries in Western Europe had established longstanding and deep-rooted Catholic traditions.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, the Marshall Plan in 1947 was seen as a direct anti-communist threat by the USSR: "Stalin regarded the entire operation as an aggressive effort to seal off Western Europe from Soviet influence and he declined involvement and pressured Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe to do the same."<sup>30</sup>

Thus, through the Marshall Plan, The U.S. had forced the Soviet Union into a stand-off between ideologies. Hart argues that the Marshall Plan, also known as the European Reconstruction Program (ERP), was also the first clear example of a 'public' diplomacy strategy. Between 1948 and 1952, the U.S. provided uninterrupted financial support, food supply and raw materials into Western European countries in order to decrease and stabilize the post-war debt and revive the economic market. Hart stresses that, following Kennan's telegram of 1946, this 13 billion dollar aid package could be considered the first concrete measure of foreign policy under the Truman Doctrine enacted out of fear for communist expansion, and out of a conscious decision to ideologically influence European nations.<sup>31</sup> Italy, France Austria and Greece received the most extensive ERP recourses, and the U.S. rapidly became an 'empire of production', as the largest economic driver of Italy and France at that time. The ERP "contributed 1.3 percentage points to Italy's 5.9 percent annual GDP

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<sup>29</sup> Scott-Smith and Krabbendam, 177.

<sup>30</sup> Hart, Justin. *Empire of Ideas: The Origins of Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press (2013): 125.

<sup>31</sup> Hart, 123.

growth rate during the 1950's".<sup>32</sup> Hart adds that U.S. economic involvement for 'fair trade' and 'open market' policy was strategically positioned and excessively exercised in regions where communist parties had grown in popularity.<sup>33</sup> In France and Italy, the two countries with the most prominent communist parties in Western Europe, the U.S. invested in propagating the Marshall Plan to the public via 'documentaries' about new technology and high levels of production in America, portrayed as a 'prospering' capitalist society.<sup>34</sup> Also in Greece, a country that severely suffered from poverty in the post-war years, was in need of financial recovery, the U.S. had very specific reasons to account for 25% of Greece's GNP, and stimulate 67% of Greek import products.<sup>35</sup> This period of aid between 1947 and 1949 overlapped with the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), which was fought between the Democratic Army of Greece, a military subdivision of the Greek communist party, and the Greek government.<sup>36</sup>

Zachariou stresses that this extensive involvement exemplifies U.S. self-interest, executed through diplomatic recourses, as the Economic Cooperation Administration and the U.S. embassy used the "threat of aid reduction" in order to steer the government in Greece towards aligning with American intervention strategies and military decisions. Thus, through economic resource control, "Marshall Planners unwittingly planted the seeds of anti-Americanism."<sup>37</sup> In these countries such as Greece, Italy and France where the ERP was heavily implemented, criticism towards American dominance grew, and both socialist and

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<sup>32</sup> Giorcelli, Michela. "Infrastructure, Development and the Marshall Plan", *UCLA Economics*, July 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. Retrieved on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020. < <https://economics.ucla.edu/2020/07/01/infrastructure-development-and-the-marshall-plan/>>

<sup>33</sup> Hart, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Ellwood, David. "The Propaganda of the Marshall Plan in Italy in a Cold War Context." *Intelligence and National Security* 18, no. 2 (2003): 226.

<sup>35</sup> Zachariou, Stelios. "Implementing the Marshall Plan in Greece: Balancing Reconstruction and Geopolitical Security." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27, no. 2 (2009): 307.

<sup>36</sup> Botsiou, Konstantina. "New Policies, Old Politics: American Concepts of Reform in Marshall Plan Greece." *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 27, no. 2 (2009): 212.

<sup>37</sup> Zachariou, 309.

communist parties gained wide-spread attraction.<sup>38</sup>

Hence, a consistent soft power approach became the main concern within U.S. Foreign Affairs in Europe, in order to outbalance Soviet recourses and cultural influence. “America harnessed the power of culture as the stealth weapon against the U.S. enemy.”<sup>39</sup> During the late 1940’s, diplomats overseas thus began to promote an ‘American way of life’. In combination with economic pressure through aid support, U.S. diplomacy had the new task of creating a cohesive narrative that would not only uphold itself against contradictories, it would have to steer away from any forceful, imperialistic trait: the ‘soft power’-effect of international persuasion of an American cultural discourse could not be controlled or directly propagated by individual state actors. The successful spread of one nation’s socio-cultural values is depending on how other nations willfully relate to, and find commonalities within underlying ideology.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, one’s nations values are only attractive if they are not pressured onto other societies. Prior to the Cold War, the U.S. had never directly pursued the fostering of an external image, and van Ham notes that ‘public diplomacy’ post-1945 evolved into a critical instrument, “which generates legitimacy and acknowledges that in our globalized world, the state has lost its monopoly on the processing and diffusion of information”.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, U.S. officials were immediately confronted with the notion that soft power implementation would become extremely complicated to manage: sympathy, further leading to a nation’s political alignment with American foreign policy, required the establishment of a cultural perception that could be malleable to different circumstances,

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<sup>38</sup> Ellwood, 226.

<sup>39</sup> Schneider, Cynthia P. “Culture Communicates: US Diplomacy That Works”, 151, in Melissen, Jan. *Wielding Soft Power : The New Public Diplomacy*. Clingendael Diplomacy Papers ; No. 2 275374556. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2005.

<sup>40</sup> Hart, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Van Ham, Peter. “Power, Public Diplomacy and the Pax Americana”, 57, in in Melissen, Jan. *Wielding Soft Power : The New Public Diplomacy*. Clingendael Diplomacy Papers ; No. 2 275374556. The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2005.



ethnicities, countries or traditions. Already during the ERP, and prior to the 1950's, the U.S. had influenced the Western European region, as American movies and theatre, music and literature were becoming a flourishing industry in post-war Europe.<sup>42</sup> As Ellwood argues, European audiences were attracted to the storytelling of American art, and especially cinema is a valuable academic source, reflecting the demand and 'appropriation process' of non-American viewers.<sup>43</sup> Harlan Cleveland, policymaker for the ERP, coined the 'revolution of expectations', as a socio-economic model where films and other technological advances would lead to mass demand and supply of modernization, and henceforth, would result in "awakening elites and masses alike, to the universal significance of the connection Americans made between prosperity and democracy".<sup>44</sup> About Italy especially, U.S. diplomats and journalists spoke not of a communist takeover, but shifted the conversation to inspiring the country to foster its own, independent form of democratic capitalism, as it was in 'desperate need' of a system that would enhance low-income consumer spending.<sup>45</sup>

Still, the U.S. 'way of life' received criticism in countries such as Italy and France: Hollywoodian narratives, frequently displaying poverty, suffrage, and other downsides of modernity, "thematically, did not exactly offer a ringing endorsement of the American system, and U.S. officials worried that it would send the wrong message to places like Western Europe."<sup>46</sup> With regards to cinema, the State Department's Motion Picture Division was involved in selecting and approving which films were allowed to be showed abroad.<sup>47</sup> Contrastingly, in some instances, prologues were made to be added to existing motion pictures, wherein it was justified to viewers that America's democracy was free to the extend that it acknowledged artistic critique, even within its own borders. Hart claims that U.S.

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<sup>42</sup> Ellwood, 225.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 226.

<sup>45</sup> Van Ham, 58.

<sup>46</sup> Hart, 138.

<sup>47</sup> Hart, 139.

diplomacy in the late 1940s became heavily fixated on, or “reduced to”, the practice of monitoring studio productions and distribution. Even though this required time-consuming efforts from the State Department, the results were often unsatisfactory: through increased mass communication, which rapidly intertwined media across peripheries, the popularity of American arts had already reached to a point of excessive demand in Europe, and censorship of domestic material would contradict the messaging of creating an international open and democratic market.<sup>48</sup>

Approaching the 1950’s, and for the first time in U.S. history, it became hard to imagine U.S. Foreign Affairs without a focus on public persuasion: “public diplomacy and promotion of culture were in fact closely connected and served similar purposes”.<sup>49</sup> Wolfe states that ‘the science of persuasion’ was essential within in U.S. foreign relations, portraying an image of “empiricism, objectivity, a commitment to pure research and internationalism”.<sup>50</sup> What Melissen describes as ‘citizen diplomacy’, entailed the conversion of non-officials, lower-income citizens who were not directly involved in politics, to ‘individualism’ and ‘market-oriented thinking’.<sup>51</sup> Hence, adapting to and playing into cultural similarities would become a strategy within diplomacy, as commonalities within ‘Western tradition’ would enhance a sense of shared values, and divert the public opinion away from aligning with communist or socialist activism.<sup>52</sup>

Historical research on U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy has extensively examined the political and economic aspects within the promotion of culture and ideology. Here, the word ‘hegemony’ is often used to refer to U.S. efforts to create a ‘Pax Americana’

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 139.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>50</sup> Wolfe, Audra J. *Freedom's Laboratory : The Cold War Struggle for the Soul of Science* (2018): 2.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Margry, Peter Jan. *Cold War Mary*. Leuven: Leuven University Press (2021): 20.

worldwide. As Goldstein argues, hegemony implies “being able to dictate, or at least dominate the rules by which international relations, political and economic, are conducted”.<sup>53</sup> This can be exercised through excessive control over world economics within an ‘economic hegemony’, or through military control within a ‘political hegemony’. Many theorists have relied on the notion that the fostering of international security and the demise of ‘grand wars’ post-WWII can be ascribed to an American hegemony, which conveyed a political message of global democracy and a peaceful world order.<sup>54</sup> Both ‘an empire of production’ and ‘an empire by invitation’ in Western Europe, the U.S. became an undeniable superpower engaging in cooperative transatlantic alliances.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, Academics such as Mueller and Nye argue that this ‘Pax Americana’ is overestimated within the context of the Cold War. These theorists have moved towards a ‘balance of power’ interpretation, as “political leaders at the time did not perceive the United States as dominant.”<sup>56</sup> Instead, an asymmetrical focus on recourses existed: while the U.S. had mostly gained nuclear and economic control, the Soviet Union’s geographical advantage towards potential alliances in Europe and Asia, and a more developed focus on soft power, made both nations resilient in different hegemonic facets, balancing out one another.<sup>57</sup>

However, although academics have explored U.S. political ideology during the Cold War to great extent, the religious dimension of public diplomacy remains understudied. Kirby notes that U.S. policies went beyond mere ‘power politics’ and ‘geopolitical considerations’. “Ideology, based on and informed by religious beliefs, was crucial in shaping perceptions of

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<sup>53</sup> Goldstein, Joshua S. *Long Cycles: Prosperity and War in the Modern Age*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press (1988): 281.

<sup>54</sup> Cohrs, Patrick O. ““Pax Americana”: The United States and the Transformation of the 20th Century’s Global Order.” *Revista Brasileira De Política Internacional* 61, no. 2 (2018): Revista Brasileira De Política Internacional, 2018-11-29, Vol.61 (2).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Mueller, John. ““Pax Americana” Is a Myth: Aversion to War Drives Peace and Order.” *The Washington Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2020): 120. Nye, 70

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 71.

and responses to the Soviet Union”.<sup>58</sup> Kirby, Herzog and Preston point out that the impact of religion during the Cold War has been underestimated in scholarly examinations, and that the East-West divide and opposing Catholic and Orthodox cultural tensions can be traced back to centuries before the ‘iron curtain’.<sup>59</sup> Nonetheless, Kirby agrees with Herzog that the impact of both Protestant and Catholic beliefs reached a peak of ‘revivalism’ in the U.S. between 1945 and 1960.<sup>60</sup> Herzog adds that there is a multitude of case studies to be found within U.S. domestic policy, which lay out the spiritual dogma largely present in legislative changes. For example, “Under God” was only included within the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954.<sup>61</sup> Still, foreign policy adoptions, more covertly enacted, have in this context been underresearched until the last decade.<sup>62</sup>

In Herzog’s theoretical framework, observing this era of U.S. diplomacy, he describes how policymaking was deliberately steered by a ‘spiritual-industrial complex’ (SIC), where a religious build-up was instigated by American legislators and government actors during the Eisenhower administration in order to “create a religious citizenry that grounded material power in sacred wisdom”.<sup>63</sup> Secular principals seemed insufficient to combat in a soft war against communism, and thus, religious unity was applied to social, cultural and political values of democracy. Implicit tactics were used, advancing a spiritual revival domestically, “not by religious leaders, but rather by leaders who were religious.”<sup>64</sup> Preston stresses that religion was crucial to the containment strategy, and adds that it is historically incorrect to

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<sup>58</sup> Kirby, Dianne. *Religion and the Cold War*. Paperback ed. Cold War History Series (2013): 2.

<sup>59</sup> Dianne Kirby. ‘Divinely Sanctioned: The Anglo-American Cold War Alliance and the Defence of Western Civilization and Christianity, 1945-48’. *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, nr. 3 (2000): 386.

<sup>60</sup> Herzog, Jonathan. "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex and the Policy of Revival in the Early Cold War." *Journal of Policy History : JPH* 22, no. 3, 2010, 337.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 340.

<sup>62</sup> Preston, Andrew. "The Religious Turn in Diplomatic History." In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 284-303. Cambridge University Press (2016), 284.

<sup>63</sup> Herzog, 338.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*.

analyse the U.S as a secularized nation. Secularization theory “reflected the desires of its adherents – cosmopolitan intellectuals and scholars for whom religion was indeed declining in significance – rather than the actual world they lived in”.<sup>65</sup> Hence, the historical examination of religion as a top-down ‘structural force’ within U.S. culture on the same level as ‘race’ or ‘gender’ remains rather undervalued.

Geertz Herzog, Kirby, Margry and Preston agree that religion, and specifically the worshipping of Marian piety, although underestimated within the context of public diplomacy, served as the ‘glue’ in creating a ‘soft’ structure of diplomatic influence, not separate from political, economic or military U.S. dominance, but rather embedded in these power recourses.<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, these academics stress that within scholarly research, the relevance of spiritual beliefs within the ideological Cold War duality is in need of more extensive reviews and case studies, as “the significance of religion and the churches within the Cold War paradigm, has received little interest from researchers, compared to strategic, military and political aspects”.<sup>67</sup> This thesis will thus contribute to the research on the religious aspect of Cold War diplomacy, and will utilize a religious framework, based on previous academic writings.

Kirby notes that it remains more challenging to examine the importance of ‘the divine’, as religion has maintained a covert status within international politics and diplomacy. Furthermore, U.S. policymakers have only in very rare instances admitted to executing political decisions out of their spiritual beliefs. Still, Herzog and Preston have effectively constructed theoretical frameworks, incorporating the spiritual side of the early Cold War. Both have built on Geertz’s analysis, which positions religion as a ‘product’ and ‘producer’ of

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<sup>65</sup> Preston, 287.

<sup>66</sup> Geertz 212; Herzog, 338; Kirby, 3; Margry 21; Preston, 287.

<sup>67</sup> Margry, 11.

culture within the political and economic realm.<sup>68</sup> Firstly, Nuancing that it remains challenging to grasp this age-old concept in one sentence, Geertz has defined religion as:

A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.<sup>69</sup>

Here, ‘moods’ and ‘motivations’ are conceptualized as the two driving mindsets that form spiritual togetherness. A motivation is the linear sense of purpose, the tendency to work towards a provisional goal, while a mood of a society or individual is the unpredictable melancholy that has no objective. Motivations are “made meaningful” by the thought of completion, moods by the sources from which they came into existence.<sup>70</sup>

Subsequently, Preston has interpreted motivations of religion as producers of culture, and moods as products of culture.<sup>71</sup> In order to measure religious revivals within a timeframe and case study, it is critical to examine the ‘manifestations of belief’, which Preston derived from José Casanova’s “discursive reality”. These manifestations are not simply to be analyzed by the literal motivations or rational behavior groups or individuals display, but also by the moods or emotion that ignites belief and subsequent acts.<sup>72</sup> This constructivist model of research, which will be utilized in this thesis, addresses religion as shaped by and shaping cultural progressions.

Lastly, as Preston in his research was primarily focused on applying Geertz’s framework of religion to U.S. foreign relations and diplomacy, Herzog on the other hand, explored the motivations and moods that made a catholic revival within the domestic public sphere possible. As Herzog argues, in order to be considered a model nation, contesting

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<sup>68</sup> Geertz, 212-213.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 97.

<sup>71</sup> Preston, 294.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 295.

Soviet ideology, the U.S. depended on moral support at home. Thus, a SIC arose, which “was the deliberate and carefully managed use of government and corporate resources to stimulate a religious revival in the late 1940’s and 1950’s”.<sup>73</sup> Both Preston and Herzog have stressed that the extent of case studies about individuals who were involved in the policymaking of that time, and to what extent they were positioned within a SIC, remains limited within the academic debate on religion and the Cold War.<sup>74</sup> Additionally, as Hart firmly claims that in U.S. post-war diplomacy, “a broader legislative mandate” -domestically- “did not necessarily translate into greater influence over the ideological realm”, a thorough analysis, combining Herzog and Preston’s fields of discussion, remains important: adding to their understanding of Geertz’s research and while considering Hart’s statement, this essay’s subsequent chapters examine how Catholic Christianity became an instrument of American cultural persuasion both domestically and abroad.

Thus, in the following chapters, Herzog’s *Spiritual Industrial Complex*, which characterizes the circular, ‘revolving door’ politics of policymakers within a religious revival of the early Cold War, will be examined and exemplified through the case study of Clare Boothe Luce. Within the study of U.S. diplomacy, the academic documentation of Clare Boothe Luce’s cultural and political influence has mostly followed gender theory approaches. Writer Sylvia Jukes Morris has written, in collaboration with Luce herself, an extensive biography, following Luce’s earlier life and ambitions as a playwright in *Rage for Fame*, and her career as a journalist and politician in *Price of Fame*.<sup>75</sup> In *Price of Fame*, Morris gives a detailed account of Luce’s conversion to Catholicism and her reasonings behind it, and she provides chronologic descriptions of Luce’s experiences as an ambassador in Italy. Although

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<sup>73</sup> Herzog, 338.

<sup>74</sup> Herzog 339; Preston, 284.

<sup>75</sup> Morris, Sylvia. *Rage for Fame: The Ascent of Clare Boothe Luce*. Random House, 1997; *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*, Random House, 2014.  
*Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*. New York: Random House, 2014.

Morris' work contributes extensively to the understanding of Luce's controversial decisions and character, it is primarily focused on positioning a woman in male-dominated fields, her marriage to famous publisher Henry Luce, and her coping with the loss of her only child.

Nonetheless, it does not delve into Luce's role within the timeframe of an institutionalized spiritual-industrial complex. Brogi touches on the 'p-factor' of her impact in Italy, describing how she became a 'psychological warrior' for the anti-communist cause, which backfired within public opinion: "with her undue pressure on the government, she caused an anti-American backlash even among moderate left leaders".<sup>76</sup> He agrees with Nuti that U.S.-Italian relations have been mostly studied in the context of the late 1940's, with the formation of an Italian Republic, and that the decade that followed remains to be studied more in-depth, and with a focus on primary source material.<sup>77</sup> However, Brogi himself does not delve deeper into the religious primary source material related to Luce in his research. Hence, as more of her primary source material could be explored here, I will contribute to the research analysis of these sources in the case study of the last chapter. In this thesis, I recognize the value of existing research on Luce, as her life and career have been discussed extensively within the frame of an 'elite woman' who had a significant historical impact, nonetheless, women's history in early Cold War foreign relations remains under-acknowledged in the general academic discussion, especially regarding the religious dynamic of U.S. policy.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, this thesis elaborates on this spiritual aspect of Luce's political and ambassadorial career.

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<sup>76</sup> Brogi, 273.

<sup>77</sup> Nuti, Leopoldo. "The United States, Italy, and the Opening to the Left, 1953–1963." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 4, no. 3 (2002): 37.

<sup>78</sup> Wu, Judy Tzu-Chun. "Gendering American Foreign Relations." In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 271-83. Cambridge University Press, (2016): 272.



## CHAPTER 2

### *The Rebirth of Mother Mary: U.S. Inclusion of Catholicism within a Spiritual Industrial Complex*

Before exploring the religious motivations within U.S. foreign policy, it is valuable to discuss the cultural relevance of Catholicism within American society. Firstly, this chapter will delve into the domestic religious revival of Christianity during the 1950's. Expanding on Herzog's SIC framework, I argue that spiritual belief was successfully utilized as a domestic cultural motivator. Although Catholics and Protestants in the U.S. had previously lived in disagreement and tension, this chapter shows how the Truman administration made efforts to, and the Eisenhower administration succeeded in bringing together these belief systems under the common denominator of 'Christianity', and employing religion for the enhancement of a Cold War ideological dichotomy on the home front. Hence, I will first explain the Protestant-Catholic cultural dynamics prior to the Cold War. Then, I will elaborate on a changed attitude towards Catholicism during the Truman administration. Lastly, this chapter argues that the Eisenhower administration not only utilized a SIC to create religious front against communist influence domestically, but also made efforts to use a SIC abroad, in order to build anticommunist alliances in Europe. I therefore argue that the U.S. diplomacy integrated Christianity into its foreign policy in order to act as a 'motivator' of culture within European countries such as Italy.

In order to examine a revival of Christianity, and especially the growth of the Catholic church in the 1950's, it is important to explore the gradual acceptance of Catholicism within American Christianity. Thirty years prior to the start of the Cold War, Catholicism had a

drastically different status within American culture. From the late 1800s to WWI, while the U.S. was an overwhelmingly Protestant Christian nation, many Catholics immigrated from Europe in order to escape extreme poverty and suffrage.<sup>79</sup> This had caused an enormous boost in the presence of Catholic churches in the U.S. However, individualism and work ethic had, throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century been associated mostly with protestant values of a personal and independent spiritual relation with God.<sup>80</sup> Here, Protestantism was embedded within the morals of American exceptionalism, and as Catholic bishops in the U.S. were in direct contact with the Vatican, anti-Catholic isolationists were vehemently opposed to this bilateral, overseas communication with Italy. According to some, Catholicism was a “paradise of infidels, and of sects” and “a center of Universalism”.<sup>81</sup>

Discrimination against Catholic belief had become culturally accepted, and reached its clearest display of bigotry with the rise of the second wave of the Ku Klux Klan, established by William Joseph Simmons in 1915 and popularized to the point of five million members in the 1920’s.<sup>82</sup> Together with African Americans and Jews, Catholics were deemed sinners of the highest form. Also, during the presidential elections of 1928, Democrat Al Smith lost to Republican Herbert Hoover, in a landslide win by Hoover of the electoral vote by 444 against 87 and popular vote by 58% against 41%.<sup>83</sup> Historians agree that a major reason for Smith’s loss was the fact that he was a Catholic. “Leery of Vatican control”, even middle-of-the road Protestants could not stand behind a Roman Catholic president.<sup>84</sup>

However, already during the 1930’s and 1940’s, a gradual shift towards more acceptance of the U.S. Catholic Church arose. After Christian immigrants had arrived in

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<sup>79</sup> Gillis, Chester. *Roman Catholicism in America*. Second ed. Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series (2020): 75.

<sup>80</sup> Gjerde, Jon, and S. Deborah Kang. *Catholicism and the Shaping of 19th Century America*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2012): 79.

<sup>81</sup> Gjerde, 79.

<sup>82</sup> Gillis, 75.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 79.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

large numbers post-WOII in the 1920's, and often had to take on low-income jobs, they were substantially present in the American working class. Here, workers who ascribed to many different churches, including the Protestant churches had been brought together in a communal workforce. Thus, Cowie argues, within lower-class communities, religions and traditions slowly amalgamated, and clear divides between the Catholic and Protestant church ceased to exist as people worked together and build communities together.<sup>85</sup> Additionally, a religious indifference within Protestant communities during the interbellum era arose, where less new members were joining a specific church, and the faith lost its unifying .<sup>86</sup> As the social influence of Protestantism declined, “one benefit that Catholicism would confer on the United States was its role as a spiritual bulwark for American state and society.”<sup>87</sup> Simultaneously, while the religious mood of citizens became more aligned with conservative ideals , Catholic Christianity for many provided a template for the family structure and stability during the unstable years of WWII. Hence, especially after overcoming two consecutive wars, “After all, even many Protestants would agree that religion was a necessary element for political stability and if the battle pitted Catholicity against infidelity,” Gjerde stresses “it was clear on which side they would fall.”<sup>88</sup> Thus, due to the upsurge of Catholic immigrants during and after WWI, and changing perceptions on Protestantism, the Catholic faith became, as a consequence of shifting cultural moods, a prominent belief system that politicians had to take into account, when attracting voters or when appeasing their communities.

The interbellum and post-WWII period in Europe marked the direct involvement of the Vatican in an age-old spiritual Iron Curtain that had persisted between Eastern Orthodox

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<sup>85</sup> Cowie, Jefferson. *The Great Exception : The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (2016), 91.

<sup>86</sup> Gjerde, 79.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

and Western Catholic communities. To the Catholic Church, it became apparent that a communist Russia, as a nation that ‘made socialism radical’, had drastically impacted its neighboring states. In *Divini Redemptoris*, a book published by Pope Pius XI in 1937, he warned humanity for the imminent danger of an infidel militant society and he poses that, within the Marian ‘good’ versus the pagan ‘evil’ dichotomy, an imminent danger lies in the annexation of Europe by communist dogma.<sup>89</sup> Moreover, he signals believers and priests to combat this “plot to kill God” in a cultural stride where cultural forces and political leaders should cooperate.<sup>90</sup> A straightforward caution, involving the international political leaders to merge interests with the Vatican to this overt extent, had not been observed for over three centuries. This messaging and subsequent increased vocalization of priests and bishops to protest the non-spiritual characteristics of communism in the 1940’s, also in Catholic communities in Eastern Europe, awoke a “Soviet concern about internal stability owing to the large Catholic populations within the Soviet sphere of influence, but also its perceptions that the Vatican was an obstacle to better relations with the rest of the world.”<sup>91</sup>

When the Second World War came to a close, American policymakers had observed the religious dynamics in Europe, and the perceived threat of communism paved the way for the support of the Catholic faith in the U.S. Nonetheless, observing the two ‘Red Scares’, the first scare in the late 1910’s and the second in the late 1940’s and 1950’s, the communist menace was heavily overstated.<sup>92</sup> To the extent of a full cultural phobia of Soviet domination domestically, ‘McCarthyistic’ fear-mongering had a large-scale political and social impact.<sup>93</sup> Joseph McCarthy, Republican senator for Wisconsin, made the exaggerated claim that Soviet communists had not only infiltrated in and collaborated with the American Communist Party,

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<sup>89</sup> Margry, 8.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Kirby, 6.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>93</sup> Storrs, Landon R.Y. “McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare.” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*. 2 Jul., 2015.

also, he argued that communist traitors were present in every leftist organization, mainstream institution, the Democratic Party and the Hollywood film industry. It was suggested that through hidden signaling and propaganda, more pro-Soviet supporters were brought together and that eventually, this would pose an eminent threat to national security.<sup>94</sup> During the first years of his political demagoguery, McCarthy, also a devoted Catholic, gained national attraction within the public opinion, and his TV and radio appearances lead to extensive media popularity and high status within the U.S. Catholic community. “Whatever launched it” Tye notes “Joe’s home-front holy war against the Soviets and subversives got a huge lift from his coreligionists. The Catholic Church in the early 1950s was ardently anti-Communist and explicitly pro-Joe McCarthy.”<sup>95</sup>

Although Harry S. Truman, U.S. president between 1945 and 1953, condemned McCarthy’s exaggerated views, he and his administration would gradually accept Catholic Christianity within U.S. politics. Truman had already been condemned for allowing Soviet infiltration domestically by extremist anti-communists such as McCarthy. The criticism contained the suspicion that Soviet spies were interfering from within his government.<sup>96</sup> In an effort to defuse civil fear, Executive Order 9835 was officialized. In this legislative order, “reasonable grounds for belief in disloyalty” made it possible for officials to remove any government worker from his position. Also, detailed information about employees’ life was demanded, gathering information about affiliations to ‘suspect’ organizations. Additionally McCarthy had declared in speeches that 200 members of the Truman administration were aligned with the Communist Party, whereto Truman had responded in a press conference that McCarthy orchestrated an effort to “sabotage the bipartisan foreign

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<sup>94</sup> Storrs, 2015.

<sup>95</sup> Tye, Larry. “Joe McCarthy’s Controversial Catholic Faith”, *America Magazine: The Jesuit Review*, July, 2020.

<sup>96</sup> Storrs, 2015.

policy”, and that his extremist views, creating tensions domestically, were exactly what the Kremlin would want.<sup>97</sup>

As the Truman administration noticed the significance of upholding close ties with the American Catholic Church, it faced the challenge of both opposing McCarthyism in order to protect the government’s political credibility, and building upon the religious connections within Catholic communities both domestically and abroad. Harry S. Truman developed a direct rapport with Pope Pius XII in 1947, which a decade earlier would have met grave criticism.<sup>98</sup> Roosevelt was the first president who appointed a ‘Personal Representative’, in order to foster contact with the pope. Myron C. Taylor took on this new position, and Roosevelt’s administration received immediate critique from influential Protestant leaders, as concerns arose that this would infringe on the Constitution’s principle of “separation between church and state”.<sup>99</sup> Taylor had responded that “domestic opposition could be avoided by maintaining contact with the Vatican through the American embassy at Rome”.<sup>100</sup> The subsequent Truman administration saw religion as a key factor in foreign relations at the onset of the Cold War, thus, Taylor would report to Truman under the title of “Peace Ambassador”. This entailed that Taylor would be the de facto ambassador to the Holy See, and build diplomatic relations with the Vatican.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, his position had to endure stark criticism from the Protestant church, especially Presbyterians, who denounced the political affiliation of the U.S. with the Catholic church.

Nonetheless, this became the first clear indication of the Truman administration

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<sup>97</sup> “Harry S. Truman to Dean Acheson, March 31, 1950.”, *Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*. Retrieved on June 3, 2021. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-resources/spotlight-primary-source/harry-s-truman-responds-mccarthy-1950>

<sup>98</sup> “Harry Truman: Exchange of Messages with Pope Pius XII”, *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved on June 18, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/exchange-messages-with-pope-pius-xii>

<sup>99</sup> Gill, George J. "The Truman Administration and Vatican Relations." *The Catholic Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (1987): 408.

<sup>100</sup> Gill, 409.

<sup>101</sup> Kosek, Joseph kip. "Faith in the Cold War." *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 1, (2011), 125.

building on U.S.-Vatican relations, in an effort to produce an image of religious unity.<sup>102</sup>

Truman had shifted from a more nuanced approach to Soviet relations, to a strict containment strategy, also involving religion as a motivator. For example, his administration was the first to create a commission that was directly focused on the incorporation of spiritual persuasion in the military. ‘The President’s Committee on Welfare and Religion’ (Weil Committee), was formed, “encouraging and promoting the religious, moral and recreational welfare and charter guidance of persons in the armed forces”, Truman said, “and thereby enhancing the military preparedness and security of the nation”.<sup>103</sup>

His domestic efforts to cultivate religious spheres of influence, and contacts with the Catholic Church, especially with leaders such as New York’s Cardinal Francis Joseph Spellman, were the first overt acts of unifying ‘the home front’ behind spirituality. Nonetheless, during Truman’s term, ending in 1952, substantial Protestant criticism against these efforts of unification, and criticism from McCarthyistic Catholics prevented an overarching, significant integration of religious integration in both domestic and foreign policy.

The subsequent presidential election of Dwight D. Eisenhower marked the beginning of fully integrated piety-infused domestic policies, building upon Truman’s strategies, and rapidly launching 1950’s America into a nation of devotion. Comparing church membership from the 1951 to 1961, it rose by more than 31%.<sup>104</sup> As Protestant membership rose by a gradual 23%, Catholics churches saw an impressive upsurge of 46%.<sup>105</sup> Although the post-war social stability of the 1950’s was an important factor in shifting the mood towards a

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<sup>102</sup> Kirby, 5.

<sup>103</sup> Herzog, 340.

<sup>104</sup> Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith : Religion in American War and Diplomacy*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (2012): Chapter 23, 1.

<sup>105</sup> Herzog, 350.

communal-based practice of faith, a deliberate top-down government involvement acted as a motivator of religion. Even though the 1950's marked the era where separation between church and state was heavily emphasized within judicial measures of the Supreme Court, the executive and legislative branches, involving the president's cabinet, and Congress, "busied itself with efforts to bring more religion into public life".<sup>106</sup> Both overtly and covertly, the Eisenhower administration was involved in the manifestation of belief as an active motivator, as William Lee Miller, journalist and historian, described Eisenhower as "a very fervent believer in a very vague religion".<sup>107</sup> Historians often refer to Eisenhower's faith as a pragmatic, as he would speak in broad spiritual parallels during his speeches, while not having been a member of any specific church, prior to his election win in 1952.<sup>108</sup> Nonetheless, as Preston notes, he was raised in a strict Protestant household, and although he used religion to his political advantage, this does not exclude a profound, personal spiritual experience: "I am one of the most deeply religious men I know", Eisenhower said in 1948.<sup>109</sup> Still, he declared numerous times during his presidential career that democracy does not exist without its foundation, being religion: "Our government makes no sense unless it is founded on a deeply felt religious faith".<sup>110</sup>

The Eisenhower administration's efforts to unify Christianity into political systems became evident through various efforts of faith-based symbolism, also directly involving the Catholic community. During his election win, Eisenhower had noticed how significant the Catholic voter base had become: McCarthy supported Eisenhower's campaign, and together with many Catholics, he voted for Eisenhower.<sup>111</sup> Before winning, Eisenhower had already

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>109</sup> Eisenhower in Preston: Chapter 23, 20.

<sup>110</sup> Henry, Patrick. "And I Don't Care What It Is": The Tradition-History of a Civil Religion Proof-Text." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 49, no. 1 (1981): 36.

<sup>111</sup> Tye, 2020.



clearly demonstrated that religion would be positioned on the forefront of the debate about American values during his presidency. “God’s Float’ was chosen as the song that the nation would hear, during the inaugural parade.<sup>112</sup> The lyrics entail the message of a unification of different beliefs, and even though Eisenhower would not associate himself with extremists such as McCarthy, his political choices do reflect the intention of Eisenhower to include Catholic believers within a merged form of Christianity.

Firstly, he foresaw great political advantages within the Catholic messaging, as it focused on structure and a group-based experience of faith. Gjerde explains how Catholicism condemned ‘the atomized’ and idiosyncratic aspect of an individual experience of faith, which would result in social chaos: “The solidity of Church doctrine, in contrast to the Protestant penchant for moving freely from religious affiliation to religious affiliation”, he adds, “provided a structure that was not detrimental to society”.<sup>113</sup> This structure of faith aligned with the Eisenhower administration’s implementation of “civil religion”, where faith becomes institutionalized and promotes the American way of life.<sup>114</sup>

Secondly, since the Catholic community had already become a significant force within Christian American religiosity, and a higher percentage of electoral voters, during and prior to the Truman administration, it’s subsequent relevance to domestic and foreign relations could no longer remain underestimated by the Eisenhower administration. The domestic importance of Catholicism became evident when Cardinal Spellman was directly contacted by the pope, and asked to stress to U.S. officials that the American forces needed to become more involved in the Vietnam conflict.<sup>115</sup> Spellman, who had close contacts within the U.S.

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<sup>112</sup> Herzig, 341.

<sup>113</sup> Gjerde, 747.

<sup>114</sup> Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in Bellah, Robert N.; Steven M. Tipton. *The Robert Bellah Reader*. Duke University Press, (2006): 224

<sup>115</sup> Henderson, Jason A. “The Influence of the Catholic Church on the Eisenhower Administration's Decision to Directly Intervene in Vietnam,” (2013): 100.

government and in the early 1950's, became a confidant of Eisenhower, and carried Vatican interests into the U.S. policy debate.<sup>116</sup> Also, in 1959, Eisenhower became the first U.S. president to personally visit the pope, marking the symbolic alliance with the Vatican and validating the U.S. Catholic community.<sup>117</sup> Thus, as the Eisenhower administration observed the involvement of American Catholics within international, anti-communist dogma, it was actively invested in the strengthening of religious relations with its leaders.

Including Catholicism in the Christianized vision of American democracy was one of the aspects of the all-encompassing promotion of religion within the executive and legislative branch of the U.S. government. Still, the intense incorporation of spirituality went beyond unifying Christianity. The deliberate endorsement of spiritual alignment involved the alliance of policymakers, private business and the Churches' leaders, constructing a spiritual-industrial complex that existed out of perceived exigency, and in that sense similar to the reasoning behind Eisenhower's warning of a future military-industrial complex. Within the legislative branch, Congress passed a resolution in 1955, signed by Eisenhower, in which was stated that henceforth, all U.S. dollar bills would have the words "In God We Trust" on it.<sup>118</sup> In 1957, the Congress legislated that the slogan be officialized as the national motto, substituting "E Pluribus Unum", which had been the unofficial motto for almost two hundred years.<sup>119</sup> Here, U.S. Congress was an active participator of bringing overt church rhetoric into the political sphere.

Within the executive branch, which had the advantage of more rapid and focused policy implementation, far-reaching decisions were made that contributed to a SIC. Here, under the creation of the 'Foundation for Religious Action in the Social and Civil Order'

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Herzog, 340.

<sup>119</sup> Preston, Andrew. "The Religious Turn in Diplomatic History." In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 284-303. Cambridge University Press (2016), 284.

(FRASCO), different elite state-actors, ex-politicians, religious figures and businessmen were involved in a ‘revolving door system’ of the SIC.<sup>120</sup> This entailed the combined effort to equate American values of individual freedom and democracy to the divine experience of faith. Eisenhower’s private pastor was one of the founding members of the foundation, which was concerned with unifying “all believers in God in the struggle between the free world and atheistic Communism”.<sup>121</sup> Well-known members of its council included presidential advisor and Presbyterian evangelist Billy Graham, Protestant minister and radio host Norman Vincent Peale, former Republican president Herbert Hoover, and journalist and entrepreneur Henry Luce. The organization was primarily focused on organizing its annual ‘National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of American Democracy’, an event that was promoted by media outlets and filmed by the United States Information Agency (USIA), a separate agency for public diplomacy, created by the Eisenhower administration.<sup>122</sup> The USIA would then use this footage in documentary films, distributed in allied nations such as Italy and France. The overarching premise of these conferences was that “America was winning the Cold War military, but not spiritually. The answer according to many was a closer relationship between church and state”.<sup>123</sup>

After Eisenhower also publicly advocated for the foundation in 1954, Nixon, his vice president, who was one of the most prominent members of the FRASCO board, utilized financial support from the foundation for “spiritual covert operations in Vietnam”.<sup>124</sup> What started as a collaborative effort involving the full political spectrum, rapidly became an informal advisory board of conservatives, informing the president. Scholarly conservative writers such as Richard Weaver and Russel Kirk, and conservative politician Clare Boothe

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<sup>120</sup> Herzog, 149.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Kosek, Joseph kip. "Faith in the Cold War." *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 1 (2011): 127-150.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

Luce also became involved in the foundation's efforts to envisage a revival of religion within politics, and the rhetoric of the organization became more anti-liberalist, and anti-Democrat. Clearly criticizing Roosevelt's New Deal, Luce referred to it as a purely communist strategy, adding "no Christian saint had more faith in the power of God's Grace to transfigure his own nature, than a Communist has in the power of State ownership of electricity and plumbing to transfigure all human nature".<sup>125</sup> Thus, building upon the foundations of the Truman administration to utilize religion as a weapon of anti-communism, the Eisenhower administration translated these rhetorical concepts into practical endeavors, not only by changing national slogans, but also by publicly endorsing and financially supporting religious propaganda. The sudden interest of both the Truman and Eisenhower administration to improve relations with the Catholic Church, was not only a visible effort to attract voters, but also the deliberate unification of Christianity in a revolving door system where government branches, private actors and religious organizations worked together to enhance the Cold War dichotomy on the home front. Resulting in a SIC, the post-war domestic stability, enhancing openness towards Church alignment, was the cultural mood that made overt integration of religion in the political system possible. Nonetheless, the motivations of policymakers were the drivers, or producers of a American religious revival in the 1950's. "The impulses of the "saved" were far less instructive than the motives of the "saviors".<sup>126</sup>

As domestic policy was embedded in spiritual rhetoric successfully, efforts of a similar overseas policy implementation were executed by the Eisenhower administration. After Eisenhower's inauguration in 1953, one of his first executive orders regarding foreign policy was the establishment of the United States Information Agency.<sup>127</sup> Thenceforth, 'public' diplomacy was positioned in a separate agency, and out of the State Department,

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 356.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, 338.

<sup>127</sup> Hart, 5.

which marked a new era of Foreign Service strategies. One of the USIA's main objectives was to enhance bilateral alliances in Europe. Firstly, in order to diminish long-term pressure on U.S. military expenses in a potential MIC, allied forces could replace U.S. troops over time through the strategy of the 'New Look'.<sup>128</sup> Here, Eisenhower's foresight was the "decreased expenditures for the army and navy in favor of increased expenditures for the air force and for nuclear weaponry".<sup>129</sup> Secondly, diverting from the military-economic containment strategies of the Truman presidency, Eisenhower was extensively more concerned with the psychological aspect, or as he coined it "the p-factor" of U.S. dominance in Europe during the 1950's.<sup>130</sup> "A global public relations campaign aimed at highlighting the strengths and appeal of the American system and exposing the deficiencies of Communism thus came to occupy, for the first time, a central place in American grand strategy."<sup>131</sup> In Europe, the USIA's primary tasks were to accommodate West Germany to a U.S. liberal democracy, influence media outlets in Austria, and actively limit the Communist Party's outreach through financial aid and cultural propaganda in Italy.<sup>132</sup> Also, 'People-to-People' and other student exchange programs were created and financed by the USIA in 1956, "making every man an ambassador".<sup>133</sup> The reasoning behind these programs was to influence the academic world in Europe, bringing students who would both unequivocally or subtly promote American democracy.

Furthermore, as the USIA was already involved in the domestic SIC through a FRASCO alignment, subsequent deliberate efforts to include religious messaging in foreign

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<sup>128</sup> McMahon, Robert J. "US National Security Policy from Eisenhower to Kennedy." In *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, 294.

<sup>129</sup> Bauer, P.. "New Look." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 11, 2019.

<sup>130</sup> Cull, Nicholas J. *The Cold War and the United States Information Agency: American Propaganda and Public Diplomacy, 1945–1989*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, (2008): 120.

<sup>131</sup> McMahon, 295.

<sup>132</sup> Cull, 120.

<sup>133</sup> Preston, Andrew. *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith : Religion in American War and Diplomacy*. 1st ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf (2012): Part VIII, 7.

policy, in order to function as a spiritual motivator abroad, were a clear example of how the Eisenhower administration embedded religion within foreign relations. Theodore Streibert, a former radio executive and Harvard assistant dean, and appointed by Eisenhower as the first director of the USIA, installed the position of ‘chief of religious information’ within the agency, which was filled by Elton Trueblood.<sup>134</sup> Trueblood, a Quaker evangelist and conservative theologian, immediately started the “Life We Prize” radio program on Voice of America (VOA), the U.S.’s international, government funded broadcaster. “Life We Prize” entailed the religious philosophy that incorporated Christian values in 1950’s, democracy, and through VOA, was translated in 47 languages, broadcasted worldwide.<sup>135</sup> Streibert’s intention, in collaboration with Eisenhower and Trueblood, was to incorporate Christian dogma within the propaganda of anti-communism internationally, and the agency understood that soft power went beyond financial aid and military support.

In Italy especially, it was deemed that military and economic aid were not sufficient in contesting the increased popularity of both the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) in the early 1950’s.<sup>136</sup> Italy thus serves as a noteworthy example, where the U.S. heavily focused on spiritual persuasion, finding commonality with the country’s profound Catholic community, and benefiting from the atheistic vacuum in communism, that did not translate to political pro-Soviet alignment for a substantial group of religious Italians.<sup>137</sup> As the country was centrally positioned in the Mediterranean and bordering Yugoslavia, close diplomatic ties with Italy were of grave importance during the 1950’s. “The Eisenhower administration’s USIA had chosen Italy,” Brogi writes, “together with the Federal Republic of Germany, as special targets in the campaign for ‘burden sharing’, a metaphor

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<sup>134</sup> Cull, 113.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Brogi, Alessandro. ‘Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce and the evolution of psychological warfare in Italy’. *Cold War History* 12, nr. 2 (2012): 270.

<sup>137</sup> Brogi, 269.

indicating US insistence that Europe play a larger part of the defense of global Western interests.”<sup>138</sup>

Religion, the vital component of the good versus evil dichotomy created by the U.S. government came into play within the Foreign Service: Christian anti-communism became the spiritual antidote that would contrast, as Eisenhower described, the Soviet’s “godless depravity in government”.<sup>139</sup> The upsurge of the Christian faith within U.S. culture of this decade was not merely based on the post-war stability and desire for a religious communal experience, but was intentionally institutionalized by the Eisenhower administration and U.S. Congress as an active ‘motivator’ of psychological conversion, not only to gain domestic support for potential warfare against Communist nations, but also to attract allied support internationally.<sup>140</sup> In the next chapter, I elaborate on the integration of religion within Luce’s ambassadorship in Italy, and argue that the U.S. had overestimated the soft power impact of Catholic-Christian commonalities with the nation. Thus, I will provide a specific case study that builds on the point Inboden makes: “Eisenhower... policies of “liberation” and the “new look” had frightened Europeans as too truculent,” he writes, “and McCathyism on the domestic front had only confirmed European suspicions that American anticommunism was inherently hysterical”.<sup>141</sup> Through the case study of Clare Boothe Luce’s diplomatic career in Italy, starting in 1953, this thesis expands on the efforts of spiritual propaganda, and will show

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Herzog, Jonathan. "America's Spiritual-Industrial Complex and the Policy of Revival in the Early Cold War." *Journal of Policy History : JPH* 22, no. 3, 2010, 347.

<sup>140</sup> Preston, Andrew. "The Religious Turn in Diplomatic History." In *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, (2016): 286.

<sup>141</sup> Inboden, William. *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945–1960*. New York: Cambridge University Press, (2008): 68.

how these efforts became challenging, as anti-American sentiments abroad were underestimated.



## CHAPTER 3

*Clare Boothe Luce's Christian Democracy: The Conversion to and Promotion of Catholicism*

Observing the Eisenhower's advocacy for spiritual alignment, his decision to join the National Presbyterian church, where he was baptized, marked the symbolic beginning of a decade-long state-imposed religiosity. Remarkably, Clare Boothe Luce, wife of FRASCO member Henry Luce, later claimed that she was responsible for convincing Eisenhower to associate with a specific church.<sup>142</sup> Luce and Eisenhower had been close acquaintances prior to Eisenhower's election, and as a member of the Republican party and Congress, Luce had publicly endorsed Eisenhower on numerous occasions, once complimenting him as "a most astounding combination of humility and confidence."<sup>143</sup> In 1952, while Eisenhower was still a general for the U.S. army, and the Supreme Commander of the NATO, Luce had a meeting with him in Paris, France, where she was traveling with her husband. Here, she had asked Eisenhower why he did not have a house of worship, as she found that it was crucial for a candidate of the presidential race to align with a Christian church. Eisenhower stressed that he was a Presbyterian Christian, where to Luce responded, "then why not accompany Mamie", referring to herself with the French hypocorism for 'mother', "to her place of worship in Paris on Sunday?".<sup>144</sup>

In this chapter, the post-WWII context and Luce's close political relation to Eisenhower are examined. I demonstrate how she was shaped by and shaping a religious revival, during her congressional career in the early 1940's and her ambassadorial term in Italy in the early 1950's. A spiritual revival is initiated by two components that manifest

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<sup>142</sup> Inboden, 265.

<sup>143</sup> Morris, Sylvia Jukes. *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*. (New York: Random House, 2014), 294.

<sup>144</sup> Clare Boothe Luce to Morris, jan 8, 1982, in Morris, 295.

belief: the ‘moods’ and ‘motivations’ of a group or individual. The individual religious experience, or the moods and motivations of Luce, will be observed within this case study. Here, Luce’s transition from liberal feminist to conservative politician and from non-practicing Protestant to devoted believer of the Catholic faith are examined in the first two sections of the chapter. What caused Luce’s conversion? I elaborate on her personal ‘moods’, the emotional reasonings behind her Catholic alignment, ‘made meaningful’ by the sources from which they were ignited. I then argue that Luce’s spiritual shift contributed to her political relevance within a government-coordinated SIC: she acted as an important ‘motivator’ in the promotion of the divine discourse. Lastly, in the final section, this chapter expands on Luce’s ambassadorial term in Italy and claims that Luce, both through personal and government-instilled religious motivation, utilized her spiritual rhetoric as a cultural diplomatic asset against communism in Italy, and as a resource to improve American-Italian relations.

Firstly, I discuss Luce’s life prior to her political and religious conversion, in order to demonstrate how she subsequently represents a broader shift in America towards religious revivalism, connected to an anti-communist scare. As the daughter of musician William Franklin Boothe and his wife, Anna Clara Schneider, who both worked in the film and theatre industry, Ann Clare Boothe was born in 1903. What distinctly characterizes CBL, who was always addressed by her maiden name ‘Clare’, as a noteworthy historical figure, is the multitude of ideals -often contradictory- she has promoted and criticized strongly throughout her life, expressed through her many career choices and personal connections.<sup>145</sup> After her parents divorced, Luce worked behind the scenes of play productions at the age of twelve, in

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<sup>145</sup> Morris, 10.

order to support her mother financially.<sup>146</sup> Two years later, she appeared as a walk-on actor in the silent movie *The Heart of a Waif*.<sup>147</sup> Simultaneously, during CBL's teenage years, her mother had married future congressman Albert E. Austin.<sup>148</sup> Austin had taken Luce and her mother with him on various business trips to Europe, where she was introduced to political issues of that time through conversations with diplomats or activists.<sup>149</sup> At the age of twenty, CBL had one of those discussions with Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, an extremely wealthy suffragist who was so impressed by Luce's social intellect that she had given her a campaigning position within the National Woman's Party (NWP) in Washington DC.<sup>150</sup> Luce began to stride for women's rights, and for equal pay in the workforce, and although she never started a college education, she continuously engaged in self-study of texts, such as the plays of playwright George Bernard Shaw, historian Edward Gibbon's "The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire", and letters and mementos from WWI.<sup>151</sup>

In 1923, CBL married millionaire George Tuttle Brokaw, with whom she had her first and only child, Ann Clare, one year later.<sup>152</sup> Struggling with the alcohol addiction of, and physical abuse by her husband, and eager to get away from the stay-at-home life she was leading, Luce filed for divorce six years later.<sup>153</sup> Nonetheless, through Brokaw's connection with important political leaders, and her own network through the NWP, CBL met Bernard Baruch, the later special advisor to president Roosevelt.<sup>154</sup> She aligned herself with Rooseveltian liberalism, developed a friendship with Eleanor Roosevelt, and became a

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<sup>146</sup> "LUCE, Clare Boothe" History, Art & Archives, U.S. House of Representatives, June 14, 2019.

<sup>147</sup> Shea, Laura in Champion, Laurie., and Emmanuel S. Nelson. *American Women Writers, 1900-1945 a Biobibliographical Critical Sourcebook*. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000), 215.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Morris, 11.

<sup>150</sup> "Ava Vanderbilt Belmont and Clare Boothe, April 28, 1923" in Morris, 11. <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-alva-vanderbilt-belmont-and-clare-boothe-april-28-1923-before-booths-170551623.html>

<sup>151</sup> Shea, 215.

<sup>152</sup> Morris, 11.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, 191.

‘protégé’ of Baruch who recommended to her to make an attempt at a political career. She was very aware of the fact that she, as a woman in a male-dominated intellectual workforce, would have “to apply extraordinary drive and originality in launching a career”, and her first ambition was to express this sentiment in articles and plays.<sup>155</sup> When speaking to Condé Nast, owner of *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair*, at a party in upstate New York, she tried to convince him to give her a writers position at one of his magazines.<sup>156</sup> Nast admitted that he was not eager to give this position to a female writer, but he still set up an interview for her with Edna Chase, editor of *Vogue* who subsequently declined her request. CBL persisted and went to the editorial office of the magazines when both Nast and Chase were not present, and started writing slogans and articles at an empty desk.<sup>157</sup> Because of this forthright action, remarkably, she was hired.<sup>158</sup> She wrote for a lifestyle magazine, but always incorporated subjects about class-struggles and gender inequality in her articles

As she wrote about themes that related back to her hardships, published in the 1930’s August and December issues of *Vanity Fair*, her articles “Life Amongst the Snobs” and “Wall Street Lady’s Man” were a direct observation of the rivalry between high-class socialites, “intimate glimpses of the New York social battlefield”.<sup>159</sup> Through fictional characters, she critiqued this community for its abundance of wealth. While describing ‘old money’ establishment as a group of people that has gotten caught up in trivial ‘non-issues’, she noted that wealth through upward mobility however, was one of the driving forces of American culture.<sup>160</sup> She stressed that there is no shame in being poor or having poor parents, however, only when poverty is temporary: “Indeed, a humble origin is usually the theme of all great

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<sup>155</sup> Reichardt, Mary R. *Catholic Women Writers: a Bio-Bibliographical Sourcebook*. (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 229.

<sup>156</sup> Morris, “Clare’s Conquest.” *Vanity Fair*, May 1997.

<sup>157</sup> Reichardt, 229.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> Luce, Clare Boothe. “Life Amongst the Snobs”. New York: *Vanity Fair Archives*, 1930.

<https://archive.vanityfair.com>

<sup>160</sup> Luce, Clare Boothe. “Wall Street Lady’s Man”, 1930. <https://archive.vanityfair.com/article/1931/8/wall-street-ladies-man>

American romances. But for one's father to have remained poor," she wrote, "especially in Greater Manhattan, is an unforgivable sin, and only to be redeemed by the son's rapid acquisition of a fortune."<sup>161</sup> Four years later, she became editor for *Vanity Fair* and wrote her debut theatre play "The Women", which became a Broadway success.<sup>162</sup> She spoke of the scarcity of female playwrights, contesting that "American Playwrights do not like or understand women, at least not normal women. None of them has ever managed to create a believable flesh and blood, attractive female character."<sup>163</sup> Hard work, women's rights, and her criticism of 'high society' elitism, which according to her, seemed to overlook the virtue of ambition, were reoccurring themes in her articles at that time, but her tone would shift significantly the subsequent decade.

In 1935, she remarried to Henry Luce, a conservative writer who founded the magazines *Life*, *Time*, *Fortune* and *Sports Illustrated*, and "the most influential private citizen in the America of his day", according to Herzstein.<sup>164</sup> As a conservative media magnate, Henry Luce introduced Clare Luce to political journalism, and she began to write for his *Life Magazine* as a reporter. Six years later, *Europe in the Spring*, her first book (1941), was published, for which she travelled around Europe as a war journalist during WWII.<sup>165</sup> The first page has a short homage to her husband: "To HRL, who understood why I wanted to go".<sup>166</sup> With a political career in mind, her book, which became a bestseller, displayed her abilities as a military and foreign policy analyst, and her husband was an important catalyzer

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Morris, "Clare's Conquest."

<sup>163</sup> Shearn, A. "Clare Boothe Luce, the Conservative Politician Who Wrote an All-Female Play", *JSTOR Daily*, 2018. <https://daily.jstor.org/clare-boothe-luce-the-conservative-politician-who-wrote-an-all-female-play/>

<sup>164</sup> Herzstein, Robert E. *Henry R. Luce, Time and the American Crusade in Asia*. Cambridge U.P. (2005), 1.

<sup>165</sup> Luce, Clare Boothe. *European Spring*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1941.

<sup>166</sup> Luce, 7.

in this process.<sup>167</sup> Hence a clear shift became visible in her writings, and after exhibiting liberal-minded ideals in the early 1930's, CBL shifted to opposite views in the early 1940's.

Secondly, this chapter thus elaborates on Clare Boothe Luce's drastically modified values. The foundations of this personal evolution are correlated to her marriage to Henry Luce, her connection to Eisenhower, the loss of her child and subsequent religious conversion, which subsequently affected her political stands and translated in extremely vocal Roman Catholic conservatist rhetoric during the Cold War. As a member of the Republican Party, Luce contributed to anti-liberal and anti-communist demagoguery, and her conversion to Catholicism was a critical factor in contributing to a religious revival during the Eisenhower administration. In the following section, which focuses on analysis of primary source material, I argue that her anti-liberal and anti-communist stands and Catholic conversion in the 1940's made her an important religious ally to Eisenhower within a SIC, after he was elected president in the 1950's.

Prior to her political career, Clare Boothe Luce had, together with Henry Luce, made donations to and multiple public endorsements for the Republican Party, and together, they became acquainted with Eisenhower, meeting with him in France during his military term as a general, which would mark the beginning of their long-term political cooperation.<sup>168</sup> Although CBL had gradually developed a closer network within the Republican Party, her political 'conversion' to Republican conservatism became official in 1942, when Luce was elected for a Republican seat in the House of Representatives in the U.S. Congress.<sup>169</sup> Already before her congressional appointment, she had started to critique liberalist viewpoints, as in *Europe in the Spring*, she described FDR's foreign policy during WWII as a "soft war" approach,

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<sup>167</sup> Herzstein, 3.

<sup>168</sup> Luce, 56.

<sup>169</sup> Luce, "America in the Post War Air World", *Vital Speeches of the Day*, Vol. IX, pp. 331-336.  
<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1943/1943-02-09b.html>

obliging to Soviet military demands.<sup>170</sup> Nonetheless, her anti-Rooseveltian rhetoric intensified rapidly after her congressional nomination. In 1944, during a tour of speeches she made in support of Republican candidate Dewey, she said that FDR was “the only American President who ever lied us into a war because he did not have the political courage to lead us into it”.<sup>171</sup> When she obtained her seat in Congress, the direct disapproval from Democrats was palpable. Howard Dietz, an American lyricist, wrote a critical, satirical poem called “Au Clare de la Luce”, which was published in the PM newspaper and heavily denounced Luce’s remark.

Soft, where the dauntless Callaghan  
 Gave itself, where every man  
 Rode through the fire with flag aloft?  
 Say it again – did you say “soft”?  
 Oh lovely Luce – Oh Comely Clare!

The brave deserve the less unfair.  
 You are elected now, that’s that,  
 The ring we’d say is in your hat.<sup>172</sup>

FDR asked John McCormack, the House Majority Leader, to search a Democrat in the House of Representatives who would be willing to read Dietz’s poem, right after Luce’s first speech to Congress. Although no representative attempted to act on this request, a general resistance arose against Luce’s political ambitions within the Democratic Party.<sup>173</sup> On the other hand, for Luce, this congressional speech became her first opportunity as a representative to establish political credibility. In the speech, she heavily disapproved of FDR’s post-war strategy, and openly rejected FDR’s vice-president Henry Wallace’s plan for ‘global air highways’, where

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<sup>170</sup> Luce, *Europe in the Spring*, 87.

<sup>171</sup> Luce, “Roosevelt ‘Lied Us Into War,’ Mrs. Luce Declares in Chicago,” 14 October 1944, *New York Times*: 9

<sup>172</sup> Howard Dietz, “Au Clare de la Luce- 1943”, *New York Historical Society*, 2018.

[https://blog.nyhistory.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/01/PM\\_8\\_Dec\\_1942\\_Clare\\_de\\_la\\_Luce\\_poem.jpg](https://blog.nyhistory.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/01/PM_8_Dec_1942_Clare_de_la_Luce_poem.jpg)

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

all allied nations would have the ability to freely use airports and airways, without territorial pressures from any country.

Much of what Mr. Wallace calls his global thinking is, no matter how you slice it, still "globaloney." Mr. Wallace's warp of sense and his woof of nonsense is very tricky cloth out of which to cut the pattern of a post-war world.<sup>174</sup>

Luce strongly opposed the idea of backing out the U.S. Air Force of allied territory and suggested that the U.S. should instead act as a dominating, leading nation, not only maintaining but rather expanding its air force presence. The concept 'globaloney' became immediately popular in conservative media and her speech received Republican praise for its strong anti-liberal rhetoric. Hence, she would become a prominent member of the Republican Party because of her forthright speeches.

At the onset of the Cold War, her scepticism of leftist or socialist ideas would evolve into an all-encompassing, stark anti-communist opinion, which later became an important asset during her ambassadorship in Italy in the 1950's. In her speech before U.S. Congress in May 1945, a few months prior to the end of the war, Luce asked Congress rhetorically: "America and world communism, shall it be one world?"<sup>175</sup> In this speech, she talked about good versus evil within the Christian faith, and stated that, if the American people agree that murder is evil and sinful, as noted in the Bible, and Nazi Germany can thus be categorized under 'evil', it was essential to classify communist Russia under the same term. Here, she used the spiritual to justify the abomination of a political ideology.

When a Communist OGPU agent strips a Russian of his small farm and a few pigs, without due process of law, and then allows him to starve to death or send him to a slave camp in Siberia, that deed is murder, too. And no Communist twaddle about implementing the people's revolution, international capitalistic plots, or the security of

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<sup>174</sup> Luce, "America in the Post War Air World".

<sup>175</sup> Luce, America and World Communism: Shall it be one world?" *Vital Speeches of the Day* 11 (21): 647.



the proletariat should change that judgement in the eyes of man, or can change it in the eyes of God.<sup>176</sup>

Furthermore, she stressed that democracy and communism could not exist in the same world as long as the Soviet Union limited its population's freedom and thus, did not align with American egalitarian values. According to Luce, 'truth' did not have meaning within communism, as its leaders changed the definition of truth or justice, as long as it fitted their policies. She then made a first prediction about what the U.S.'s role in international politics should entail.

And what should our Government do abroad? First and foremost, use our great diplomatic power and vast military prestige - now - to help all Asiatic and European Statesmen and officeholders – Frenchmen, Poles, Italians, Greeks, Belgians, Dutch, Germans, Austrians, who are not either Fascist or Communist, to stay in power...which guarantee the people freedom.<sup>177</sup>

She warned that European nations in particular were in need of American diplomatic and military protection, and suggested that totalitarian communism, described as biblical evil, would clash with "the light of freedom", which implied that the U.S. would provide this 'God given' freedom in allied nations.<sup>178</sup> During her later ambassadorial career, she would act upon this understanding of America as a spiritual nation. Although she identified as a Protestant at that time, made religious references sporadically in her speeches and texts, and was married to Henry Luce, who was a committed Presbyterian Protestant, Clare Boothe Luce did not align herself with a specific church until 1946, after her congressional career.<sup>179</sup>

This alignment was to the Roman Catholic church, and a sudden conversion to

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid, 649.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Morris, *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*. New York: Random House, (2014):162.

Catholic Christianity was the consequence of an impactful personal event, the loss of her child, that would mark the rest of her political career. In combination with her anti-liberal and anti-communist motivations, this loss became a significant element of her spiritual journey and enhanced her political value to the Eisenhower administration. Domestically, Eisenhower attracted more catholic voters because of Luce's campaigning for his presidential candidacy, and abroad, Luce's spiritual viewpoints synchronized with the Eisenhower administration's efforts to propagate the image of faith-based democracy.

In 1944, when her daughter Ann Clare Brokaw, passed away in a car accident, Luce was recovering from this trauma. She did not try to prolong her congressional seat the subsequent year, and she stepped back from her political career.<sup>180</sup> The same year, she was introduced to Father Fulton Sheen by a mutual friend, after confiding to him: "I am not in trouble, but my mind is in trouble".<sup>181</sup> Sheen, who was a Catholic grief counsellor, had met with Luce for multiple sessions, where Luce asked him eventually, "if God is good, why did he take my daughter?", where to he responded "perhaps it was in order that you might believe. Maybe your daughter is buying your faith with her life".<sup>182</sup> For two years, Luce followed spiritual counselling sessions with Sheen, and in February, 1946, Luce became a member of the Roman Catholic Church and was baptised by Sheen. Sheen later attested that "no man could go to Clare and argue her into the faith. Heaven had to knock her over."<sup>183</sup>

In "The Real Reason" (1947), an article written by Luce, she elaborated on her conversion.<sup>184</sup> Here, she admitted to have harshly criticized Catholic believers when she was a

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Luce, "The Real Reason (1947)". Crisis Magazine, 1 december 1987.  
<http://www.crisismagazine.com/1987/the-real-reason>.

<sup>182</sup> Luce and Sheen in Morris, 152.

<sup>183</sup> Sheen to Shadegg, Stephen C. *Clare Boothe Luce; a biography*. New York, Simon and Schuster (1970): 211.

<sup>184</sup> Luce, "The Real Reason".

non-practising Protestant, and stresses that multiple factors eventually resulted in her religious transformation.

It finally took two world wars, the overthrow of several dozen thrones and governments, the Russian revolution, the swift collapse, in our own time, of hundreds of thought-systems, a small number of which collapsed on me, the death of millions, as well as the death of my daughter, before I was willing to take a look at this extraordinary institution, the Catholic Church.<sup>185</sup>

Within the text itself, Luce spoke of a necessary overlap between church and state, describing Catholicism as “a very democratic religion”, where God has purposefully positioned both world’s finest and worst influences on earth, for one to decide for himself which path he chooses.<sup>186</sup> As she reflected on her conversion, Luce regretted that she had not sooner chosen to join the Roman Catholic faith, quoting Saint Augustine of Hippo, “Too late have I loved Thee, O Beauty so old and so new”.<sup>187</sup> For Luce, the context of the Cold War and her anti-communist values, together with the loss of her child, were crucial elements for her altered view of spirituality. She combined her personal and political journey in her newly found faith and became a strong supporter of the idea that democracy and Christianity exist in harmony.

In the late 1940’s, Luce started to combine her political and religious ambitions and became a national representative of her faith, receiving the Laetare Medal in 1947 for her services to the church as a prominent American Catholic.<sup>188</sup> Subsequently, she resumed her travels to Europe and was able to arrange private meetings with Pope Pius XXII in Italy in 1949, where Luce allegedly wanted to convince the pontiff that atheistic communism would become an international threat, and that countermeasures were needed, where to Pius XXII responded “Signora, sono cattolico anch’io!”, which translates to “Madam, I’m a Catholic

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Morris, 440.

too!”<sup>189</sup> The pope insinuated that faith and political principles were tied together. According to him, anti-communism went hand in hand with Catholicism, and thus, it was evident that he did not express sympathy for communism. Additionally, Luce also became involved in Italian politics, funding a trip for Alcide De Gasperi, who was the leader of the Christian Democratic Party and Prime Minister of Italy, to meet with her in the U.S. and discuss the threat of communism in Italian political parties. She had observed the Italian post-war political landscape and had been informed by De Gasperi that the PCI and PSI were gaining more public attraction. Luce aligned with Gasperi’s vision for Italy: a capitalist democracy, based on Christian values.<sup>190</sup> Later, CBL claimed to Morris in personal interviews that her meeting with the pope and Gasperi ignited her interest in foreign policy and diplomacy, as a necessary means to combat communist ideology.<sup>191</sup>

Thus, when Eisenhower contacted Luce in 1952, and asked her to return to politics, she agreed instantly. He had asked her to become a representative of his presidential campaign: Luce’s anti-liberal, anti-communist motivations, strengthened by her Catholic conversion, were important factors for Eisenhower.<sup>192</sup> Luce joined the campaign, as she was promised an important position within his cabinet. Travelling the country, she wrote over one hundred speeches for his campaign, and endorsed Eisenhower on radio shows and public events. She was able to convince a substantial Catholic electorate of the Democratic Party to vote for Eisenhower with her strong rhetoric, and she contributed to the landslide win of his campaign, as millions of Catholics had voted for his presidency.<sup>193</sup> Thus, Catholicism became an asset in the presidential race, and it also certified Luce’s position within the Eisenhower

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<sup>189</sup> Paolucci, Antonio. “La Salvaguardia della Sistina. Stiano Tranquilli I Consiglieri Troppo Zelanti”, *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2010.

<sup>190</sup> Morris. “Clare in Love and War”, *Vanity Fair*, 2014.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

administration, which aimed to unify Christianity behind anti-communist ideology. Within the domestic political landscape, CBL had shifted from a liberal-leaning mindset to conservative Republicanism, and from former Protestant to a leading figure of American Catholicism. Hence, her personal evolution serves as an example of the socio-political context of the early post-war period. Her emotional journey and her political rhetoric of the 1940's signify the manifestation of her belief, which combined spiritual and political values. The subsequent decade, she would become an active motivator of religion, involved in a SIC within U.S. diplomacy.

Lastly, using primary sources of CBL related to her ambassadorial term, I argue that Luce was not only shaped by her personal and political experiences domestically, but also participated as a motivator of religious revivalism during her ambassadorial career abroad, in Italy during the early 1950's. Hence, as Geertz describes religion as a producer of culture, this thesis claims that two factors played a role in Clare Boothe Luce's efforts to contribute to a SIC in cultural diplomacy. First, the Eisenhower administration's disregard of gender-based restrictions in early-1950's diplomacy, in order to appoint Luce as ambassador, reflects the significance of Luce's persona and values: Catholic anti-Soviet demagoguery became a valuable asset within a government-orchestrated religious revival. Second, I show how this spiritual rhetoric was utilized in Italy by CBL, in an effort to diminish communist political popularity in the Italian national elections, and in order to enhance diplomatic cooperation with the Italian government during the Trieste crisis. Thus, I argue that CBL was an important diplomatic motivator of the SIC abroad.

After Luce contributed to the election win of Eisenhower, he proposed to her to become his Secretary of Labour. She declined respectfully, as she had developed an interest in

diplomacy and said that she “fit nowhere except into the field of foreign affairs”.<sup>194</sup> Then, Eisenhower asked what she would like best, and CBL responded “Naturally, what I can’t get, Rome”.<sup>195</sup> Luce was already personally involved in Italian political sphere, as she had contact with the pope and De Gasperi, and had conversated with them about the perceived threat of agnostic communism. However, in order to convince Eisenhower, she gave three reasons as to why an embassy to Italy would also be in his political favor: Not only would this further solidify his Catholic voter base, and enhance the support of female voters, an embassy position for Luce in this country would mean that Eisenhower had found a reliable Catholic in politics, faithful to his administration, and in a position to enhance political and religious ties with a European nation.<sup>196</sup> Eisenhower said that he would give her an answer soon, as he first discussed it with his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, who was a Presbyterian: Luce expected he could have reservations regarding her faith and gender.

Unexpectedly, Eisenhower and Dulles agreed and assigned her to the embassy position to Italy in 1953. “Why the heck send a Latin country a woman?”, diplomat Elbridge Durbrow - ‘Minister Counselor’ at the U.S. embassy in Italy - commented, and more backlash followed both within the Democratic and Republican Party, as Luce was the first woman to receive a U.S. ambassadorial position in a politically significant country.<sup>197</sup> Prior to her ambassadorial nomination, it was alleged in newspapers that Luce was to become Eisenhower’s running mate and possible vice-president (VP), and in a public statement, she elaborated on this assumption and subsequent speculations in the media that she did not obtain the position of vice president because she was a woman.

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Luce to Morris, *Price of Fame: The Honorable Clare Boothe Luce*, 309.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Durbrow to Morris, 332.

I am not limited by my sex in politics. That has been an asset in our chivalrous world. I am limited by lack of political experience and administrative ability. These qualities are two a vice president should have.<sup>198</sup>

Hence, Luce herself noted that she did not consider gender either an advantage or disadvantage, but that her own inexperience explained why she was not the running mate, and she stressed that she supported Eisenhower's decision to choose Richard Nixon as his VP.<sup>199</sup> Also, looking back on her diplomatic career decades later, she makes a similar point, underlining that the discussion should be focused on her political strengths.

It's a funny thing for a woman to say, that I should even suggest I might be distressed, but I've always thought myself that getting the job done as well as possible was a good deal more important than whether you put in a black or a woman or an ethnic of some sort or someone who had a certain religious bent.<sup>200</sup>

Although Luce vocalizes this 'neutral' stance on gender, which reflected her conservative viewpoint that she as a woman did not experience inequality due to her gender, nevertheless, the amount of women in diplomatic positions were very scarce in the early 1950's. Thus, Luce's ambassadorial term still demonstrated that the Eisenhower administration did not uphold the existing ban on female U.S. Foreign Service officers in this specific case and exception. The ban prohibited married women to join the diplomatic service, and lasted until 1972.<sup>201</sup> While Luce's husband, Henry Luce, was an important conservative member and financial supporter of FRASCO, and also had personal affiliation with Eisenhower, it was Luce herself who convinced Eisenhower to neglect the fact that no woman had ever been selected as ambassador to a geopolitically imperative nation, in function of her own political

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<sup>198</sup> "Draft of Clare Luce's statement regarding running for vice presidency. ca. 1942-1945", *Henry R. Luce Papers*, MS 3014, New-York Historical Society.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> Morin, Ann Miller, and Clare Boothe Luce. *Interview with Clare Boothe Luce*, 1986. Manuscript/ Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mfdipbib000724/>

<sup>201</sup> "The Palmer Case and the Changing Role of Women in the Foreign Service", *Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training*.

ambitions to work in the Foreign Service. Eisenhower on the other hand wanted to maintain and solidify his rapidly growing Catholic voter base, and saw value in sending a Catholic diplomat to Italy, who he could consolidate and give precise instructions. Thus, religious motivations, within the context of a SIC, during the Eisenhower administration, overrode existing gender discrimination.

In this chapter, I argue that, during her subsequent ambassadorial post, Luce also participated in the implementation of a SIC abroad. While she used blunt anti-communist rhetoric in her telegrams, interviews, letters and articles, her more subtle references to Catholicism are often overlooked. In this section, I utilize primary source material, in order to show the subtle ways in which Luce embedded religious catholic dogma in her diplomatic statements. What Eisenhower had in mind for Luce's diplomatic post, was something similar to the position Truman had envisioned for Myron C. Taylor, only, Luce had the advantage of being converted to Catholicism, the dominant religion in Italy, and years of personal communications with the pope. Taylor's function as a official representative to the pope had been criticized heavily within the U.S. government and by the Protestant church during the Truman administration. Thus appointing a diplomat would be a more acceptable approach that did not infringe blatantly upon separation between church and state. Additionally, the linkage between spirituality and democracy had become more accepted during the SIC, and was utilized by CBL, as it would repetitively appear in her diplomatic rhetoric. Two major diplomatic missions during Luce's ambassadorial term, the national Italian elections of 1953, and the Trieste issue, were crucial moments in Luce's career in Italy, as she had to demonstrate her validity as a female diplomat. However, Luce often engaged in exaggerated claims about communist anti-Catholicism within Italian political parties, in an effort to motivate the public to divert from popular left-wing ideas.



The first mission began when the Eisenhower administration wanted to ensure that within Italian politics, moderate Christian voters were not influenced by the PCI and the PSI, the communist and socialist party in Italy.<sup>202</sup> When Luce arrived to her embassy post in Rome, the Italian General Elections were only two months away. Nonetheless she was asked by the administration to cooperate with De Gasperi, contribute to his reelection with his Christian Democracy Party (DC), and agree on “specific Italian Government internal anti-Communist policies”.<sup>203</sup> However, the DC was already divided between conservative right-wing Catholics and left-wing anti-American Catholics during the late 1940’s, and this polarization had only increased up to 1953.<sup>204</sup> Eisenhower had warned that, although the military threat of the Soviet Union had already drastically diminished, especially in Italy, the necessity of ideological pushback was still necessary, as he “worried constantly that lethargy and inaction in Europe...would allow that continent to fall into Soviet hands”.<sup>205</sup> The Holy See publicly endorsed the DC, claiming that it was religiously immoral to vote for the PCI or PSI. Luce, however, who had consulted with the pope about the elections, and agreed with the Vatican about supporting the DC, suddenly accused DC center-leftists of pro-Soviet alignment: “The left-wing Christian Democrats too were a group of Catholics infected with Marxism”.<sup>206</sup> Her sudden opposition resulted in strong criticism from the DC, and public backlash from its leaders, and did not lead to a positive first impression of CBL. As the divide

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<sup>202</sup> “Letter From the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State”, *Department of State*, Luce Files: Lot 64 F 26, Letters, 1955–56. Top Secret; Official–Informal.

<sup>203</sup> “No. 760. The Secretary of State to the Embassy in Italy: 123 Luce, Clare Boothe: Telegram (1953)”, *Office of the Historian*.

<sup>204</sup> “Letter From the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State”.

<sup>205</sup> Eisenhower quoted in Ninkovich, Frank A. *Modernity and Power. A History of the Domino Theory in the Twentieth Century*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1994), 212.

<sup>206</sup> “Luce to Eisenhower, 11 April 1955; DDEL” in Brogi, Alessandro. ‘Ambassador Clare Boothe Luce and the evolution of psychological warfare in Italy’. *Cold War History* 12, nr. 2 (2012): 269–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14682745.2011.558611>.

between DC voters had gradually increased over years, eventually, in June, this affected the elections, and the DC did not maintain a supermajority of the electoral votes, losing a substantial amount of Senate and Chamber of Deputies seats to the PCI and PSI.<sup>207</sup>

Dissatisfied with the results, CBL claimed to a New York Times reporter, L.C. Sulzberger, that not only Italian, but also American citizens, would be ‘disastrously’ affected when Italian left-leaning parties in Italy would enforce a nation-wide Stalin-inspired state.

If Italy goes Communist, not only it will be disaster for the United States, but it will be an incredible political defeat for the Republican Party. It would make the loss of China look small by comparison. The loss of Italy would have a profound effect on Americans of Italian decent and on Catholics in the United States.<sup>208</sup>

She further emphasized to Sulzberger in the interview that the Chinese capitulation to Marxist ideology did not compare to a potential attack on the Christian faith. Adding to the fear mongering of the Red Scare, Luce intended to not only discredit the PCI and PSI, but also to employ religion as a motivator, also in the U.S., against communism.

Francis T. Williamson, minister of the United States Embassy to Italy under Clare Boothe Luce, agreed with Luce’s stark remarks about the left-leaning parties and even suggested that right-wing extremism would be less of a threat than soviet-inspired agnosticism, infringing upon Christian democratic values and endangering an American “sense of unity and direction”.<sup>209</sup> The National Security Council 5411/2 paper, sent to the embassy, confirmed this sentiment: “an extreme rightist government, almost certainly authoritarian, probably ultra-nationalist and opposed to European unity, would be far less dangerous than a communist regime”, clashing with American religious values.<sup>210</sup> CBL,

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<sup>207</sup> “Letter From the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State”.

<sup>208</sup> Luce to Sulzberger, C.L. in *A Long Row of Candles*, Macmillan Company (1969): 977.

<sup>209</sup> Francis T. Williamson in Del Pero, Mario. “The United States and ‘Psychological Warfare’ in Italy, 1948–1955.” *Journal of American History* 87 (March 2001): 427.

<sup>210</sup> Del Pero, 427.

having read the paper and having discussed it with Williamson, recommended to Eisenhower that "an independent, catholic, nationalist, and rightist political movement" with members of Italian centrist and right-wing political parties could be established, providing strong resistance against left-leaning politicians.<sup>211</sup> For Luce, this would have been a significant moment in her ambassadorial career, that could redeem her diplomatic image, as she would bring together politicians who aligned with Catholicism, and thus would create a strong political block supporting democratic capitalism. However, Luce had underestimated the anti-American sentiment of many extremist right-wing parties, and after the concept of this 'catholic political movement' received harsh backlash from rightist parties, her suggestion to the Eisenhower administration was denied by the U.S. State Department. Thus, Luce, newly introduced to her ambassadorial function, did not successfully contribute to the unification of the DC. Overall, CBL's religious rhetoric during and after the elections was met with criticism, as she underestimated the political tensions. De Gasperi had to quit as Prime Minister, after his party members were underwhelmed by the election results, as the DC only secured a slight majority against the PCI and PSI.<sup>212</sup>

CBL's second mission, her involvement in resolving of the 'Trieste Issue', redeemed her diplomatic image in Italy and marked her first successful large-scale negotiation, in which she managed to contribute to an advantageous outcome for both Italy and the U.S.. De Gasperi had once said to her after the Trieste crisis, "If I had had this Trieste settled, I would still be Prime Minister".<sup>213</sup> During this mission, Luce also utilized religious promotion, however, here, her rhetoric was effective in convincing the U.S. to act on the Trieste Dispute, and in restoring cordial diplomatic relations with the Italian government. The Trieste region, a

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> "Letter from the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State". *Department of State*, Luce Files: Lot 64 F 26, Letters, 1955-56. Top Secret; Official-Informal.

<sup>213</sup> Morin, Ann Miller, and Clare Boothe Luce. *Interview with Clare Boothe Luce*, 1986.

culturally mixed region overlapping between northern Italy and the former Yugoslavia, was declared ‘the Free Territory of Trieste’ (FTT) in 1947, and became a neutral, non-governmental region after post-Cold War tensions arose between Italy - an allied nation to the U.S. - and Yugoslavia - a nation that had been part of the communist block of the Soviet Union.<sup>214</sup> Political tensions arose, when in 1953’s, Italy and Yugoslavia came to a border-related military dispute. Trieste, as De Gasperi attested, had been the ‘crown jewel’ of Italian nationalism, previous to WWI, and as its harbour is geographically interesting for trade relations, the two countries had clashed over its borders and Luce had observed that this could escalate into an international East-West dispute.<sup>215</sup>

I had been briefed about the so-called Trieste situation, and faced with what looked like war which was about to come, I remembered that what State Department advice had been was, "When it boils up, calm it down; when it calms down, forget it." And that struck me as a recipe for constant conflict.<sup>216</sup>

Hence, when the dispute seemed to calm down for a few months, she did not forget about it, and actively reported about the potential dangers of this conflict to the President’s Special Assistant Jackson<sup>217</sup>. The actual details of the Trieste tensions, were related the Tripartite Declaration of March 20, 1948, a declaration that the U.S. and other allied nations had signed, which entailed the promise from allied nations that it would participate in the reinstalment of Trieste as Italian territory. However, Yugoslavia’s president Tito argued that this agreement purposefully had not included his nation, labelling his country as an ally of the communist East: Tito vehemently denied any relation to the Soviet Union. His policies had not been “sufficiently malleable” to Soviet communism, hence, his country had been rejected by the

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<sup>214</sup> "Letter from the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State".

<sup>215</sup> "No. 106. The Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the President’s Special Assistant (Jackson)" *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, Eastern Europe; Soviet Union: Eastern mediterranean*, Vol. VIII.

<sup>216</sup> Morin, Ann Miller, and Clare Boothe Luce.

<sup>217</sup> "No. 106. The Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the President’s Special Assistant (Jackson)".

Soviets.<sup>218</sup> The prior Truman administration's State Department had, regarding the conflict, ordered to appease to some degree to Tito, as the U.S. considered a potential cross-over from a Soviet nation to allied forces very valuable to U.S. intelligence agencies.<sup>219</sup>

Nonetheless, as De Gasperi had proclaimed that this betrayal of the U.S. towards its ally, Italy, was inexcusable, Italian-American diplomatic tensions rose. Luce however, strongly agreed with De Gasperi's viewpoint, and warned the Eisenhower administration that it was spiritually and morally unjustifiable for the U.S., to, on the one hand give in to Tito, a communist leader, and on the other hand make efforts to establish Christian democracy in Italy.<sup>220</sup> "The loss of Italian friendship for the U.S. which must inevitably follow an adverse decision for Italy on Trieste," Luce added, "would divest Eisenhower's foreign policy of much moral coherence."<sup>221</sup> CBL had expressed her criticism of the U.S. to De Gasperi, and the Italian Prime Minister subsequently agreed with the U.S. Ambassador's proposal to set up negotiations with Tito. Concerned with the U.S.'s spiritual image as a Christian nation, Luce also underlined to the State Department, that if the U.S. continued inaction in the Trieste conflict, this would be an 'image blow' for the Eisenhower administration, portraying itself as a whited sepulchre on the international political stage. Furthermore, it would also harm the Republican Party's surge of a Catholic electorate.

It would be a political blow. Many of Connecticut's (and other States') hundreds of thousands of Catholic and Italian voters would begin to go back to the Democrat fold. One of the greatest reasons why Catholic voters in the USA left the Democratic Party was their deep-seated suspicion that the Acheson build-up of Tito was the effort to further anti-Kremlin Communism, and that Ike would reverse this policy.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Morris, 339.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> "No. 106. The Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the President's Special Assistant (Jackson)".

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

CBL thus stressed to Eisenhower that the promotion and unification of Catholicism under his administration would not sustain its credibility domestically.

When before could Democrats rightfully claim that Republican policy was appeasing totalitarian dictatorship, scuttling freedom in Europe, selling Democracy down the river to the Commies?<sup>223</sup>

CBL's clear messaging towards her government, warning about domestic and international consequences if the U.S. did not improve its public relations with Italy, immediately lead to sympathy from the new Italian Prime Minister in 1954, Giuseppe Pella, who said he wished that Luce would "remain on this assignment for a long period", and called her his 'mediator'.<sup>224</sup> The U.S. State Department however, first suggested to Luce that Pella's army should retract some of its military force in the region, before Tito would back out of the Trieste region.<sup>225</sup> CBL rejected this proposition, arguing that this would be "highly offensive" to the Italian and other allied nations, as it would seem as if the U.S. is mediating for a communist dictatorship, insulting its Christian democratic allies all over Europe.<sup>226</sup> Luce once more pressed the State Department about the negative implications to the U.S.'s image and the American-Italian relations, and eventually, she received confirmation that the U.S. would sign the treaty, together with Great Britain, France, Italy and Yugoslavia, whom had already agreed, that gave Italy the northern zone, 'Zone A' of the region, including the port city Trieste itself, while Tito would accept a small southern 'Zone B'.<sup>227</sup> The U.S. State Department gave authorization to CBL to organize the FTT conference, and in October, 1945, the agreement was signed de facto.

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Morris, 357.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> "No. 106. The Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the President's Special Assistant (Jackson)".

<sup>227</sup> "Letter from the Ambassador in Italy (Luce) to the Secretary of State". *Department of State*, Luce Files: Lot 64 F 26, Letters, 1955-56. Top Secret; Official-Informal.

Because of the Trieste situation, Luce was able to restore her diplomatic image and enhance bilateral relations with Italy. During this mission, her diplomatic rhetoric involved the clear connotation of American religiosity, and contributed to resolving the Trieste issue, as she obtained sympathy from the Italian government and succeeded in convincing the U.S. government to make a strong statement against communism by signing the Trieste agreement. She argued that the Eisenhower administration should take its responsibility as a spiritual democratic branch of government, not only to secure Catholic political support domestically, but also to attract political support abroad. “The return of Trieste was a cause of deep satisfaction to the Italian people,” Luce concluded, “For Trieste is not only a symbol of Italian unity, it is also a fine city – where I may add, American soldiers left behind a most friendly and agreeable memory”.<sup>228</sup> This chapter has shown that Clare Boothe Luce’s case study contributes to Herzog’s spiritual-industrial complex, first expanding on her political and religious conversion within this timeframe, and subsequently arguing that she acted as a promotor of Christianity during her ambassadorial career, as religion was embedded in her political principles.

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<sup>228</sup> Luce, Clare Boothe. “Italy in 1955” *Vital Speeches of the Day* 21, no 10 (March 1955): 1070.

## Conclusion

The U.S. had incorporated cultural persuasion to its strategy after the Second World War. Religion, imbedded in cultural motivation of society, was strategically utilized by the Eisenhower administration to encourage both domestic and allied spiritual communities to adhere to a unified Christian democracy. This democracy would thus clash drastically with agnostic communism enforced by the Soviet Union. Clare Boothe Luce, ambassador to Italy in the early 1950's, serves as a ideal example of an individual who was both motivated by and a motivator of Christianity-infused American values. Church and state were no longer separated as spiritual rhetoric became essential within an anti-communist 'soft' war on the Home Front and in the U.S. Foreign Service. This thesis has contributed to the research on the religious dimension of the Cold War, and Clare Boothe Luce's personal and political contribution to the SIC.

Nonetheless, this thesis is limited to the timeframe of the early-Cold War. The relevance of Christianity and the upsurge of Catholicism within the American electorate, in the decades after the 1950's, would be valuable to examine in further academic research. Also, CBL's further political career and writings are not discussed in this analysis, and her religious experience, combined with her political beliefs in the years after her ambassadorial term in Italy, would be interesting to explore. However, this thesis has added to the study of religion in U.S. diplomacy, and has incorporated the individual experience of a female politician within Herzog's Spiritual Industrial Complex.



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