

American Cultural Diplomacy, the Cinema, and the Cold War in Central Europe

Wagnleitner, Reinhold (University of Minnesota, Center for Austrian Studies, 1992)



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Abstract

In this paper I will not only try to analyze the impact of US-Cultural diplomacy in Germany and Austria during the Allied occupation after 1945, but I want to discuss the important political, social and economic role of this cultural transformation, a massive change achieved through the means of cultural penetration. In a wider context I want to substantiate the following thesis: the so-called Americanization of European culture was not a by-product of the political, military and economic successes of the United States in Cold War Europe but was actually at the center of that process. In a Europe that had been devastated, the USA became synonymous with modernity. By virtually representing the codes of modernity and material abundance, America signified the defeat of the old, the traditional, the small, the narrow--and the poor. To use semiotic terms: America became the sign of the new and the signifier of modernity.

Keywords

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When thinking of Hollywood during the early Cold War, Bond films and blacklists come to mind more readily than the U.S.-Soviet Cultural Exchange Agreement. The potential of such film co-productions are the focus of CEU History Associate Professor Marsha Siefert's new book chapter about cultural diplomacy during the Cold War. These independent producers became key players in the American effort to co-produce films with the Soviet Union." "The acceleration of the Vietnam War in 1965 chilled the political rhetoric, but by then the project itself had broken down and the Soviet team moved to a new film topic – the life of Tchaikovsky – deemed less susceptible to Cold War politics." *American Cultural Diplomacy, the Cinema, and the Cold War in Central Europe*. 1992. Department of History University of Salzburg. Publishing *American Values: The Franklin Book Programs as Cold War Cultural Diplomacy*. 2007. Library Trends. At the height of the Cold War years, "Jazz Diplomacy", proved to be the most powerful tool of the United States to diminish both the credibility and appeal of Communism beyond the Eastern bloc (Rosenberg Jonathan: 2012). From the 1950s to the 1970s however, the U.S State Department sponsored programs; sending its finest jazz musicians to the far end corners of the world (Costigliola Frank: 1984). . Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman and Dizzy Gillespie among others toured in more than 35 countries from Eastern Europe, to the Former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Asia and Africa (<http://www.ebook30>