The Institute of International Education: From Prima Donna Idealism to Parastatal Behemoth and Neoliberal Broker (1919–2003)

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Abstract

The Institute of International Education (IIE) administers the most prestigious awards for international education such as the Fulbright awards. IIE has dominated international education from 1919 to the present as an intermediary between states and private organizations. The Institute’s combination of private administration and capital with the brand of the US government has characterized the shift from massive public spending and bold liberal internationalism in the postwar era to the neoliberalism of the late-twentieth century. In my dissertation, I argue that Americans came to rely on international students as proxies to end global conflicts, fortify the United States’ geopolitical standing, advance capitalist economic development in the Global South, and keep US colleges financially afloat.

The Carnegie Endowment and Rockefeller Foundation sponsored IIE to be the vanguard of international educational exchanges in the early twentieth century. After World War II, with the federal government and the Ford Foundation as new IIE partners, Carnegie and Rockefeller became wary of how this unchecked growth and IIE’s administrative weakness would threaten the core missions of international liberalism. The internal documents available at the Rockefeller Archive Center from IIE, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Commonwealth Fund, and the Ford Foundation belies the optimism of IIE’s published materials. The reports of students also depict the United States as a country aspiring to lead the postwar world but struggling with racial discrimination and a shifting national identity.
The Institute of International Education: From Prima Donna Idealism to Parastatal Behemoth and Neoliberal Broker (1919–2003)¹

The Institute of International Education became central to the spread of twentieth-century liberalism: the political, social, and economic philosophy based on the peaceful international cooperation of states and private organizations, the promotion of democracy, and free markets. IIE administers funding for international education, such as the prestigious Fulbright awards. But its impact is far greater. As a significant intermediary between states, private philanthropies, corporations, and universities, IIE has smoothed global crises and facilitated US diplomatic policies for the past century. IIE has dominated the fields of international education and person-to-person diplomacy from 1919 to the present. In my dissertation, I argue that IIE encouraged American reliance on international students as proxies to end global conflicts, fortify the United States’ geopolitical standing, and advance capitalist economic development in the Global South. The Institute’s combination of private administration and capital with federal legislation and the brand of the US government has characterized the shift from massive public spending and bold liberal internationalism in the postwar era to the neoliberalism of the late-twentieth century.

My contribution to the historiography bridges apparently disparate fields such as the US in the world, the history of education, and migration history. Historians Madeline Y. Hsu, Margaret O’Mara, and Paul A. Kramer have connected global politics, the rise of US universities, and international student flows. My analysis of IIE links the soft power of education with the geopolitical calculations of capital and international relations.

Over the past two summers at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC), I concentrated my research on the first record group in the IIE records, which contains the alumni and historical files. My preliminary research at the RAC in 2022 confirmed that this record
group holds a mix of top-down administrative and bottom-up student perspectives from across the twentieth century. I accessed series 1 and series 2 (alumni and grantee files) and series 3 (historical administrative files). The alumni and grantee files contain reports that are frank and deeply descriptive about their international experiences with the qualitative details that I will need to flesh out my dissertation. The historical files consist of budgetary discussions, political correspondence, and conference and board minutes that illuminate the philosophical principles that guided the IIE at the administrative level. The tension between the bottom-up cross-cultural struggles found in the grantee reports and the administrative ideals and conflicts of the historical files shed light on core social and political relations during the twentieth century.

Chapter One of my dissertation “The Log Hearths, Muslin, and Stationery of International Liberalism in the 1920s and 1930s,” focuses on interwar internationalism and the role of international students in ending global conflict (1919–1939). At the beginning of this period, Stephen Duggan, IIE’s first director, spent much of his time traveling across the country and visiting universities around the world to raise awareness of IIE fellowships and learn about other systems of higher education. The central conflict during these early years was between Duggan and his funders, primarily the Carnegie Endowment and Rockefeller Foundation, about how to spend money. During this period, IIE prioritized European citizens as its grantees, but it also established programs with other regions. The themes of colonialism, racial hierarchies, and liberal internationalism are vital to this chapter. Duggan interpreted IIE’s role as a mediator. There was a simmering tension, however, between the goals of IIE and European colonial powers, especially since IIE tried to expand its fellowship programs to Africa and Asia. Duggan also visited China and Russia, meeting with controversial figures such as Trotsky. Much of the pressure in this chapter also appears in the 1930s with the Spanish Civil War and the increasing power of European dictators whose politics were diametrically opposed to IIE’s liberal internationalism.

There were subtle shifts in how Americans defined what it meant to be “modern” and “liberal” in the fifty years spanning the founding of IIE in 1919 to the disillusionment of the late-1960s. IIE’s liberal internationalism of the 1920s and 1930s was optimistic about the prospect of preventing future war, and Americans who studied and worked abroad were similarly confident of their identities as cosmopolitan modernizers. This
chapter documents the origins of IIE and indicates how its founders and fellows embodied that vision of modernity and liberal internationalism.

IIE noted Japan, China, and India as key countries where the United States had to direct its educational attention to influence the political landscape. IIE was also concerned that “Destructive socialist propaganda is rampant, especially of the Bolshevik type.” 2 The director of Teachers College at Columbia University, Paul Monroe, expressed his concerns to Duggan that the US must act swiftly to establish exchanges abroad. According to Monroe, a major issue in China was “whether the Germans, Japanese, or Americans will dominate.” 3 The training of Chinese students and scholars in the US, and the export of American scholars to China, could help to establish American primacy in the competition to control Chinese education and politics.

From its founding, therefore, IIE’s mission was both practical and ideological. It aimed to expose students and scholars to a conception of American education and identity that was a “wholesome all-round interpretation of American life.” 4 IIE’s purpose was not only to increase the quantity of foreign students in the United States but also to manage their experience. In addition to the overall wholesomeness of American culture, Duggan wanted IIE’s international exchanges to emphasize the founding principles of the United States. The architect Cass Gilbert advised Duggan that IIE should inform its grantees of:

our conception of democracy and our form of government, especially to the Constitution of the United States, the correspondence and public writings and speeches of Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Franklin and other leaders of public thought at the time the nation came into being; that attention be especially directed to the wise advice contained in Washington’s Farewell Address to Congress... 5

Gilbert also wanted to show that even though the US had problems related to labor and corruption, it had been able to improve its collective society and culture through political reform and could be a leader for the rest of the world to do the same. 6
It was important for IIE to maintain its nonpartisan identity in its publications. Although Cass Gilbert’s perspective had a political focus, he was clear to state that “The partisan political point of view, of course, should be absolutely eliminated but attention should be called to the fact that the American People have learned that whichever party wins the minority must loyally acquiesce...” In subsequent years, IIE would maintain political neutrality. It recruited board members and funders from both major political parties. Its published literature reflected that same aspiration toward partisan political neutrality. IIE was careful in its depiction of American democracy and political life to illustrate the US according to these ideal forms.

Despite the undercurrent of imperialism in IIE’s intentions for Chinese students, formal imperialism stymied IIE’s efforts to expand its programs in Africa where European imperialists viewed education as destabilizing. Florence M. Snell, an IIE staff member, reported that the British authorities were not interested in sending Black South African students to the United States. The British refused the offer to send Black South Africans to Hampton because “…the effect of going to the front was bad on nearly all the natives and that American negroes...have come to this country, sowing Bolshevist doctrines, getting money from the natives on false pretenses and leaving them the worse for his presence here.” The British authorities had deep reservations about exposing their Black subjects to European or US culture, especially to the influence of Black Americans, whom they viewed as corrupting and dishonest. It would take decades of struggle for decolonization and civil rights for the momentum to begin to shift. IIE was more interested in establishing peaceful relations with other countries than in encouraging revolution.

Stephen Duggan’s most ambitious trip was to Asia and Europe in 1925 and 1926, initiated because Duggan was a member of the Philippine Educational Survey Commission. Rather than ending his trip in the Philippines, Duggan had elected to travel to China, Japan, and Russia before continuing to Europe. The purpose of this extended trip was to find the “best means of cooperation that can be developed between the universities of those countries and our own.” Irving T. Bush had sent Duggan letters of introduction for many eminent political leaders, including Trotsky. Duggan was interested in contacting the widest variety of politicians and intellectuals possible.
so that he could better engage in his conception of liberal internationalism and prevent future war through a thorough understanding of the “other.”

The cases of Angelina Paratore and Rose Mary Galbo, two women who studied and worked as teaching assistants in Milan and Sicily in 1934–1935, represent typical examples of the experiences of IIE fellows. Paratore wrote to Miss Douglass at IIE, “I am thrilled to hear of my appointment to Palermo, especially because I visited it in 1931 and know many people there. Besides that, Piana dei Greci, the native town of my parents, is only sixteen miles from Palermo. I am thoroughly familiar with the Sicilian language, customs, and ways...” After completing her year in Sicily, Paratore wrote to Douglass once more: “I cannot measure the benefits I received from my year abroad. I came back ‘a new man,’ my views are broader. All the world interests me. I speak Italian fairly well while before I never spoke it.” The idea of transformation, becoming “a new man” through international travel and study was characteristic of how students framed their IIE fellowships. Studying abroad was an opportunity to both connect with the old world where many students’ families had originated and to transform themselves into new and more modern iterations of their previous selves, combining the cultural knowledge of their extended kin groups and nations with their individual growth and development. The individual could therefore become a bridge between nations and generations.

The letters of two French students in the US document the reciprocal side of international exchange. Suzanne Voiron was enjoying her year at St. Catherine’s in St. Paul, Minnesota until she contracted tuberculosis. Her health insurance would not cover the entirety of her $35 bill for x-rays, so Voiron had to contribute $10. Voiron could not pay both that bill and the costs of returning to France, so IIE gave her a loan of $49.32. The cold of Minnesota winters and the American medical insurance system had ended Voiron’s year in the US with pulmonary tuberculosis and a hefty medical bill.

Lucie Jeanne Runacher had a more satisfying culmination to her year in the United States. Runacher had been born in China, and by the time of her return to France, she was planning to travel to China once more. From her first letter to Miss Sanborn at IIE from Syracuse, where she was studying law, she wrote of her rich social life:
“Everybody has made me a very warm welcome. The girls are very nice for me. I have already one real friend. The food is good, my room is good, everything seems to be all right.” She commended Sanborn for being “a very nice aunt for me” and suggested she might visit IIE over the holiday break. In another letter, she emphasized her social ties once more: “I am taking only a few courses in the Law College, to have as much free time as I can. I enjoy the walk I take every morning to the College, the air is so pure and I feel full of life and strength. I like the girl with whom I am living. Most of them can talk only of their college and boy-friends, but the few others are worth listening to.” Runacher also dabbled in dating: “I started having some dates, but the impression that they do not mind at all what’s happening outside of the university is even stronger with them than with the girls. I should like very much to meet some ‘grown-up’ people!” She asked Sanborn for advice in applying to work in China as a secretary for a few months after she returned to France, perhaps hoping to find more enlightened people.

In another letter, her musings turned to the political. She declared, “I think you must have read about the riotings in Paris. I am very much excited. I read the New York Times every day and try to understand what is going on in Europe. France, Nazi...Austria...I am of no political party, I only want a strong and honest government. I knew this would happen in Paris; I wonder how it is that it did not start earlier.” Presumably, she was referencing the far-right riots that erupted on February 6, 1934. Runacher’s excitement at the prospect of rioting and her interpretation of political extremism as exciting illustrate the mentality that allowed so many Europeans to accept fascism.

The last few years of the 1930s presaged the beginning of World War II. Horatio S. Krans at the American University Union in Paris and Stephen Duggan maintained a robust correspondence across the Atlantic. They wrote at length about contemporary politics. Duggan stated his preference for liberal internationalism:

...our great hope in the critical international situation is for the statesmen, especially in Europe, to make very definite progress in building an effective system of collective security...Perhaps the greatest drawback is in the persistence with which the great powers cling to the old and outworn slogans of power politics. Power politics and a system of collective security, either with or without a League of Nations, just do not mix.
The purpose of IIE was to bypass the system of power politics and cultivate ties between individuals to establish mutual understanding and future peace.

Money continued to be a preoccupation for IIE and the American University Union. Despite his worries about war, Krans sent several letters to Duggan to ask subtly about whether there could be additional Rockefeller Foundation money for the Union. The Rockefeller Foundation, on behalf of the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, had stepped in to provide funding for IIE and the American University Union. Over a ten-year period, they had given them $240,000. This allocation of funds from 1929 to 1938 was provided for general expenses, not scholarships, and was meant to be matched by other funding sources. These other sources included the Carnegie Corporation, which had also agreed to give $60,000 each year to the Institute for ten years. The Rockefeller Foundation would send one last payment of $20,000 to close out the period ending with 1938. IIE was able to continue Union operations without Rockefeller funding, but the war intruded. The London office remained open until 1943, but the Paris branch closed when Germany invaded France.

Chapter Two, “Cultural Relations During World War II (1934–1945)” will focus on the buildup to World War II and educational exchanges during the war. Much of my material for this chapter will come from university archives rather than the RAC. The confusion of the early World War II years caused mass disruptions to IIE’s international network. The American University Union headquarters in Paris closed. Its director Horatio Krans and his wife returned to the US after Germany’s invasion of France. At a meeting of the American University Union in October 1940, the leadership committee voted to compensate Horatio Krans for his lost employment and forced evacuation to New York City. IIE also struggled to find positions for refugees at fiscally stretched colleges. IIE could not compel either university administrations or hostile local communities to accept refugees, and it lacked the funds necessary to provide for the salaries and tuition costs of the thousands of students and scholars from Europe who desperately sought a position in the US.

Chapter Three, “The Fulbright Program and Postwar Reorientation” will focus on postwar programs (1945–1960). The postwar period led to a demand-based revolution in higher education in the United States as new demographic groups enrolled in college
classes. IIE organized a conference in Chicago in 1946 to address the shifting landscape of American universities: “At a time when ex-service men and women are thronging into institutions of higher education with financial aid under the G.I. Bill of Rights, the institutions are also expected to accommodate larger numbers of foreign students who will help rehabilitate their war-ravaged countries.”32 In the words of NYU’s Vice-Chancellor Harold O. Voorhis, universities were struggling with “the appeals of intellectually famished foreign students for accommodation in this country at a time when so many of us are frantically harassed with the inordinate demands of our own GI’s.”33 Voorhis advocated a policy in which “there be better preparation, better credentials of our foreign students that they may compete without coddling on terms of absolute equality with our indigenous clientele.”34 Voorhis’s comments indicate that universities like NYU were willing to make the necessary changes to accommodate both veterans and international students, but they were administratively overburdened by the demands of both groups. Voorhis demanded that international students should be held to the same academic standards for admissions and coursework as domestic students.

The 1946 conference marked a change as universities focused on the undergraduate student experience. In 1942, there had been the first Conference of Foreign Student Advisers in Cleveland.35 Foreign student advisers (FSAs) quickly became the primary point of contact between international students, university administrations, and the bureaucracy of visas and bursars. In the four years between the Cleveland conference and the Chicago conference, the director of the New York City International House estimated that the number of FSAs in the US had quadrupled from 100 to 400.36 During the 1946 conference, the participants made several resolutions including support for the Bloom and Fulbright bills and a statement that they were “opposed to all forms of intolerance, unfriendliness and racial discrimination.”37 The most significant change for IIE might have been the transition in its focus from graduate to undergraduate programs “since these colleges represent a distinctly American contribution to higher education.”38 In prior years, IIE had demonstrated a preference for graduate students. New demographic groups, whether working-class veterans, women, Black people, or international students, became integrated in the “distinctly American” undergraduate colleges and universities that had mostly been reserved for middle- and upper-class white men before World War II. The need for administrative support for these
demographic groups entering US colleges for the first time had swelled. Provost Monroe E. Deutsch of UC Berkeley concluded the 1946 conference by stating, “we educate the best that come to us, regardless of nationality, regardless of creed and color, of wealth or status, and that applies in our own land and among us as well.”

IIE partnered with university FSAs to provide undergraduate international students with the services they needed. The potential profits from government sponsorship through the GI, Bloom, and Fulbright bills would supplement college financial aid packages for needy students and expand college administrations.

IIE acted as a mediator for the internationalization of American higher education in the postwar period. It became “the central clearing house for foreign students in the United States” during this period of rising demand. IIE had already established a vast international and domestic network of non-governmental organizations, universities, foundations, corporations, and governments by the end of World War II. It was better positioned than any other organization to coordinate between these partners to provide information for new college recruits and inform universities of strategies to help acclimate their students to the rigors of American universities.

Despite a ballooning of government spending, the State Department was clear that it did not want to assume a greater role in managing international students. At the 1946 meeting, Hershel Brickell, chief of the Division of International Exchange of Persons of the Department of State declared, “the underlying philosophy must be that the government does what private organizations cannot or will not do; that the government coordinates such programs; that the government stands by to help whenever its advice or assistance is needed; that the government supplements and facilitates.” The model for the Fulbright Bill would be the State Department’s cultural relations programs with Latin America. Despite the reassuring tone of these remarks, the threat of the looming Cold War hung over the proceedings. Brickell asked, “are we ‘going to be able to achieve world understanding before the atomic bomb blows us all up?’” IIE had always invested its programs with the weight of impending war, but nuclear weapons were a new form of terror. On a scale greater than ever before, IIE hoped that international student exchanges would bond competing nation-states together.
Colleges and universities responded enthusiastically to the prospect of admitting increased numbers of international students. Many such as Bowdoin, Smith, MIT, and Fisk emphasized that they had either set aside scholarship funds for students in financial need or preferred them in the admissions process when compared to other applicants of equal merit. A significant dilemma for colleges was determining how to measure competing applicants based on the rigor of their secondary education, their English ability, and their general aptitude to succeed at a US college. Since the relative merits of students had bearing not only on admission but also funding, these were significant questions. IIE was able to help universities better understand how to compare transcripts and secondary school records because it was more familiar with the secondary and tertiary school systems of other countries. It could also guide students to apply to the colleges that would best meet their academic needs. IIE had been bombarded by requests from students who required no financial assistance, but needed help understanding the variety of US institutions and their complicated application requirements. The State Department, meanwhile, concerned itself with the “health examination of the students, the placement of foreign students on a national basis, orientation of the students with respect to our American life in general and our academic ways in particular, assistance to these students in connection with immigration, income tax and Selective Service questions.” The US government and the academic community were eager to delegate responsibility for international student recruitment, placement, and orientation to IIE.

World War II had fundamentally changed the financing structure and scale of IIE at the same time that universities were expanding due to federal programs such as the GI Bill. The Fulbright Act of August 1, 1946 continued this trend. IIE would handle the practical aspects of matching federal grantees with host institutions, providing orientation programs, and subcontracting with universities and local organizations. Meanwhile, the government-sponsored reorientation exchanges with Germany, Austria, and Japan trained young students from former US enemy states to be liberal democratic leaders. Wartime propaganda had primed these students to expect racial discrimination in the US, and the government struggled to explain the historical context behind US racial relations to an audience that would critically question government information as propaganda.
The relationship between IIE and the US government had moments of strain in the postwar period despite overall amicability. Laurence Duggan, the second president of IIE and son of Stephen Duggan, wrote to Assistant Secretary of State William Benton that “the Institute would be prepared to collaborate on its broad bases provided certain assurances were given.”\textsuperscript{49} He had been waiting for more than two months for a reply to a previous letter to clarify IIE’s role in administering the Fulbright program.\textsuperscript{50} Amidst internal conflicts between State and the Office of Education about sponsorship of Fulbright, IIE was having difficulty determining what the government’s expectations were.

IIE also underwent a massive reorganization after the war. In a thorough investigation of IIE operations prior to their investment in its operations, the Commonwealth Fund found that “prior to the reorganization Mr. Stephen Duggan, who was the president, attempted to get his hand on all possible fellowships he could in the country, but that the Institute was not particularly interested in the question of getting more fellowships now unless they could find some way to adequately finance the staff who had to do the job of handling the individuals selected.”\textsuperscript{51} The situation had improved under Laurence Duggan, according to a Commonwealth Fund interview with the Carnegie Corporation, which “was literally besieged by complaints from the universities and colleges about the Institute as it was then being conducted under Dr. Stephen Duggan. These complaints went so far as threats to boycott or ‘picket’ the Institute if it were not improved.”\textsuperscript{52} FSAs were even more critical, one stating that “Dr. Duggan, the founder, was a prima donna - he had to dominate everything and everybody.”\textsuperscript{53} Edward R. Murrow, a former IIE assistant director and chairman of the board, reassured the Commonwealth Fund and other private foundations:

> the Institute can best perform its functions by remaining a private, independent organization with no unofficial or under-the-table tie-ups with the State Department. He said that Laurence Duggan had done a masterful job in bringing this situation about and that any relationship that the Institute has with the State Department is purely on a contract basis.”\textsuperscript{54}

Stephen Duggan was an ambitious administrator, but the expansion of IIE fellowships in the postwar period far exceeded his attempts. Given their wariness of government expansion, it was important for the leadership of private foundations to ensure that
IIE’s relationship with the federal government would maintain firm boundaries between the world of private philanthropy and state programs.

Fulbright would have enormous financial implications for IIE. Its Washington bureau recognized, “While present expenditures for this work involve a cash outlay of less than $1,000,000, agreements already negotiated under the Fulbright Act total $77,000,000 and it is anticipated that other agreements already planned will increase this figure to $330,000,000 to be spent over a period of the next twenty years.”55 IIE would need to overhaul its operational structure to manage the increased workload, including investing in:

- business machines for punching and sorting IBM cards, which would not only convert much of our ‘dead’ information in Clearing House files into active statistics invaluable for all Government and private agencies concerned with planning future training programs, but would also make it possible for us to expand our operations five-fold and handle detailed statistics on all foreign students in the United States…”56

Despite the potential windfall from the Fulbright Act and Bloom Bill (Smith-Mundt Act), there remained considerable uncertainty for several years about the extent of federal funding, especially for international students traveling to the United States.

In the summer of 1948, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) arranged a set of exchanges.57 AFSC invited ten German students to a series of summer seminars in preparation for future fellowships in the United States, many to be arranged by IIE.58 AFSC would pay up to $5,000 for the students’ transportation expenses to and from Germany.59 They would also pay for the students’ maintenance expenses during the summer sessions.60 The German students participated in seminars around the country from June 25, 1948 to August 21 to “define the basis for lasting world peace.”61 They tackled challenges such as “the struggle for peace between nations, with an investigation of the human rights of individuals and racial and political minorities; the struggles for economic resources and national security; problems related to the advancement of colonial peoples and imperialism, etc.” 62 In addition to these discussion groups, the German and US students also engaged in “group recreation and meetings for worship after the manner of Friends, and through the creative experience
of cooperative living.” The AFSC hoped that the combination of cooperative discussions about the prevention of war, intercultural social bonding, and religious meetings would strengthen the tenuous relationships between the US and Germany after the war. The ten German students also needed to heal from their wartime experiences.

The German students came from widely divergent backgrounds. There was the heiress who lost her family’s country estate and vast fortune to the Nazi regime due to her father’s political beliefs, the former member of the Hitler Youth who served in the German Navy during World War II but now yearned for a more peaceful existence rebuilding towns as an architect, and the young woman with flawed English who had been forced to leave school because her mother was Jewish, a mother who then died in Auschwitz in 1944.

One of these students, Ingela Keup, grew up in a wealthy family with private tutors on a country estate in Mecklenburg. Her parents hired students from England and France to tutor their children during the summer. Her family lost everything once Hitler came to power. The Nazi government arrested her father on political charges in April 1933 and took the family property. After two years in prison, her father moved to Paris with his family. When the Germans invaded Paris in 1940, they were interned for three months and eventually sent back to Germany under Gestapo supervision. Keup continued her studies in Germany, becoming an interpreter. She noted:

terrible nights of bombing and during the last days of fighting in Berlin our homes were destroyed twice - the terrible, destructive power of war and its final absurdity became a personal experience to me in those days... the terror of the national socialist government and the cruelty of the war made me want to work in some way counteracting these destructive powers... Soon after the end of the war I became acquainted with the Friends’ Ambulance Unit.

Keup was applying to the University of Chicago. Her experience as a refugee and victim of the “absurdity” of war and nationalism convinced her to use her language skills to unify people of different nation-states.
The AFSC and other civic organizations were motivated by religious pacifism and international liberalism to encourage international exchanges and the intense deliberations that would surely take place between students who had experienced so much suffering during the war, as combatants, witnesses, or refugees. IIE had once shared the same mission, and ideology still powered its core mission, but Laurence Duggan also recognized that the majority of international students came to the United States out of self-interest, not in the pursuit of mutual understanding and world peace. He wrote that the number of international students in the US had increased from 10,000 before the war to 20,000 after it “to study our technology.” Duggan argued that the performance of the US during WWII had attracted students to US universities so that they could replicate American engineering. He advocated a deeper role for the United States in world affairs and a greater emphasis on international relations in college curricula: “Unless and until we have a citizenry that is not only informed but able to make critical judgments about international affairs, we will not have those mature and wise policies that the world expects of a leader.” Duggan viewed the greater demand for US higher education as an effect of US leadership in the world during World War II. He advocated an escalation of that leadership, aided by improved curriculum that would teach US students about other nations and the administrative support structures to ensure that international students would be successful.

The technical expertise that Duggan lauded featured in the US government designs for its future economic relations with Japan. In its reorientation program with Japanese leaders, which IIE administered, Japanese business experts and specialists in engineering toured US facilities and corporations. During a visit to the Jones & Laughlin Steel Corporation in Pittsburgh, the management discussed “administrative policies; labor relations and agreements; safety regulations and methods; personnel training program and wages, pensions and benefits.” At General Motors in Detroit, the management team also discussed “labor relations and agreements; grievance settlement and procedure; group incentive plan and wage benefits.” At the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, Michigan, the report noted that “Due to the fact that all members of the party hold executive position in their respective field and the Japanese industry is plagued with strikes and labor problems, they showed deep interest in labor-management relation, grievance procedure, arbitration, management problems, wages, pensions and workers benefits.” The report then associated the management of labor
with US democratic institutions: “They were thoroughly impressed by the efficiency
and mechanization of American industry. It is believed that they have obtain (sic)
during their visit a clear picture of the word ‘democracy’ and the importance of the
individual under democratic principles.” 79 This report indicates that the reorientation
programs explicitly connected US democratic institutions with industrial capitalism
and labor relations. The belief seems to have been that Japan and Germany would be
less prone to authoritarianism in the future if they could more effectively manage
unionization and strikes. The primacy of the individual is an important element in
analyses of American democracy and economic achievement, especially from the
perspective of the private foundations that donated millions of dollars to support IIE’s
operations.

Despite the preoccupation with individualism as a defining feature of American culture
for donors and government officials, many international students did not fixate on the
individual. For some of the Japanese visitors, US social policies that protected the
rights of workers were emblematic of US democracy and capitalism. According to Kanji
Tominaga, “In the United States, the rights of the working people as well as the rights
of property are now to be protected, that is, minimum wage, maximum labouring hour,
relief for unemployment, security for old age and so on are now set by the various codes,
and everyone has a chance to become rich or to get on in the world and can enjoy his
life so long as he duly works.” 80 He pointed out, however, that “racial discrimination is,
I think, a large obstacle to development of a democracy.” 81 In a survey of US
government fellows, “there were at least 50 or 60 references to social democracy, and
all but half a dozen were positive in tone. They concentrate on things like equality of
opportunity and absence or flexibility of class distinctions. On the other hand, some
200 grantees volunteer more or less detailed impressions about racial and ethnic
prejudice in the United States and the bulk of these were hardly complimentary.” 82 The
report indicated that, “There is relatively little attention focused upon the presence or
absence of individualism and a competitive spirit in our culture. Some of the grantees
question the basic premise that we are ‘a nation of individualists’: others feel the
opposite: but in any case, it appears that not a great deal of importance is attached by
the grantees as a group to this particular facet of our ‘national character’.” 83 Therefore,
among international students sponsored by the US government in the postwar period,
equality and social democracy were more defining aspects of American culture than individualism or competition, and racism was a persistent negative theme.

Friedrich G. K. Grohé, a German engineering student at Michigan State College wrote a particularly evocative account of his time studying and traveling in the US from 1948 to 1949. Grohé wrote of the warmth and interest that people in Michigan showed him: “Although many Americans considered the German nation as a whole with some skepticism or at least reserve, there was scarcely any resentment against the individual German provided he showed some tact and tolerance as it can cheaply be expected in human relations.”

One astounding aspect of the reorientation programs was that they placed students and industrial leaders from former enemy states in educational and business settings together in collaboration without substantial resistance or conflict. Key to the success of these programs was a careful screening process for applicants so that those like Grohé who were open to developing closer relations with the United States and learning about its culture, while also unflinching in their recognition of the flaws of both the US and their home countries, would most effectively engage in the mutual understanding process of liberal internationalism. Grohé wrote, for example, “Ignorance is likely to produce prejudice and discrimination, sometimes even an unjustified fear. All this may poison international relations, especially under the influence of propaganda. The experiment of foreign student trips to various communities proved to be a great success in surmounting such unnecessary barriers.”

These official trips were instructive social encounters, but their hyper-organization did not provide space for the spontaneous social interactions that reveal the most about cultural behavior.

Grohé’s most illuminating travel took place during solo hitchhiking trips. These were minimally planned and took advantage of Grohé’s youth, flexibility, gender, and the privileges of his class and skin color. In a journey from Michigan to Florida over the Christmas holidays, Grohé traveled in strangers’ cars, slept on park benches and in police stations and prisons when he could not afford a hostel or hotel, and ate candy bars and sugar cubes for nourishment. He visited engineering sites such as the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Fontana Dam, encountering along the way in Kentucky “a typical ‘hill billy region’ with all its poverty, dirtiness, and, as it seemed, depravity.” In Georgia, Grohé “was shocked in view of the negro sections which
looked unworthy of human beings. However, I had always to keep in mind, what the Nazis had done with Jews and political enemies. Here at least, nobody was prosecuted or even killed.\textsuperscript{89} He described:

When I stood on the highway in the negro section of Augusta to wait for the next ride, it was a strange feeling to find myself the only white man on the street in a vicinity that could just be as good a part of darkest Africa. It was a feeling of being in a hopeless minority. At that moment I could understand, although not approve of, some of the attitudes white people have developed in regions largely populated by negroes.\textsuperscript{90}

Grohé continued:

It was, of course, ignorance which produced this strange feeling, and I saw the trend which leads from ignorance to prejudice, from a more or less imaginary necessity for self-defense to ‘preventive’ aggression. Later, after I got personally acquainted with some fine negroes and learned that they are ‘only’ human beings too, not very different from me in their mentality and reactions, such feelings of strangeness never came back...\textsuperscript{91}

The incidents that most disturbed Grohé included “a dead dog lying on the curb, obviously since some time, because he was already going to decay. This was in the middle of the negro section. On the street the big cars rushed along on their way from the East to Florida, but nobody took care.”\textsuperscript{92} Grohé’s acknowledgement of the parallels between the racism and religious persecution of the Nazi state and the effects of racism in the US South points to some degree of self-awareness, although the Nazis committed much worse crimes than neglecting to properly dispose of an animal carcass. Despite the disgust he felt at the poverty and isolation he experienced in Georgia, and his initial conversion of that disgust into racism, Grohé was eventually able to recognize the historical and socio-economic causes of the poverty he witnessed in the South, both in the “hilly billy region” of southern Kentucky and in Georgia.

When he returned to Michigan State, Grohé had other experiences with people of different national and religious backgrounds, especially Jews, that made him conscious of the suffering that the Nazis had caused. He wrote:
Although I had never approved of, or excused, the horrible crimes committed by the Nazi regime, I had not been a friend of a German confession of collective guilt. But here, facing the members of groups of people who had been, directly or indirectly, discriminated and prosecuted by Germans, I recognized the full extent of those crimes as clearly as never before and could not help feeling guilty myself or, at least, deeply ashamed."93

Grohé’s response to being surrounded by other international students and those from the US with different racial, religious, or ethnic backgrounds was precisely how liberal internationalists hoped the reorientation programs would shift the mentalities of their participants. For Grohé, the individual began to matter more than the nation, religion, or race. He could develop friendships and respect for his fellow students despite their differences.

Grohé also participated in an AFSC program in the summer of 1949 in Portland, Oregon.94 He again decided to hitchhike to both save money and experience the country more intimately. When he arrived in Chicago, he was troubled by the inequality he witnessed:

In no other place, I saw wealth and poverty, beauty and ugliness so close one beside the other. It was fascinating and depressing at the same time. There was the splendid business section, but only a few blocks further, I found myself in the middle of a slum area that looked worse to me than anything else I had seen before with the exception of some negro sections in the South. But there was one thing that disturbed me more than the unpleasant view at the miserably looking houses, since it seemed to express a somewhat discriminating attitude towards the poorer part of the population. While the streets were kept in excellent condition in the business and wealthy residential sections, the city administration did apparently not take much care for public property in the slum areas. Very dirty streets and broken road surfaces contributed to the sad atmosphere considerably. Certainly, Chicago is not the only city in the world, where this can be observed, but in no other place I found the contrasts, if not to say extremes, so much pronounced and so close together. All this in addition to a visitation to Maxwell Street made me Chicago appearing in a kind of demoniacal light, very “American” as Europeans may be inclined to say.95
The inequality of the United States, especially visible in its largest cities such as Chicago, was therefore a defining feature of American culture for Grohé, as it was for many Europeans.

Despite his poor impressions of Chicago, Grohé’s hitchhiking to Spokane confirmed his sense of wonder at the vastness and liberalism of the United States. He observed:

The trip gave me a good impression of the enormous distances and the vast ‘living space’ in this country. It has always seemed to me, that these tremendous dimensions have made a decisive contribution to the development of the American character, the way of living, and the form of democracy established in the United States. No wonder that Americans are used to think and work on a large scale."

Even when a police officer warned him not to hitchhike in Washington because it was illegal, the generosity of the police in not issuing a punishment when he explained that he was an international student who was unfamiliar with Washington State laws surprised Grohé, proof of “the liberal and individual way in which laws are applied.” Grohé was impressed by the focus on intention over strict interpretation of laws in the United States. This is another example of a moment when, despite being a citizen of a country recently at vicious war with the United States, the possession of a letter of introduction from his university president, his socio-economic status, and his race prevented Grohé from experiencing consequences from his reckless and illegal behavior.

When he eventually arrived at the AFSC seminar, he experienced another form of democracy and international liberalism. He described how “For seven weeks, a group of twenty-nine students from fourteen countries lived, worked, and studied together under almost ideal conditions.” The students, he noted:

were asked to get together and to run the seminar ourselves according to the principles of democracy. In plenary sessions, we decided on the entire program, at what time we wanted to get up in the morning and have our meals, how many hours of lectures, discussions, and time for recreation every day we thought were appropriate, where we wanted to go on our weekend trips, etc."
During the seminar itself, the students debated political issues and ideas such as totalitarianism, pacifism, and colonialism. According to Grohé, “We all agreed, that the world situation could be improved, if at least the western democracies, including the United States, would not only practice their democratic principles in domestic affairs but rather, in their zone of influence, increase the adoption of the same measures of freedom, justice, and human rights to their foreign policy.” He went on to say that “The coupling of foreign policy with economic interests, as it is still done sometimes, was considered somewhat dangerous. It seemed important to eliminate further the striving after excessive economic profit and the exploitation of the natural wealth of certain regions.” The seminar participants were enamored by the democracy of the United States if not its capitalist ambitions, and they did not interpret the two as being mutually beneficial as many liberal internationalists did.

Chapter Four, “Human Capital and the 1960s African Airlifts,” discusses the Kennedy (or Mboya) Airlifts of 1959–1963. The Kennedy administration eagerly supported the rapid increase in the number of African students during the early 1960s as part of its efforts to support decolonizing nations and counter Soviet influence. Once the challenges of financial support, racism, and cultural differences became evident, the State Department recruited IIE and other NGOs to provide administrative support for the students, especially to find jobs. The central tension in this chapter is between American capitalist notions of labor, especially based on new economic ideas of human capital, and the cultural assumptions and preferences that African students had about their value in the labor market as elite students. There are also domestic and international political tensions such as the presidential election between Kennedy and Nixon that may have motivated him to support the airlifts to court the Black vote and fight the Cold War.

Most of this chapter will be supported by research conducted at the National Archives, but IIE’s own files and those of the Commonwealth Fund provide insights into their perspective on the airlifts. Dr. Haffron of the Commonwealth Fund noted, for example, that in a meeting about the airlifts, IIE’s vice president Al Sims “was quite conservative in his comments, possibly because there were 2 or 3 negroes at the meeting and I feel that he really did not let his hair down and say frankly what he thought about the whole operation. It was clearly implied, however, that he took a rather dim view of this method.
of selecting students for an educational experience here.” The method that Haffron was referencing was the selection of students by political preference over merit. Haffron continued, “I also gathered that the Institute has considerable business interest in trying to raise funds for fellowship aid for native Africans for college experience in the U.S., with a view to setting up a more suitable program for student selection based on academic and personal qualifications.” Haffron’s observation about how Sims modified his comments based on the presence of Black audience members indicates the racial complexities of the early-1960s. The African airlifts were intensely political, designed to both project an image of racial liberalism to the international community and improve Kennedy’s reputation for civil rights in domestic politics.

Chapter Five, “Decolonization and Economic Development, 1964–2001,” will focus on economic development projects in Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa. Students and scholars received grants during this period to study in the United States to enhance their skills as liberal democratic leaders and to promote economic development.

Chapter Six, “September 1939–9/11: IIE Alumni Research and the Power of Nostalgia” will discuss an alumni research program funded by Henry Jarecki and staffed by Daniel Greenspahn from 2001 to 2003. During those pivotal two years, Greenspahn contacted IIE alumni from the 1930s, organized the data from hundreds of thousands of grantee files, solicited donations, and designed new fellowship opportunities based on the experiences of past grantees. In this final chapter, I analyze the correspondence between Greenspahn and the 1930s alumni, solicitation letters, internal memos, and publicity stills to determine how IIE and its alumni interpreted the historical events of the twentieth century with particular emphasis on the parallel escalations toward World War II and 9/11, the refugee crises of the 1930s and early 2000s, and the persistent threat of terrorism. In addition to Daniel Greenspahn and Henry Jarecki, I analyze key alumni such as Ruth Gruber, Werner Von Rosenstiel, John Kenneth Galbraith, Helmuth Joel, Anna Moffo, and Joseph Lelyveld. Important organizational figures include Allan E. Goodman, Henry Kaufman, and Patti Peterson. The structure of this chapter indicates the cyclical nature of history, the enduring power of liberalism (and neoliberalism), the value of historical memory and nostalgia for philanthropy, and the diminishing importance of the Cold War.
The 9/11 attacks coincided with an ambitious project that IIE had initiated to research its alumni and their influence. Daniel Greenspahn had been hired to conduct a research project “to identify the impact and importance of IIE’s work and its role in promoting mutual understanding among the peoples of the world.” Months into Daniel Greenspahn’s appointment as IIE’s alumni historian, the toll of September 11th illuminated the parallels between contemporary events and those that IIE alumni had experienced in the 1930s. The tragedy of September 11th shifted the tone of Greenspahn’s letters. In one letter to an alumnus who had studied in Czechoslovakia from 1937–1938, Greenspahn wrote, “During the 1930s, we were brought together through your interest in international study and our desire to foster mutual understanding between people of different nations through exchange programs. Though much has changed about the world, IIE remains dedicated to fostering mutual understanding, building global problem-solving capabilities, and strengthening people's international competence.” Greenspahn wrote similar letters to all the alumni he could reach from the 1930s, asking them to fill out a brief survey and speak to him on the phone about their experiences as IIE fellows. Many responded enthusiastically, and Greenspahn developed extensive correspondence and had frequent telephone conversations with some of the alumni.

Daniel Greenspahn’s most exciting discovery in his alumni research was Ruth Gruber. He wrote to the board of trustees about a few of Gruber’s academic and career accomplishments: “In 1931 Ruth Gruber participated in an American German student exchange under the auspices of IIE...She interviewed prisoners in Stalin’s Soviet Gulag...” IIE had lost touch with Gruber, but Greenspahn had heard about one of Gruber’s lectures at the 92nd Street Y: “…Ruth Gruber recounts the fascinating story of her involvement in the top-secret United States government rescue of 1,000 World War II refugees. While the Holocaust raged through Europe, she posed as a military general, escorting the Jewish survivors through Italy en route to New York.” Greenspahn reconnected with Gruber and orchestrated a meeting with Allan Goodman, IIE president. Gruber had the fame and credentials that could serve as powerful symbols for IIE’s fellowship programs. Her idealism served as a refreshing contrast to the cynicism of the post-9/11 period.
Elizabeth Spaeth is a PhD Candidate at Indiana University. She would like to thank the archivists, research staff, and other support personnel at the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) including Bethany J. Antos, Lee R. Hiltzik, Barbara Shubinski, and Andrea Cadornigara. In addition to the RAC research stipend, this research would not have been possible without the generous support of the Indiana University History Department, Institute for Digital Arts and Humanities, and the College Arts and Humanities Institute.

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