

**Conferencia - Americans All: Good Neighbor Diplomacy in World War II\*****Darlene J. Sadlier**

In August 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt named Nelson A. Rockefeller to head the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (CIAA), a new federal agency whose main objective was to strengthen cultural and commercial relations between the U.S and Latin America in order to route Axis influence there and secure hemispheric solidarity. An art patron whose family owned Standard Oil, Rockefeller hired some of the country's top figures to head the various divisions dedicated to the fields of radio, film, print materials, art, libraries and educational activities. This was the US government's first major investment in culture as a means not only to make friends abroad but also to influence the public at home. Although the agency was not without its problems, the CIAA years have no equivalent in the U.S. history of foreign relations endeavors; it was also a high point of U.S.-Latin America friendship—a relationship that has never been duplicated since. My talk today is about selected CIAA investments in the arts, literature and radio as diplomatic forces. The specific projects that I am highlighting today are those based largely on my research at the Library of Congress in 2009—in the Hispanic Reading Room, and in the Divisions dedicated to Prints and Photographs, Manuscripts, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound. As I hope to show in my presentation, the Rockefeller agency drew upon myriad personnel and vast material resources both at home and abroad to create a hemispheric dialogue in which writers and artists for the first time had a significant voice.

**THE ARTS**

Just months after the CIAA's inception, Robert G. Caldwell and Wallace K. Harrison, Chairman and Director, respectively, of the agency's Cultural Relations Division, received written approval for twenty-six special projects at a cost of nearly one-half million dollars. The most expensive, at \$150,000, was an Inter-American exhibit of art and culture under the direction of the MoMA, to be held simultaneously with parallel exhibits in capital cities throughout the Americas. Two hundred fifty-five U.S. paintings were curated by the MoMA in conjunction with other major museums, and in April 1941, these were previewed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Portions of the large exhibit then toured eight South American republics, Mexico and Cuba for close to a year, beginning with an exposition at Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes in June. The emphasis was on modern art and included paintings by Georgia O'Keefe, Thomas Hart Benton, Edward Hopper, Stuart Davis, Loren MacIver, and

Eugene Speicher, among others. U.S. specialists accompanied the various tours: MoMA's Stanton Caitlin went to Mexico City, Quito, Lima and Santiago; New Orleans artist Caroline Durieux, who had lived in Mexico and worked with Diego Rivera and other muralists there, oversaw exhibits in Buenos Aires, Rio and Montevideo; and Lewis A. Riley, who had studied art and archaeology and lived in Central America for nearly a decade, traveled to Havana, Caracas and Bogotá. The ambitious project was successful in introducing a little-known aspect of U.S. culture to the other American republics. Durieux was enthusiastic about the South American reception, stating in a newspaper interview that over 60,000 people had attended the three capital city exhibits. In *Good Neighbor* fashion, which focused on the sameness of peoples north and south, she also emphasized fundamental similarities between the Americas that should outweigh any differences. But she seemed to put emphasis on race: "There is a definite kinship between North and South Americans who, after all, have sprung from the same European stock, and there is no reason why misunderstandings should exist between them." (One might note the absence of any reference to the Americas indigenous and African heritages.) She was particularly pleased that Latin Americans "were learning that there is more to the United States than business"—a recurring slogan in cultural relations.

The CIAA project included the publication and distribution of 35,000 tri-lingual exhibit catalogs titled *Contemporary Painting in the U.S.* with a preface by novelist Waldo Frank, who was a major proponent of Latin American literature and culture in the U.S. Ten sets of fifty-three U.S. art books each were donated to major institutions in the ten exhibiting capital cities. Press reaction was positive and widespread, including positive reviews by two of Brazil's most celebrated authors, novelist José Lins do Rego and poet Manuel Bandeira. Meanwhile, an amusing anecdote about the exhibit appeared in U.S. newspapers. Among the paintings on display was Eugene Speicher's portrait of Broadway star Katharine Cornell in the role of Bernard Shaw's *Candida*--a painting that Cornell had donated to the MoMA. According to Leonard Lyons's syndicated column, "Broadway Medley," Cornell suddenly began receiving fan mail from South Americans who had seen the exhibit and praised her extraordinary beauty. Intrigued by this outpouring, Cornell obtained a catalogue of the show and discovered that two of the artwork titles had been switched: "Cornell as *Candida*" had been transposed to one of Speicher's voluptuous nudes.

The second part of the Inter-American art project involved an exhibition of Latin American works to be loaned by various U.S. art museums, private companies and institutions, including the MoMA, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Pan American Union, IBM, the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Taylor Museum in Colorado Springs. The San Francisco

Museum of Art was one of the most heavily invested, with a contribution of contemporary Latin American paintings, drawings and photographs by Mexicans Rufino Tamayo, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros and Fermín Revueltas; Brazilian Cândido Portinari; Colombian Luis Alberto Acuña; Peruvian Julia Codesido; and Cubans Wilfredo Lam and Amelia Pelaez.

As a result of CIAA initiatives, certain Latin American artists quickly came to the attention of critics, and markets for their works grew in the U.S. Already in late 1940, Brazilian Cândido Portinari was on the rise in art circles as a result of his larger-than-life, modernist murals of Northeastern jangadeiros (fishermen on rough-hewn rafts with sails), baianas and gauchos, which were displayed in Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer's acclaimed Brazilian Pavilion at New York's 1939 World's Fair. During his stay for the U.S. exposition, Portinari was commissioned to paint numerous portraits, including a self-portrait for Nelson Rockefeller and four portraits of Arthur Rubenstein family members. In November 1940, poet and Library of Congress director Archibald MacLeish invited Portinari to paint a set of murals for the Library of Congress's Hispanic Reading Room. As a Good Neighbor gesture, the Brazilian government paid for Portinari's return to the U.S., and the CIAA matched Brazil's funds to support the artist's work. Once sketches were completed, Portinari began painting the murals in October 1941 and finished two months later.

Like other muralists at the time, Portinari was drawn to the rural poor and urban working class as inspiration for his work. His World's Fair murals also depicted Brazil's three races through modernist-style figures of men and women. While the Brazilian government, under dictator Getúlio Vargas, wanted to promote the country's modernity and put limits on images of Brazil as poor, black or mixed-race, Portinari continued to celebrate the nation's racial heritage in his floor-to-ceiling paintings for the Library of Congress. The murals focus on the most humble social types: Portuguese sailors on a ship bound for Brazil; mixed-race São Paulo frontiersmen or bandeirantes pushing into the interior to seize land for the Crown and capture fugitive Indian slaves; Portuguese Jesuits converting Indian women and children; and African slaves being transported during the eighteenth-century gold rush to the Minas Gerais interior. The Library of Congress murals were well-received at the official opening on January 12, 1942, where a specially-produced publication, *The Portinari Murals*, celebrated the artwork as a step forward in U.S.-Brazil cultural relations.

In spring 1942, Brazil's Ministry for Education reciprocated by inviting U.S. artist George Biddle to teach a course at the newly-created Escola Técnica in Rio. Biddle had been heavily influenced by Diego Rivera and the Mexican muralist tradition and was a central

proponent of the Federal Arts Project under FDR, his first mural having appeared in the 1933 Chicago's World Fair. Brother of Francis Biddle, Attorney General under FDR, he later chaired the U.S. War Department's Art Advisory Committee (1942-1944) and wrote *Artist at War* (1944), about his experiences as an art war correspondent for *Life* magazine in North Africa and Sicily. Biddle and his sculptor-wife Hélène Sardeau were invited to create two murals in fresco and bas-relief for Rio's Biblioteca Nacional. Biddle wrote enthusiastically to Henry Allen Moe, who chaired the CIAA's Educational Activities section of the Division: "I feel very happy now the way things have turned out. The two large murals are in as fine a building as any in Rio, on the main avenue of the City; and the themes which I intend to use have, I believe, great significance: (1) Not hatred, Destruction and Death over America, but (2) Intelligence and Humanity Shall Rule Our World. As far I know, it is the first time that two artists from the States have been invited by a South American Government to execute an important mural commission." As was the case of Portinari, Biddle also painted portraits while abroad, which brought him into close contact with major Brazilian officials. Biddle's LOC archive includes a January 20, 1943 letter from Rockefeller to Brigadier General Frederick Osborn, which mentions that Biddle had painted a portrait of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Oswaldo Aranha's mother—an especially important assignment given Aranha's close association with the US as Brazil's former Ambassador to the US.

Biddle's social activism and horror of war, wedded with his various experiences as a teacher and artist in Brazil, led him to draft a document (dated December 23, 1942) advising the CIAA to convene a congress of Latin American and U.S. artists and writers in the U.S. He compared Western Europe's longstanding program of cultural relations with Latin America with the U.S.'s historic and lamentable indifference to cultural exchange: "Over and over again in a year's stay in Brazil I saw tragic evidence of the lack of such a program. Commenting on this situation a Brazilian publisher and editor said to me: "'You are thirty years late at the start. But for these next few months you are without competition. For God's sake do something NOW. After the war it may be too late. At any rate you will no longer be in a position where you can shape an intelligent cultural program for an eager and friendly audience of 120,000,000.' "

Having resided in Brazil for over a year, Biddle was possibly unaware of CIAA efforts to promote art exhibits and literary translations—areas he specifically targets in his proposal. On July 22, 1942, Rockefeller wrote to Biddle: "If you ask Dr. Oswaldo Aranha to recommend the ten books he feels are most appropriate, we will make a special effort to have them published under this project." Later, on February 19, 1943, Rockefeller authorized the Brazilian Division

to negotiate, at \$500 each, Portuguese translations of U.S. publications that Biddle had recommended. These included Charles A. and Mary Beard's *The Rise of American Civilization* (1927), Van Wyck Brooks's *The Flowering of New England* (1936), and Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steel Commager's *The Growth of the American Republics* (1930). Biddle also recommended broader, more comprehensive actions, such as discussions over copyright laws to protect artists and writers, federal programs to support the arts literature and theater, laws to preserve historical monuments and art objects, and ways to address common educational problems and goals. His most detailed recommendation involved CIAA sponsorship of a U.S. visit by fifty Latin American artists and writers at an estimated cost of \$70,000—a figure that he deemed a bargain in terms of goodwill and intellectual dividends, and a scant amount compared to the *New York Times* (December 10, 1942) report of forty-six billion dollars that had been spent by then on the war effort. Biddle also convinced the government to allow a select group of artists to accompany U.S. troops to Italy to make a pictorial record of the war. His correspondence with John Steinbeck on this subject shows the latter's desire for writers to be included in that group, although only artists were ultimately sent overseas.

Along with the Latin American and U.S. art exhibits, the CIAA sponsored a South American tour by sculptor Jo Davidson, who was commissioned in the spring of 1941 to create bronze busts of ten Latin American presidents. Davidson received especially long and favorable newspaper coverage while he was working in Montevideo (*El día*, August 3, 1941) and Caracas (*Crítica*, May 14, 1941). In June 1942, the National Gallery of Art hosted an exhibition of his works accompanied by a catalogue, *Presidents of the South American Republics*. The CIAA's Good Neighbor agenda was forefront in the museum's mind when it placed Davidson's earlier busts of Roosevelt and Wallace among those of the Latin American leaders. No expense seems to have been spared: the CIAA gave the busts to the Latin American presidents and their families and dispatched hundreds of catalogues in Spanish and Portuguese for distribution through U.S. embassies in South America.

Similar to Biddle, Davidson is another example of an artist whose life was radically changed by his war-time assignments. Writing to U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Claude Bowers, in August 1944, he reminisced about his South American tour and referred excitedly to his chairmanship of the high-profile Committee of Artists, Writers, and Scientists for the Re-election of FDR: "This is the very first time in my life where I have taken any active part in a political campaign—but I feel it so, that I simply had to do it." That sentiment was echoed by hundreds of CIAA-contracted artists, filmmakers and writers who, perhaps for the first time, felt that culture was a recognizable and integral part of U.S. foreign diplomacy.

## POSTER ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY

The CIAA's graphics unit sent pictures in print, mat and plastic format to approximately one thousand Latin American newspapers in Rio and Buenos Aires on a daily basis, and from there they were sent on to other South American cities. Up-to-the minute photographs of the D-Day invasion and other critical events were sent by radio transmission from New York to Latin America. Another essential part of the press and publication north-to-south initiative was the distribution of illustrated materials, including posters and cartoons, for the largely illiterate population. In the area of poster art, a "Hemisphere Solidarity Poster Contest" was launched by MoMA as part of a CIAA arts initiative in 1942. The competition required the use of one of twelve slogans in English, Spanish and Portuguese, such as "Hands off the Americas," "21 Republics – 1 Destiny," "Unite against Aggression," and "Fight for a Free America." MoMA received 473 entries from Latin America and 382 from the United States and Canada. Thirty-four prizes were distributed, half to Latin Americans and half to U.S. and Canadian entrants, and there were nineteen honorable mentions. The two largest prizes went to José Renau from Mexico City and Stanley W. Crane from Woodstock, N.Y. Renau's "Unite against Aggression" was the most visually compelling and hard-hitting poster: colorful flags of the twenty-one republics form the backdrop for a powerful image of three hands that together plunge a sharpened stake into the body of a large, writhing cobra. MoMA published a pamphlet with illustrations of the prize-winning artworks and distributed 13,708 copies in North America and another 6,000 in South America. The contest was also written up in major magazines and newspapers, including Newsweek (November 2, 1942), the New York Times (October 21, 1942), and the Christian Science Monitor (November 7, 1942), whose article included color images. Vogue magazine (February 1, 1943) also ran a full page color ad in which fashion models were artfully posed against a backdrop of the prize-winning posters.

By 1945, the CIAA boasted that it had the world's most extensive collection of Latin American photographs, covering a broad range of subjects. Many of these pictures were taken by professional photographers contracted to travel to Latin America. Arguably the most important among them was Genevieve Naylor, a highly-talented WPA and Associated Press photojournalist who traveled to Brazil in October 1940 with her soon-to-be husband, the artist Misha Reznikoff. According to historian Robert M. Levine, Brazil's Dept of Press and Propaganda (DIP) restricted Naylor to subject matter that emphasized Brazil's modernity and largely white, middle and-upper class population; among the Rio subjects she was allowed to photograph were buildings, homes and beachfronts in the fashionable Zona Sul (Southern

Zone), yachting and golf club settings, and commercial shops along the historic downtown Rua do Ouvidor. The Vargas government prided itself on its reform measures and as a result Naylor was encouraged to photograph various social services, including a newsboys' foundation and a school for children of fishermen, which also became the focus of a CIAA documentary, *Boys' Fishing School* (1945).

Naylor and Reznikoff traveled widely in Brazil for nearly three years, trekking into the interior and as far north as Pernambuco, and despite the limits imposed by the government, Naylor was often able to break free and photograph less officially approved subjects. Still in her twenties, she had studied under Berenice Abbott at the New School for Social Research in New York and her work is very much in the tradition of the socially conscious, depression-era photographs of the New Deal's Farm Security Administration and the street photography of the New York Film and Photo League. (Famous names from these schools include Walker Evans, Dorothy Lang, Ben Shahn and Helen Levitt.) The power of her black and white images derives partly from her poor or working class subjects, who are captured in daily yet dramatic motion: a newspaper boy walking in a chiaroscuro afternoon in downtown Rio, passengers clinging to the outside of an overcrowded trolley, street performers dancing Northeastern frevo, young and old enjoying the beachfront, crowds celebrating Carnival, and hundreds gathering for a religious festival. Significantly, several of her photographs disclose the intimate physical proximity between the poor and the well-to-do. We see a black fisherman hauling in nets while a Zona Sul luxury high-rise looms in the background; In another shot, first-class passengers loll on a riverboat's comfortable upper deck while third-class travelers ride on the deck below, where an enormous side of beef on a hook dangles against a backdrop of strung hammocks.

Naylor also shows candid scenes of Brazil at war: soldiers boarding a train, street actors comically miming Hitler and Mussolini, and pro-fascist graffiti on a wall—this last a reminder of fifth-column activity in Brazil. She frequently veered away from the DIP's approved subject matter but was never actually prevented from recording the country's poverty. In one photograph weary adults stand in long bread lines and in another three child beggars sit on a rough-hewn wooden bench. The latter image is especially moving because Naylor photographs the children from behind; by emphasizing their ragged condition and diminutive size instead of their faces, she creates the feeling of unrecognized people and a powerfully emblematic portrait of child poverty. The shot is especially heart-rending because the children are so small—despite the lowness of the bench, their tiny bare feet dangle above the ground.



Naylor's photographs show Vargas's portrait displayed in shops, cafés and even a samba school. Her picture of a local photographer's window display shows small-framed portraits of men, women, and children reverently assembled in front of a large picture of Vargas in presidential attire. Here Vargas resembles a patriarch presiding over his family, a role that many Brazilians associated with the leader. Interestingly, a slightly smaller portrait of Vargas sits above and to the right of this reverential display, as if the dictator were carefully overseeing his own adoration as *pater familias*. This is the kind of photograph that the DIP might have approved of—perhaps without recognizing its panoptic implications.

Naylor's sizable work, a portion of which was lost during her travels in Brazil, makes an interesting comparison to Orson Welles's incomplete film about Latin America called *It's All True*. Both Robert M. Levine and Catherine L. Benamou have noted that Naylor helped Welles identify film locations in Rio. Like Welles, Naylor was intrigued by samba and Carnival and had to work under the watchful eye of the DIP. But Naylor was less scrutinized than Welles, who naturally drew attention and publicity because of his celebrity, movie cameras and crew. A feature-length documentary by a world-famous director was far more important to the government than individual pictures taken by a little-known woman with a portable still camera. As we know, Welles' filming of black Brazilians celebrating Carnival and the reenactment of a trip made by four dark-skinned Northern fishermen seeking economic justice were anathema to the DIP's desired image of Brazil. The project incurred the displeasure of not only Vargas but also of RKO studio executives and Rockefeller himself, whose idea of *Good Neighbor Brazil* included colorful tropical settings and figures such as Walt Disney's *Zé Carioca* and the Brazilian bombshell, Carmen Miranda.

Anticipating Welles and quite unlike Disney, Naylor did not refrain from portraying Rio as a racially-mixed society, but her photo-documentary was more wide-ranging and eclectic. Her pictures of Brazil's integrated, racially-mixed population prominently feature trolley cars, trains, luxurious hotel beachfronts and high-rise buildings—symbols of modernity. Group shots of mainly working-class black, brown and white children at play and in school arguably supported Brazil's much-touted image of itself as a "racial democracy"; and her focus on youth tied in well with the CIAA's emphasis on children as future hemispheric leaders. At the same time, her pictures of beggars, bread lines and black poverty contradicted the idea of a racially egalitarian society. A seemingly innocuous shot of more than one hundred uniformed schoolgirls performing in an outdoor civic pageant conveys an image of a progressive Brazil that the government was eager to show, but it also reveals that all but a few of the girls are white.



Naylor's work from Minas Gerais and the Northeast is filled with images of churches and religious worship—an important aspect of Latin American life that prompted the CIAA to promote, especially in its documentaries, U.S. families at Sunday worship. But Naylor's images are far more interesting in their display of the multitudes gathered for outdoor religious processions or the extreme penitence of those who kneel on cobblestone streets in prayer. Her photographs of Minas are culturally informative, showing colonial towns with beautiful baroque architecture and the life-size statuary carved by Brazil's famous 17th-century artist, Aleijadinho. Poverty is everywhere evident here and in photographs of the Northeast, but with few exceptions her focus is on family, community, faith and work—elements that were to become central to the CIAA's image of an ethos uniting the American Republics. Naylor captures the solemnity and dignity of people in poverty as well as the merriment of Carnival revelers, street musicians and children playing toy musical instruments. Her picture of a Northeastern sanfonista (accordion player) could easily have been the model for the blind ballad singer in Glauber Rocha's famous revolutionary film, *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (1963) (*Black God, White Devil*). Catherine L. Benamou is correct when she points out that Naylor's photographs of Northeastern cowboys, families and rural towns anticipate the dramatic style and radical substance of the 1960s films about the Northeast that came to be known as Cinema Novo.

On January 27, 1943, just before her return to New York, a small exhibit of fifty of Naylor's photographs, titled *Faces and Places in Brazil*, opened at the MoMA. According to a MoMA document, the photographs focused on seven areas: school children, Copacabana Beach, types of people in the interior, Rio de Janeiro, religious festivals, the São Francisco River and Carnival. New York Times columnist Edward Alden Jewell's favorable review mentioned that other, out-of-town reviewers were impressed by the exhibit. The Pittsburgh Sun Telegraph ran Naylor's photograph of the passenger-laden Rio trolley car and in a caption added a bit of humor while acknowledging the importance of Brazil to the Allied effort: "Ticket please. You think Pittsburgh's trolleys and businesses are overcrowded? Here's a trolley at rush time in Rio, Brazil, another country where Roosevelt stopped on his return from Casablanca."

### **ON THE AIR**

Unlike Hollywood movies, U.S. commercial radio was far from an international industry in the years leading up to WWII, and shortwave was used primarily for receiving foreign programs. That situation changed dramatically with the war and the emergence of the CIAA and other

information agencies, all of which recognized radio's ability to shape public opinion at home and abroad. The CIAA recruited major media figures to build a program of news and entertainment for domestic consumption and to provide Latin American listeners with alternatives to Axis radio--which, along with British radio, had gained world-wide prominence in the post-WWI years.

In addition to top-level administrators, the Radio Division recruited some of the foremost names in broadcast writing. Among the contributors were Arch Oboler, who had written NBC's popular horror series, *Lights Out*; Norman Corwin, who had worked at CBS and was the nation's most respected writer of socially critical radio drama; Clifford Goldsmith, the creator of *The Aldrich Family*; Stuart Ayers, an NBC veteran who wrote the *Land of the Free* series; and distinguished writers from Dupont's *Cavalcade of America*, including playwright and journalist Maxwell Anderson, poet Stephen Vincent Benét and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Sherwood Anderson. One of the most active among the agency's contributors was poet, anti-fascist dramatist and Library of Congress head Archibald MacLeish, who directed the short-term Office of Fact and Figures (OFF) and Committee on Information (COI) and then became Assistant Director of the OWI. MacLeish wrote and narrated many programs for, among others, NBC *Inter-American University of the Air*, a series that provided informal instruction to listeners to increase awareness of hemispheric relations. Latin Americans were also an important part of the Radio Division. Chilean Daniel del Solar, a writer for *March of Time* and the *Associated Press*, produced scripts for the series *Estamos em guerra (We're at War)*; Colombian George Zalamea wrote for *Radioteatro de América (Radio Theater of America)*; and Brazilians Orígenes Lessa, Pompeu de Souza, and Raimundo Magalhães produced material for the DIP's New York-to-Rio program *Hora do Brasil (Calling Brazil)*. Undoubtedly the most exciting and flamboyant broadcast contributor, however, was Orson Welles; back from filming in Brazil, he wrote and narrated the CBS *Hello Americans* series, which blended instruction with entertainment, featuring Hollywood personalities such as Carmen Miranda and well-known actors from Welles's *Mercury Theater*. Ever interested in better relations with government, the Hollywood Motion Picture Society of the Americas regularly loaned out celebrities for radio dramas, interviews and special programs—many of which were broadcast from Hollywood. Film star Joan Blondell greeted listeners in Portuguese in her December 1942 interview with poet and Brazilian Consul Raul Bopp, while Welles was busy writing and broadcasting *Hello Americans* from the same west coast office.

In a sense all CIAA broadcasts were intended to be educational, but from a purely instructional standpoint one of the most original and ambitious CIAA shows, seldom free of

dramatized material, was the NBC Inter-American University of the Air. Directed by Sterling Fisher, a specialist in public opinion and radio, Inter-American University was a distance-education program devoted primarily to topics in history and music. Designed in consultation with educators in the U.S. and Latin America, the program was broadcast in English and transcribed and rebroadcast in Spanish and Portuguese to supplement classroom instruction throughout the hemisphere. In the words of a promotional flyer for Spanish-speaking audiences, its objective was “enseñar delectando” or “to teach while giving delight.”

The preview show for Inter-American University was broadcast on June 28, 1942, with the program’s General Supervisor, Dr. James Rowland Angell, serving as announcer and backed by the NBC Symphony orchestra conducted by Frank Black. In his introduction, Angell discussed the role of the “ethereal university” for the “spiritual defense of the Americas” as a “permanent agency for mutual understanding based on the finest cultural thinking.” Several prominent figures helped to launch the show. Speaking from Washington, D.C., Nelson Rockefeller talked about the program’s objectives, including opening new intellectual horizons and bringing higher education in reach of everyone; he called it a “free university as opposed to those in totalitarian countries whose cultural vitality was crushed and sapped.” Assistant Secretary of State Adolf Berle noted the program’s high level of scholarship and literacy aims, while J.T. Thorson, Canada’s Minister of War Services, spoke about the program’s ability to bring closer understanding among the Americas. Actor Vincent Price read poetry by Walt Whitman and Archibald MacLeish, which was followed by the song “America” performed by the “Voices of America” choir. A roundtable with U.S. and Latin American representatives discussed the new radio university as a medium for promoting the democratic spirit, raising the living standard of people through education, and teaching as entertainment. The program concluded with an announcement of its first series, called Land of the Free.

The stated premise for Land of the Free’s projected twenty-seven broadcasts was “mutuality” based on four characteristics supposedly shared by the Americas: republican forms of government; democratic principles derived from constitutions or bills of rights; a stake in world economic and political life; and an expressed common desire to maintain political, economic and cultural independence. The first four shows, or “chapters,” laid the foundation for the series. Aired on July 6, 1942, Chapter One, “The Search for Freedom,” focused on the Atlantic Charter and New World immigrants who fled from religious and political persecution at home. Such historical dramatizations, as always, served as allegories of the present war-time struggle. For example, comparisons were made between persecuted Huguenots, Irish, French, Germans and others who had escaped to the New World, and U.S. residents in Europe

who had been imprisoned by the Nazis and then shipped back to the U.S through Lisbon. Chapter Two, "The Few and the Many," begins with the voices of two fictionalized Nazis who scoff at the idea of representative self-government, one of whom asks: "Where can we find it today?"—as if democracy were passé. A second voice jubilantly replies: "That, my friend, is a blessing of the Western Hemisphere!"—a declaration followed by a narrative on the colonial struggle for representative self-government in the Americas. "Freedom of the Common Man" was the subject of Chapter Three, about Spanish priest Bartolomé de las Casas, who preached against the mistreatment of Indians and later African slaves in 16th-century Mexico. Chapter Four, on the "Freedom of Trade," began with a conversation between two Brazilian coffee growers concerned about their product reaching U.S. markets because of enemy ships in the Atlantic. Maurício says to João: "Freedom of trade is the very life of our nations!" to which João replies: "We will have it again, Maurício. Some day when the war is over...". This brief dialogue serves as the basis for a dramatized account of the history of colonial trade in the New World.

Praised by radio reviewers for its quality and originality, *Land of the Free* was renewed for the 1942-1943 broadcast season and was awarded a Peabody Honorable Mention for top educational programming in 1943. That year Inter-American University also featured a new series titled *Music of the New World*. Scripts and scores for the projected three-year program were prepared by John Tasker Howard, curator of the NYPL Music Division's Americana Collection; Gilbert Chase, LOC Latin American music specialist; and Ernest La Prade, author of the music primer *Alice in Orchestralia* (1925). At the time, NBC's reference collection was limited to music for daily broadcasting needs. Producing *Music of the New World* required extensive knowledge not just of the field but also of the archives where compositions could be found. The programmers' collective musicological expertise resulted in the playing of little-known compositions as well as older, once familiar but rarely heard songs.

Two years after Inter-American University was launched, Archibald MacLeish wrote and narrated a new series for the curriculum, titled *The American Story*. Once again, the basic focus was the similarity of the Americas based on shared history of European discovery and exploration, Crown-appointed governments, and more general attributes such as the lure of the frontier and the "infection of freedom." A combination of narration and dramatization, the half-hour evening broadcasts used colonial documents from the LOC and other archives as source texts for the scripts. Aired on February 5, 1944, the first show was a template for those that followed. After a solemn musical opening, MacLeish tells listeners that hemispheric differences, such as the lingua franca, are real. But he immediately reverses direction and

poses the rhetorical question: "What is it that binds men more closely than speech?" to which he replies: "Experience...our history," a theme that assumes the status of a mantra. MacLeish then draws from colonial sources for a dramatic account of Columbus's life and voyages, which serves as a model for what he calls the "single record" of New World discoveries by the French, German and other Europeans in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. What makes MacLeish's program compelling is not only the quality of the script but also the performances by himself and radio personality and stage and screen star Arnold Moss, who appeared throughout the series. In many ways, this and other series in the Inter-American University anticipate *You Are There*, the popular CBS radio and later television show whose dramatizations brought together figures from the past and present. The February 12th broadcast also anticipates by several decades critic Hayden White's commentary on the relationship between literary and historical narratives: MacLeish challenges those who say that an American literature has yet to be achieved by referring to the wealth of historiographies (correspondence, reports, and personal journals) written by New World discoverers.

## LITERATURE

### Translations

Although some CIAA-sponsored publication activities, including titles translated into Spanish and Portuguese did not have the extensive public reach of films, newspaper articles, photographic exhibits or radio programs, they transmitted a broad range of U.S. literary talent and scientific information to the Latin America region. The translations were a logical extension of CIAA educational initiatives, which involved establishing American libraries and supporting library science training in Latin America. A June 9, 1942 memo from Robert Spiers Benjamin in the Publication Division summarizes important projects underway at the time. Perhaps no one task was as demanding as the division's role as factotum literary agent for procuring titles and rights for editors and authors in the U.S. and Latin America. One of the largest projects, earmarked at \$80,000, was to support translations of State Department-approved U.S. literary and scientific materials by Latin American publishers. The CIAA helped publishers by purchasing and distributing, through the American Council of Learned Societies, a minimum of five hundred copies of each book. These negotiations were based on a report by Library of Congress and Hispanic Foundation's Lewis Hanke, who visited Latin American publishers in the fall of 1941. Victor Publishing in New York translated a few of its own works into English for a "Good Neighbor Collection" in tandem with its Rio company, Livraria Victor Ltda. The first title was Danton Jobim's questionable comparison, *Two Revolutions: F.D.R. and*

Getúlio Vargas (from the original *A experiência Roosevelt e a revolução brasileira*), which appeared in March 1941 and by June was in its fourth printing.<sup>1</sup>

A status report for February 1944 lists dozens of Spanish and Portuguese translations with details of purchase arrangements for advanced copies by the ACLS and estimated costs. Books selected for publication varied according to the publisher. For example, the Buenos Aires Editorial Losada published translations of Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, Thomas Dewey's *Experience and Education* and *The Science of Education*, Edgar Lee Masters's *The Living Thoughts of Emerson*, Archibald MacLeish's *A Time to Speak*, and Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Representative Men & Other Essays*, while Guillermo Kraft Ltda. issued, among others, Leland H. Hinsie's *Concepts and Problems of Psychotherapy*, Oliver L. Reiser's *A New Earth and a New Humanity*, Francis L. Wellman's *Success in Court*, and Frank Luther Mott's *History of American Journalism*. Benjamin's report also refers to special subsidies for anthologies; for example, the CIAA contributed \$4,350 to *An Anthology of Contemporary North American Literature* by Editorial Nascimento in Santiago, Chile.

According to the same 1944 report, publishers such as São Paulo's *Livraria Martins* and certain government agencies, including the Ministry of Agriculture in Rio, received the majority of translation subventions, followed by Argentina, Mexico, Chile and Haiti. The report also lists some of the Latin American titles published in English since 1942. These included *New Directions' An Anthology of Latin American Poetry* (subsidized at \$2,900) and *Five Young American Poets*; *Macmillan's Germans in the Conquest of America* by Colombian Minister of Education Germán Arciniegas and *Chile: A Geographic Extravaganza* by Benjamín Subercaseaux; the Knopf anthology *The Green Continent and Peruvian Traditions* by Ricardo Palma; *Houghton Mifflin's Anthology of Latin American Literature* (subsidized at \$3,000); and *University of Chicago's Rebellion in the Backlands* by Euclides da Cunha. According to Benjamin's 1941 memo, the CIAA provided small grants of \$600 to \$700 to U.S. publishers to help with translation expenses, and the Press Division helped promote books in newspapers and magazines. In the case of Brazil, Mexico and most likely other countries, a local committee recommended titles. In 1942, the Brazilian committee had numerous judges, including artist Cândido Portinari, literary critic Augusto Meyer, and writers Raul d'Éça, Luís Jardim and Gilka Machado. In Mexico, critic Alfonso Reyes, Antonio Castro Leal and Francisco de Monterde made the selections.

There is insufficient space to list all the Brazilian titles recommended for translation. Novelists dominated the list, including Jorge Amado (*Jubiabá*, *Mar morto* [*Sea of the Dead*] and *Cacau*), Amando Fontes (*Os Corumbas*), and Machado de Assis (*Dom Casmurro*, *Memórias*

póstumas de Brás Cubas [Epitaph of a Small Winner]), the last of whom was described in a note as the “best 19th-century writer [,] mother a negress.” Other authors suggested were Vianna Moog (*O rio imita o Reno* [A River Imitates the Rhine]), Rachel de Queiroz (*Caminho de pedras* [Road of Stones], João Miguel, *As três Marias* [The Three Marias] and *O quinze* [The Year 1915]), Octavio de Faria (*Os caminhos da vida* [Byways of Life]), Érico Veríssimo (*Caminhos Cruzados* [Crossroads], Clarissa and Olhai os lírios do campo [Consider the Lilies of the Field]) and Graciliano Ramos (*Vidas secas* [Barren Lives], *Angústia* [Anguish] and *São Bernardo*). The emphasis on the socially-committed Northeastern novel by Amado, Queiroz and Ramos and southern “regional” writers such as Moog and Veríssimo is not surprising given their popularity at home and the radical and left-liberal sentiments of the era.

One of the particularly interesting features of the translation program is the high number of book recommendations that deal with race and slavery in Brazil—as if the committee were eager to point out similarities as well as differences between the history of blacks in the U.S. and Brazil. Titles include Josué de Castro’s *Alimentação e raça* (Alimentation and Race), João Dornas Filho’s *A escravidão no Brasil* (Slavery in Brazil), Gilberto Freyre’s *Casa grande e senzala* (Masters and the Slaves, 1946) and *Sobrados e mucambos* (Mansions and the Shanties), Renato Mendonça’s *A influência africana no português do Brasil* (African Influence in Brazilian Portuguese), abolitionist Joaquim Nabuco’s *Minha formação* (My Formation), Artur Ramos’s *As culturas negras no novo mundo* (Black Cultures in the New World) and *O negro brasileiro* (The Black Brazilian) and Nina Rodrigues’s *Os africanos no Brasil* (Africans in Brazil). The committee’s emphasis in this case departs sharply from the Vargas government’s tendency to minimize or erase blackness in the construction and promotion of Brazil’s image abroad.

Other CIAA translation activities around this time included \$5,000 for best books in Latin America to be translated and published by Farrar & Rinehart, Inc. Peruvian *Ciro Alegría’s* *Broad and Alien is the World* (1941) (*El mundo es ancho y ajeno*), translated by Harriet de Onís, won first prize; the competition generated enthusiasm and was continued. Two years later, Farrar & Rinehart published *Alegría’s* earlier *The Golden Serpent* (*La serpiente de oro*, 1935) which, like *Broad and Alien*, portrayed poverty and class struggle, especially of the indigenous peoples, in Peru. Historian Hubert Herring proposed translating magazine articles into Spanish, Portuguese and English for Inter-American consumption, a project that was funded by the Publications Division.

One of the U.S. publishers most actively engaged in the CIAA translation literary initiative was Knopf, and the person largely responsible for the Latin American selections was



Blanche Knopf, a keen supporter of modern literature, who brought major authors Jorge Amado, María Luisa Bombal, Graciliano Ramos, Eduardo Mallea, Ricardo Palma, among others, to U.S. attention. On April 9, 1942, Sumner Welles took time out to promote Knopf's Good Neighbor interests by writing to Claude Bowers about Blanche Knopf's forthcoming tour of South America "to establish contacts with authors and editors and to identify material for translation." Blanche Knopf's enthusiasm about what she discovered on her trip is apparent in her short essay, "The Literary Roundup: An American Publisher Tours South America": "The chief impression I gained on my recent trip to South America was one of newness, of aliveness, of something being created virtually from the ground up by people who find joy and excitement in that creation, and a great hope for the future" (7). She concisely comments on the book publishing world in Latin America and mentions her own author, William Shirer (*Berlin Diary*, 1940), and John Gunther (*Inside Latin America*, 1941) as two of the best-selling contemporary U.S. writers in Spanish translation (8). Knopf was particularly impressed with Chilean writers and compared Gabriela Mistral's position in the Spanish-speaking world with that of Thomas Mann in pre-Hitler Germany. She also praised historian and geographer Benjamín Subercaseux as "brilliant," and described Maria Luisa Bombal as a "first-rate young novelist," whose work would soon appear in English by Knopf.

### THE POST-WAR

Once the war was over, cultural diplomacy in general was under scrutiny because of its association with the liberalism of FDR's New Deal, or, in the words of Asst. Secretary for Latin American Affairs Spruille Baden, "do-gooders and one-worlders" and "communist-fellow-travelers"—the latter term intended as a specific reference to the CIAA, which was closed down completely in 1946. Cultural programs were now the purview of the State Department, which, in 1950, was attacked by Joseph McCarthy as having been infiltrated by communists. Among those being investigated by McCarthy, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and/or the FBI were Archibald MacLeish, Orson Welles, and former Rockefeller/CIAA advisor William Benton, who had served as Assistant Secretary for Public and Cultural Affairs after MacLeish, and was now a U.S. senator from Connecticut. MacLeish was singled out by McCarthy and J. Edgar Hoover for his communist associations; his bemused response was "no one would be more shocked to learn I am a Communist than the Communists themselves." Welles was secretly and officially listed by the FBI as "a threat to the internal security" of the U.S.; during the period of the Hollywood blacklist he was given few opportunities and as a result became a European exile for nearly a decade. Benton's criticism of McCarthy's

vituperative and unsubstantiated attacks against State Department officials and his formal call for McCarthy's expulsion from the Senate resulted in similar attacks against him and U.S. cultural programs in general.

According to historian Frank Ninkovich, monies that had been appropriated for the CIAA and the OWI needed to be disbursed prior to June 30, 1946. An early post-war arrangement between the State Department and the National Gallery of Art, which gave the Gallery authority over the government's art program, came to an end because of the Department's dissatisfaction with exhibitions that failed to promote U.S. art abroad. To respond to the overseas demand for cultural materials, the Department's J. Leroy Davidson used the unspent funds to purchase seventy-nine contemporary oil paintings by such figures as Georgia O'Keefe, Stuart Davis, Walter Gropper and Marsden Hartley at the extraordinarily low price of \$49,000--which, as Ninkovich points out, was the result of negotiations with artists who agreed to sell under market value as a patriotic gesture. Like the CIAA's earliest touring exhibits on U.S. and Latin American art, the Department's emphasis was on modern art and its association with progress and modernity. The purchase was also in keeping with the idea of offering cultural media (as opposed to informational media) directed specifically at the upper and ruling class.

The paintings were displayed in New York under the exhibition title "Advancing American Art," which was already a sign of changing attitudes: formerly used to describe the Good Neighbor community of twenty-one republics, "American" now was being used to describe only the U.S. After a favorable reception in New York, "Advancing American Art" was shipped to a UNESCO international art exhibit in Paris in October 1946, where it received glowing reviews and, in Ninkovich's words, "provide[d] an excellent stimulus to further intercultural relations. The collection was later split into two touring exhibits, one for Europe and the other for Latin America. But a cultural backlash began when the February 18, 1947 issue of *Look* magazine featured an illustrated article on the collection, headlined: "Your Money Bought These Pictures." Denunciations from Hearst-own newspapers and Republican Party leaders soon followed, accusing the State Department of pushing a left-wing agenda through the purchase and display of art that subverted the "American [U.S.] way of life."

Truman agreed with this view—as his statement "It that's art then I'm a Hottentot" -- made clear, and he stood with political conservatives who considered representational art to be the only acceptable form for U.S. cultural exchange. Yasuo Kuniyoshi's *Circus Girl Resting* was the specific source of Truman's reaction and one of the paintings most virulently attacked. Benton, who had been Assistant Secretary at the time and approved the purchase of the

paintings, received a special drubbing. Reaction was even fiercer when HUAC declared that some of the artists in question had communist affiliations. As John Merryman, Albert Edsen and Stephen Urice have noted in their book *Law, Ethics and the Visual Arts*, the populist hue and cry against the paintings was not so terribly different in style from the 1937 Nazi condemnation of modernism as degenerate art (or, one might add, the Stalinist program of social realism in the arts). Ultimately the traveling exhibits were cancelled, Davidson's job was eliminated at the State Department, and the entire collection of paintings was put on the block and auctioned off as "war surplus" by the War Assets Administration for less than \$6,000. Benton was personally pursued by McCarthy in the early 1950s for his role in the purchase of the collection and for the "un-American" act of printing his *Encyclopedia Britannica* in England instead of the U.S. In 1952, at the height of the Red Scare, Benton lost re-election to the U.S. Senate. U.S. cultural diplomacy was scrutinized as never before and became increasingly tethered to U.S. Cold War interests.

Looking back on the CIAA today, its policies seem, at least in comparison to what followed, a remarkably enlightened example of the government's enthusiastic prioritization of modern and relatively progressive forms of public culture as a powerful mediating force for political and economic interests. It is doubtful that Good Neighbor relations would have yielded the same degree of mutuality or cooperation without the cultural agency and its broad-based program of public information and education through radio, print media and the visual arts. Of course as a war-time propaganda agency, the CIAA used its resources to sway attitudes, build friendships abroad and promote an economic agenda that was abundantly favorable to the U.S. In this sense, the CIAA was more than the sum of its parts and played a crucial role in what is sometimes called U. S. cultural imperialism. But while acknowledging the agency's self-interested character, we should not lose sight of the fact that it helped change, even if only in the short-term and to a degree we can't precisely calculate, the way the U.S. viewed Latin America and the way Latin America viewed the U.S. Most scholars and students of U.S.-Latin American relations would agree, I believe, that relations among Western hemisphere nations were never as good as during the period when FDR was in office. Some of the recognition for this Good Neighbor closeness belongs to the U.S.'s war-time belief and investment in culture and in its creation of an agency whose mission was, for whatever mixed reasons, aimed at engaging, negotiating and making friends with neighbors.

\* Esta conferencia fue dictada por la Dra. Darlene Sadlier en la Biblioteca del Congreso de los Estados Unidos en abril del año 2013. Aquí se presentan argumentos que forman parte de la investigación que la Profesora Sadlier lleva adelante y que fueron volcados en su último libro: *Americans All: Good Neighbor Cultural Diplomacy in World War II*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012. Le agradecemos su contribución para la publicación

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### **Sobre la autora**

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