

The Idea of an American Century

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The phrase “American Century” has usually been used to describe a particular period in our history: the emergence of the United States as the world’s greatest power during and after World War II and its crusading internationalism during the Cold War. But such is the power of the idea that it has survived, in popular discourse, as a description of America’s continuing image of itself as a nation that somehow sets the course of the world’s history – a nation whose values and virtues continue to make it a model to other peoples. In this paper, I want to try to describe the origins and some of the implications of this idea during and immediately after World War II. But in the world of the early twenty-first century – a world now defined in part by the catastrophic attack on the United States in September 2001, by the new wave of nationalism that has swept the country in its aftermath, and by the newly aggressive role in the world that the United States seems to be preparing to assume – the concept of an American Century suddenly seems alive again.

In many ways, of course, the *idea* of an American Century (although not the phrase) is as old as, indeed older than, the nation itself; and it is in the early origins of this idea that some part of the modern understanding of the concept can be found. Ever since the first Europeans set their eyes on the American continents, the idea that the New World would somehow transcend and redeem the Old became an article of faith among many people on both sides of the Atlantic. The European settlements in America were destined to be a “city on a hill,” “the last best hope of

man on earth,” or -- as Herman Melville wrote in the mid-nineteenth century -- the “political messiah,” who has come, he said, “in us . . . the pioneers of the world.”

The seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth century proselytizers of American exceptionalism, and of the special role America was to play in history, saw the New World and the new nation as an example, a model, a light shining out to a wretched globe and inspiring it to lift itself up. It was a morally energized vision, but also a largely passive vision. Few people in those years supported active efforts to impose the American vision on other societies, or even to promote it abroad with any real fervor. It was a vision of the United States looking out across a decadent or uncivilized globe, vaguely disapprovingly, hoping it would choose to follow the American example and improve.

Another, different vision of America’s role in the life of the world emerged late in the nineteenth century when a new and more muscular form of nationalism began to penetrate American thinking about the country’s place in the international order. This new vision was inspired by, and was at times not very different from, the European imperial visions of the time, as Henry Watterson, the editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, suggested when he wrote around the time of the Spanish-American War and the American acquisition of the Philippines and other colonies:

From a nation of shopkeepers we become a nation of warriors. We escape the menace and peril of socialism and agrarianism, as England has escaped them, by a policy of colonization and conquest. From a provincial huddle of petty sovereignties held together by a rope of sand we rise to the dignity and prowess of an imperial republic incomparably greater than Rome.

Theodore Roosevelt, similarly, told a California audience in 1903, that all nations pass away,

but that "the great expanding nations" of history leave behind "indelibly their impress on the centuries. . . . I ask that this people rise level to the greatness of its opportunities. I don't ask that it seek the easiest path." ¹

But the more powerful expression of this new sense of America's global role was not a conventionally imperialist one. It was the vision articulated by, among others, Henry Cabot Lodge, the Massachusetts senator who became the most powerful obstacle to Woodrow Wilson's dream of a new world order. Lodge saw no contradiction between his fervent opposition to the League of Nations and his equally fervent commitment to the idea of America as a global power. But he did place boundaries around that idea. "We are a great moral asset of Christian civilization," he said in 1919, during the debate over the League:

How did we get there? By our own efforts. Nobody led us, nobody guided us, nobody controlled us. . . . I would keep American as she has been -- not isolated, not prevent her from joining other nations for . . . great purposes -- but I wish her to be master of her own fate.²

The cluster of ideas that such statements represent marked an important departure in America's relationship to the world, but also a sharply bounded one. America would take its place among the great world powers, the early champions of empire insisted, but it would not tie its fortunes to those of any other nation. It would make no alliances and acquire no colonies (other than the ones it had somewhat hesitantly absorbed after the Spanish-American War). The United States, unlike European colonial powers, would not seek new opportunities to remake other societies in the western image. It would, rather, act unilaterally to promote its interests and to preserve an "Open Door" for American trade.

The vision of an American Century that emerged during and after World War II was a fusion of these two related, but until the 1940s mostly separate, visions. The critical ingredient that now set the United States on its new path -- born of the nation's experience in World War II -- was the determination of many Americans to use the nation's great power actively and often very aggressively to spread the American model to other nations, at times through relatively benign encouragement, at other times through pressure and coercion, but almost always with a fervent and active intent.

Many prominent Americans worked to promote this new and more expansive vision of America's global destiny, which for a time in the 1940s had relatively little broad public support. But the man whose name is most clearly linked to the idea of an American Century is undoubtedly Henry R. Luce, the founder and crusading editor/publisher of *Time*, *Fortune*, and *Life* magazines and as early as 1940 one of the nation's most outspoken internationalists. He believed strongly that the United States must assist Britain and its allies in their war against Germany and, earlier than most supporters of Britain, that eventually America itself must become a combatant. In 1940, he joined a group of influential internationalists to put pressure on the Roosevelt administration to find new ways to help the imperiled British war effort. Known as the "Century Group," after the elite New York men's club in which they held their meetings, they played an important role in persuading the president to create the Lend-Lease program in March 1941. A few weeks before that, on February 17, 1941, Luce published a celebrated and controversial essay in *Life* magazine entitled "The American Century," whose title -- although not original to Luce -- he helped make a part of the nation's public language.³

Luce's vision of an American Century was rooted in part in his own experiences. He was born and spent his entire childhood in China, the son of a Presbyterian minister and missionary

who taught in a small college for Chinese converts to Christianity. His first sustained experience with America came when he entered prep school in Connecticut in 1913. In China, Luce lived with his family inside walled missionary compounds, where he encountered virtually no Chinese people (except domestic servants) and instead spent his youth almost entirely in the company of like-minded missionary families from America and England. Outside the compounds were the fetid villages and ravaged countryside of a desperately poor nation. Inside were the pleasant houses, carefully tended gardens, and stable communities of the Victorian Anglo-American bourgeois world.⁴

The contrast between the ordered world of the missionary compound and the harsh social and physical landscape outside it reinforced the assumptions driving the Protestant missionary project in China: the unquestioned belief in the moral superiority of Christianity and in the cultural superiority of American (and western) culture; the commitment to showing the way not just to the love of Christ, but to a modern, scientific social order based on the American model. Luce as a child knew relatively little about America other than the idealized image of it that his father and other missionaries created to justify their own work. America to him began not as a physical place, not as a diverse and contentious culture, but as an abstraction -- an ideal and a model. And even though he spent over half a century living in the United States after 1913, he never really abandoned his youthful attachment to a carefully constructed myth about America's history and its place in the world. Decades later, "The American Century's" ebullient, moralistic, paternalistic language echoed in many ways the missionary credo that Luce – and the many other missionary children who went on to play influential roles in America's late-twentieth-century global missions – must have heard every day as a child.⁵

But "The American Century" was also an impassioned piece of propaganda written for a

particular historical moment – an essay designed to rouse Americans out of what Luce considered their slothful indifference and inspire them to undertake a great mission on behalf of what he considered the nation’s core values. It was an effort to force his fellow citizens to confront the reality of the war and America’s obligation to play a forceful role both in ending it and in building a better world in its aftermath, an effort to persuade them of the importance of saving Great Britain and defeating fascism. As part of that effort, he sketched a bold picture of the nation’s destiny that exaggerated only slightly what would by the late 1940s be a widely shared and increasingly powerful view – a vision in which American abundance and American idealism seamlessly merged.

The American Century, Luce wrote,

... must be a sharing with all people of our Bill of Rights, our Declaration of Independence, our Constitution, our magnificent industrial products, our technical skills. . . . [W]e have that indefinable, unmistakable sign of leadership: prestige. And unlike the prestige of Rome or Genghis Khan or 19th century England, American prestige throughout the world is [the result of] faith in the good intentions as well as in the ultimate intelligence and strength of the whole of the American people.⁶

How, Luce wondered, could a nation that embodied such important and potentially universal values, a nation with such unparalleled wealth and power, remain on the sidelines in the battle for the future of the world? All America’s hopes for its future would fail, he insisted, unless our vision of America as a world power includes a passionate devotion to great American ideals . . . a love of freedom, a feeling for the equality of opportunity, a tradition of self-reliance and independence, and also of cooperation. . . . we are the inheritors of all the great principles of Western civilization--above all Justice, the love of

Truth, the ideal of charity. . . . It now becomes our time to be the powerhouse from which the ideals spread throughout the world and do their mysterious work of lifting the life of mankind from the level of the beasts to what the Psalmist called a little lower than the angels.⁷

Something of the same moralistic, evangelical language appeared in another powerful call for a new American role in the world, a speech delivered a little over a year later, on May 8, 1942, by Vice President Henry A. Wallace and widely known as "The Century of the Common Man" (although its actual title was "The Price of Free World Victory"). Wallace would later become a controversial, even reviled figure for his leadership of dissenting leftists in the early years of the Cold War, his bitter criticisms of what he considered America's excessive militarism and aggression, and for his perhaps unwitting alliance with communists in the 1948 campaign. But he gave his speech at a high watermark in his political career. A little over a year into his vice presidency, he had a reputation – soon to be shattered – as the second most important figure in government, as the "assistant president," as Roosevelt's likely heir. His 1942 speech was not the work of the later, embittered and ostracized Wallace. It was the work of a prominent, mainstream Democrat – an important and influential figure in the Roosevelt administration – attempting to rouse the public behind a war that the nation was not yet clearly winning.⁸

Wallace was implicitly critical of what he considered the imperialistic rhetoric of Luce's 1941 essay, and he was careful to distance himself from any notion that the United States could unilaterally impose its values and institutions on the world. But he too presented a vision of the future that included a central role for the United States in both inspiring and shaping a new age of democracy. "This is a fight between a slave world and a free world," he said. "Just as the United States in 1862 could not remain half slave and half free, so in 1942 the world must make

its decision for a complete victory one way or the other." Naturally, Wallace expected the "freedom-loving people" -- who were not Americans alone, but among whom Americans stood pre-eminent -- to answer that question and to shape the postwar world. The shape of their answer, he said, was embodied in the Four Freedoms Franklin Roosevelt had proclaimed in January 1941, freedoms that "are at the very core of the revolution for which the United Nations have taken their stand." And just as Luce's vision of an American Century included a vision of exporting western industrial abundance to the world, so Wallace insisted that "the peace must mean a better standard of living for the common man, not merely in the United States and England, but also in India, Russia, China, and Latin America -- not merely in the United Nations [as the western alliance then called itself], but also in Germany and Italy and Japan."⁹

"Some have spoken of the 'American Century,'" Wallace added, in an obvious effort to distance himself from Luce. "I say the century on which we are entering . . . can be and must be the century of the common man." In the years to come, as Wallace's own vision (and political fortunes) changed, he came increasingly to see his speech as a full-throated rejoinder to what he considered Luce's more imperialist vision. At the time, however, both Wallace and Luce spoke generally kindly about each other's remarks and seemed to agree that they were, on the whole, fighting the same battle. ("I do not happen to remember anything that you have written descriptive of your concepts of 'the American Century' of which I disapprove," Wallace wrote to Luce shortly after he delivered his speech. Luce's description, he added, "is almost precisely parallel to that I was trying to say in my talk.") In his vision of a world modeled on American notions of freedom, in his commitment to spreading the fruits of economic growth to the world, in his insistence that "older nations will have the privilege to help younger nations get started on the path to industrialization," and perhaps most of all in the extravagant rhetoric with which he

presented these ideas, Wallace's speech was less an alternative to Luce's essay than a variation on it. "There are no half measures," he concluded. "No compromise with Satan is possible. . . . We shall fight for a complete peace and a complete victory. The people's revolution is on the march, and the devil and all his angels cannot prevail against it. They cannot prevail for on the side of the people is the Lord."¹⁰

"The American Century" and "The Price of Free World Victory" were major documents of their time. Both Luce and Wallace arranged to have them repeatedly reprinted, and they circulated widely throughout the United States and the world. But they are of interest today not mainly because they had great influence on the public conversation of their time; their influence was, in fact, relatively modest in the end. They are of interest because they are among the most visible symbols of a growing movement among American leaders, and eventually among many others, to redefine the nation's relationship to the world and, in the process, to redefine America's sense of itself. They make clear that the idea of an American Century was not a product of the Cold War; that the idea preceded and helped to define the Cold War – just as the Cold War eventually helped to redefine it. And they suggest something of the crusading power that idea came to assume among influential Americans across a large swath of the political and ideological spectrum.¹¹

The idea of an American Century found concrete expression in many ways. It helped support the aggressive internationalism of American foreign policy after World War II and throughout the Cold War. It helped inspire the Marshall Plan and the larger postwar system of foreign aid. It helped sustain America's vast military establishment and justify the nation's increasing covert interventions in other nations. It helped bind the United States to the United

Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, and to legitimize the complex system of alliances that the nation created in the 1940s and beyond.

But another compelling expression of that idea came in efforts to refurbish, and even redefine, the idea of the American nation itself in the years after World War II. For in the aftermath of that terrible struggle, it no longer seemed possible to take for granted the moral and practical claims of democracy and freedom. To many Americans, the great task after the war – a task that came to seem even more urgent several years later as the Cold War cast its shadow across the nation’s cultural landscape – was to define American identity, to tie it firmly to a belief in the nation’s great moral power, to mobilize the American public to embrace it, and then to export it to the world. This was the great cultural project of the 1940s and 1950s, a project fully compatible (and often synonymous) with the nation’s geopolitical goals. And it mobilized in its service not just the state, but a large community of intellectual, academics, writers, philanthropists, business and labor leaders, clergy, journalists, and many others.

One of the earliest and most celebrated efforts to arouse popular enthusiasm for the idea of an American Century, to reinforce Americans’ commitments to the particular virtues of the national project, was the Freedom Train – an exhibit of over 100 important documents and artifacts from American history, which traveled across the nation behind a red-white-and-blue locomotive between 1947 and 1949. Among the items in the Train’s exhibit were the Mayflower Compact, the Bill of Rights, a manuscript copy of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, a draft of the Declaration of Independence edited by Jefferson, a copy of the Constitution annotated by Washington, one of Woodrow Wilson’s drafts of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the flag that had flown at Iwo Jima, and much more. Upon leaving the train, visitors were invited to add their names to a Freedom Scroll and to take a

pledge rededicating themselves to the American creed. More than 3.5 million Americans visited the train during its two-year journey.¹²

The Freedom Train represented not only the urgency behind the effort to promote American identity, but the wide array of forces committed to furthering that promotion. The idea emerged out of the federal government. William Coblenz, who worked in the public information office of the Justice Department, proposed a traveling exhibition after being inspired by a lunchtime visit to the National Archives. “It seemed to me incredible that a display of such topical interest was not being brought to all the American people,” Coblenz, later wrote. He enlisted the support of the Attorney General and eventually the President behind the idea. By allowing these great documents to travel across the nation, Attorney General Tom Clark argued, it might be possible to reverse the “cynicism, disillusionment and lawlessness” that the end of the war had produced. “Indoctrination in democracy is the essential catalytic agent needed to blend our varying groups into one American family,” he claimed. “Without it, we could not sustain the continuity of our way of life.” Funding for the train came from major American banks and corporations, funneled through the American Heritage Foundation, which was created to organize the Train and “to remind people that freedom is a continuing struggle.” The design of its exhibits was supervised by Hollywood studio executives. Its progress across the country was eagerly chronicled by the national press and publicized through an elaborate campaign designed by the advertising industry. The Freedom Train was one of many efforts by such private/public alliances to promote American values and cement the idea of the American Century in the first years after the war.¹³

But the promotion of the American Century was not simply a product of government and of defenders of free enterprise. It was a major project of the academic and intellectual worlds as

well, and became most clearly visible in the growth of the American Studies movement. Before the war, there had been about a dozen such programs scattered among a few elite northeastern colleges and universities and mostly devoted to interdisciplinary work on history and literature with no particular ideological foundation. After the war, both the number and the character of such programs rapidly changed. By 1947, there were over sixty programs, spread through almost all regions of the country, and more than a dozen graduate programs training scholars to keep the movement alive. And out of the American Studies movement – out of the formal American Studies programs but also out of the even more widespread scholarly ethos that the movement created – came an extraordinary outpouring of scholarship devoted to exploring American national identity, the “American character,” and the nature of American democracy. “Somewhere back of the American Studies ideas,” Leo Marx wrote in 1979, “there once lurked an amorphous conception of the United States as the embodiment of a social ideal.” This scholarship was not uniformly, or even primarily, celebratory; indeed some of it provided some extraordinarily harsh critiques of American culture and politics. But there was an essential unity within the movement in the belief that there was such a thing as a national character and identity; that it was important for the nation to examine, strengthen, and improve its culture; and that there were lessons in this effort both for Americans themselves and for much of the rest of the world.¹⁴

Many of the early founders of American Studies became deeply involved in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, funded (unbeknownst to some of them at the time by the CIA), whose goal was to trumpet the superior virtues of American culture to a world tempted by communism. Some helped create the Fulbright program, which for half a century now has sent American scholars overseas to help other peoples understand the United States. And others helped create the Salzburg Seminar, a summer program in Europe (conceived by three Harvard students in

1947, taught by leading American scholars of American Studies, and specifically designed to help European students understand the United States and use its history and culture to rebuild their own. Most of the faculty – led by F. O. Matthieson of the American Civilization program at Harvard – were people of the liberal left, determined to present a critical view of the United States and to illustrate its long and painful struggle against its own demons. Hence Matthieson’s passionate belief that the central document of American Studies was Melville’s *Moby Dick*. “No more penetrating scrutiny has yet been made of the defects of individualism,” he wrote of it. Or Richard Hofstadter’s insistence that “we Americans came with no intention of acting . . . as national apologists.” But they also had, as Matthieson told the first group of students, who came from all over Europe, “a strong conviction of the value of American democracy” and of its suitability for other societies. “Heretofore American have come to Europe as students,” Matthieson told the participants. “But now we come, not to study your culture, but bringing our own.” The Salzburg seminar (which still survives) attracted funding from the Ford Foundation and many other proselytizing American philanthropies, and the support of the State Department.¹⁵

In 1944 the British historian Denis Brogan published a book entitled *The American Problem* (later published in the United States under the title *The American Character*). In it , he wrote of the challenges facing the United States after the war in dealing with a world destined to become more and more interconnected. The American problem, he wrote, was a double one: the problem of making intelligible to the American people the nature of the changes in the modern world which they can lead, or which they can resist, but which they can’t ignore. That is a problem for Americans. There is the second problem: the problem of making intelligible the normal American’s view of the world, of his own history and

destiny.

Americans, he concluded, “have much to give, materially and spiritually: a well-founded optimism about their own possibilities; a well-founded belief that some of the problems of unity . . . have been solved in the American Experience.” The American Studies movement embraced the challenges and, at times, expressed the faith that Brogan described.¹⁶

So did Henry Luce, who had helped popularize the idea of an American Century in 1941, and who devoted much of his postwar energy to making his magazines effective champions of that idea both at home and abroad, both in promoting the aims of American foreign policy and in leading a highly public search to define the “national purpose.” To Matthieson and many other academics and intellectuals, the Luce publications were crude purveyors of a simplistic, hegemonic vision of the American Century. In fact, Luce’s magazines were far from uniformly celebratory, and Luce himself sought constantly to persuade leading intellectuals (including some of the most dyspeptically critical) to contribute essays to *Life* and *Fortune*. But Luce’s magazines did include a large dose of exuberant nationalism – particularly in the overseas editions that were becoming an increasingly important part of the company’s activities. Luce believed that by illustrating the brilliance and variety of American culture, business, religion, and politics, his publications could help arouse Americans to commit themselves to the larger purposes he believed they must accept, and also inspire the peoples of other countries to recognize the value of the American model. Most of all, his magazines could inspire the world to emulate the core value of the American people.

The “postwar *Time*,” Luce once explained to his editors, will have to do “plenty of explaining” to the new readers it hoped to attract around the globe. It would have to explain itself, certainly, but it would also “have to explain about America.” There was much about

America that needed explaining to the world, not all of it attractive, Luce argued. “But if we had to choose one word out of the whole vocabulary of human experience to associate with America – surely it would not be hard to choose the word. For surely the word is Freedom. . . . Without Freedom, America is untranslatable.” And that, then, was the postwar mission of his magazines. “Despite all confusions by which we have been confused and may have confused others, I think we have achieved some intellectual right to say that we of Time Inc. have fought, are fighting and will fight ... ‘For the Freedom of All Peoples.’ . . . We believe that the relation of the people of the U.S. with the other peoples of the world must be based on the principles of Freedom. (This can be endlessly celebrated.)”¹⁷

The idea of an American Century, and the widespread efforts to promote and solidify that idea, reflected a vision of the nation that even in the 1940s many Americans feared was unstable. How else can we explain their fevered efforts to promote and solidify that vision among a public they suspected had a weak attachment to it. Even the proselytizers themselves offered very different versions of what America was and what an American Century would mean. And yet, in the end, almost everyone involved in this great, sprawling project seemed to agree that it was possible to define the meaning of America in terms that would be broadly acceptable; that there was such a thing as an American creed and an American character; that the idea of an American Century rested on something more than a realistic appraisal of American power, that it had a basis in the values and culture of the American people.

In the end, though, the American Century theorists were never able to produce a definition of an American character or an American creed that adequately represented their own time, let alone ours. The Freedom Train is one of many examples of the great difficulties

inherent in defining the American ethos. It was the product of awkward compromises that belied its message of a universal American commitment to a set of national symbols. There was a vigorous debate over whether to include the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 as one of the central documents of American freedom, a debate the defenders of including the Act lost. Even the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution – guaranteeing African Americans “equal protection of the laws” and the right to vote – were, the organizers feared, too controversial to add to the Train’s picture of the American creed. There was a prolonged struggle over how the Train should deal with the racial norms in the South and elsewhere, and a quite bitter debate among the organizers about the appropriate stance to take. Ultimately, the organizers forbade segregated viewing of the Train and cancelled visits to several cities (including Memphis and Birmingham) that balked at that requirement; but they also made concessions to segregationists. In some cities, they permitted separate lines for black and white visitors and admitted them in alternating groups of twenty-five. They permitted an extra car containing the Confederate constitution to accompany the train through Georgia. Despite the huge popular interest the Train provoked, the admittedly scanty evidence suggests that few African Americans, and indeed few people of color of any kind, visited it – perhaps a reflection of their view that freedom, for many Americans, remained an empty ideal. “I want freedom itself,” Paul Robeson said at the time, “not a freedom train.”¹⁸

Those who announced the dawn of the American Century, and the much larger group of people who attempted to promote it as a projection of American values and morality into a crippled and beckoning world, were able to sustain their image of a vital American creed only with considerable difficulty – and only by ignoring, suppressing, or marginalizing the considerable conflict and diversity and injustice that lay beneath the bright, shining surface of

American life; by flattening out their vision of America and the world and creating a manichean image of the globe. Their enthusiasm was understandable. They were acting in the shadow of the greatest war in human history that produced some of the greatest crimes against humanity the world has ever seen. And they were acting, too, in the midst of a new conflict – more difficult to understand, sometimes vague in its aims, subject to no easily foreseeable resolution – that they considered equally momentous and that they believed required a firm commitment from the American people and from the nation's allies, a commitment that they knew would not be easy to sustain. Similar efforts have followed the terrible events of September 2001, as leaders from many areas of American life have mobilized themselves to fortify and inspire the nation in a new and difficult struggle against a shadowy and elusive foe. The example of the comparable efforts of a half century ago, therefore, can be seen both an inspiration and as a warning.

For in embracing the idea of an American Century in the 1940s, a generation of internationalists -- determined to overcome the nation's long tradition of isolation and autonomy in the world -- were in fact inventing a national image that they believed would be helpful to that goal, sometimes wittingly, sometimes not. And in creating this carefully constructed artifice and projecting it so energetically into the world, they were not only contributing to the creation of the kind of American Century so many predicted – a century in which they hoped America would be not just all-powerful but widely emulated and admired. They were also sustaining the nation's insular self-regard and isolation, which their project was allegedly designed to destroy.

NOTES

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1. Robert Dallek, *The American Style of Foreign Policy: Cultural Politics and Foreign Affairs* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), p. 27; "Message to Congress," December 6, 1904, in Herman Hagedorn, ed., *The Works of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: xxx, 1925), pp. 255-256; John Milton Cooper, *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 71, 75.
 2. William Widenor, *Henry Cabot Lodge and the Search for an American Foreign Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 318.
 3. Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce: A Political Portrait of the Man Who Created the American Century* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), pp. 1-23.
 4. Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971), pp. 12-24; Jane Hunter, *The Gospel of Gentility: American Women Missionaries in Turn-of-the-Century China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 128-173; Elizabeth Root Moore oral history.
 5. Henry R. Luce to Elisabeth R. Luce, July 7, 1912, Henry R Luce to Henry W. and Elisabeth R. Luce, December 24, 1916, both in Henry R. Luce MSS, Time Inc. Archives.
 6. Henry R. Luce, *The American Century* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1941), pp. 32-34.
 7. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
 8. John C. Culver and John Hyde, *American Dreamer: A Life of Henry Wallace* (New York: Norton, 2000), pp. 275-280; Edward L. and Frederick H. Schapsmeier, *Prophet in Politics: Henry A. Wallace and the War Years, 1940-1945* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press,

1970), pp. 29-33.

9. Henry A. Wallace, "The Price of Free World Victory," in *Prefaces to Peace* (New York, 1943), pp. 369-375.

10. Ibid., p. 373, 375; Henry A. Wallace to Henry R. Luce, May 16, 1942, Wallace Diaries, X, 1575.

11. Richard J. Walton, *Henry Wallace, Harry Truman, and the Cold War* (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), pp. 10-14.

12. "The Freedom Train," *The New Republic*, September 20, 1948, p. 7; Stuart J. Little, "The Freedom Train: Citizenship and Postwar American Culture, 1946-1949," *American Studies* 34 (1993), 35-36; Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), pp. 249-252; Wendy Lynn Wall, "The Idea of America: Democracy and the Dilemmas of Difference," Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1998, pp. 212-250; Frank Monaghan, *Heritage of Freedom: The History & Significance of the Basic Documents of American Liberty* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947). Monaghan, one of the organizers of the Freedom Train exhibition, described this as a "book presenting and explaining the documents on the Freedom Train . . . the finest collection of original documents on American history ever assembled for exhibition purposes." It provides the texts of the documents on the train along with prefatory notes by the author.

13. William A. Coblenz, "The Freedom Train, And the Story of Its Origin: Our Civil Liberties on Wheels," *Manuscripts* 10 (Winter 1958), pp. 31-33; "Why They Throng to the Freedom Train," *New York Times Magazine*, January 25, 1948, pp. 18-19, 52, 54; "The Freedom Train," *Tide: The News Magazine of Advertising, Marketing, and Public Relations*, April 30, 1948, pp. 24-32;

Robert Griffith, "The Selling of America: The Advertising Council and American Politics, 1942-1960," *Business History Review* 52 (1983), 397-399; Little, "The Freedom Train," pp. 42-43, 49-51; James Gregory Bradsher, "Taking America's Heritage to the People: The Freedom Train Story," *Prologue* 17 (Winter 1985), 229-234.

14. Leo Marx, "Thoughts on the Origin and Character of the American Studies Movement," *American Quarterly* 31 (1979), 398-401; Tremaine McDowell, *American Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), pp. 26-28; Wall, "The Idea of America," pp. 251-253.

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