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Daniel Bessner. *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual.*

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Introduction by Robert Jervis, Columbia University

I suspect that most readers of this Roundtable, like our reviewer Nils Gilman, will be “only dimly aware of Hans Speier.” I also suspect that, like Gilman and his fellow reviewers, readers will be interested to learn more about him. As Daniel Bessner explains in his intellectual biography, Speier is one of the lesser-known European intellectuals who fled Nazi Germany, having never taught in a major university or written much of note. Our reviewers agree with Bessner that he is nevertheless very interesting for his intellectual trajectory, the choices he made, and his role in the emerging national security state.

All our reviewers praise the book, with Andrew Johnston calling it “a fascinating and illuminating story.” Having just finished the book myself, I agree. Like many of his colleagues, Speier was a Marxist during the Weimar period, but, unlike many of them, he saw a convincing refutation of this worldview in the support of the working class for Nazi leader Adolf Hitler. Even more significantly, this experience left him with a jaded view of democracy, a belief that propaganda could be extraordinarily powerful in modern societies, and the conviction that intellectuals could play a larger and more productive role by advising the government than by seeking to educate the public. Acting on these beliefs, Speier played a large role in the studies of propaganda in the 1930s, took his expertise into the American government during World War II and, most importantly, became the founding director of RAND’s Social Science Division, a perch from which he was not only able to influence that organization and give advice to the government, but also had a reach into universities through the Ford and Rockefeller foundations.

Like almost all those who study the role of intellectuals in policymaking, Bessner is significantly to the political left of Speier and so it is not surprising that he is often critical of him. As the reviewers note, however, unlike the earlier generation of critics epitomized by Noam Chomsky,¹ Bessner neither attributes base motives to Speier nor is without sympathy for his stance. While those who find Speier’s analyses of the Soviet Union clear-eyed and his attempt to develop useful social science to be admirable will object in places, even they will recognize Bessner’s book as a work of analysis rather than a brief for the prosecution.

As the reviewers note, what is particularly interesting about Speier’s intellectual evolution is that having seen both the power of Nazi propaganda and the fundamental challenge to the Weimar regime that this posed, he took Walter Lippmann’s side in the famous (and still highly relevant) debate with John Dewey about the roles of public opinion, education, and intellectuals in embattled democracies and concluded that in a time of emergency underhanded, if not dishonest tactics, were necessary to sway the public and fend off totalitarian rule (76-79). In the 1930s and 1940s he believed that such behavior would lapse when the Nazis were defeated. With the onset of the Cold War, however, he felt that the ‘state of exception’ (to use the phrase of the (in)famous German legal and political theorist Carl Schmitt, who may have influenced Speier) had to continue on at least a semi-permanent basis. But Bessner devotes little attention to the fact Speier’s efforts to counter and employ propaganda were directed outward at other countries, and not at the American public.

Nevertheless, like Lippmann, Speier did doubt that American opinion, unguided by elites and strong institutions, could support coherent and effective policies to combat first the Nazis and then the USSR. Here Bessner’s book misses a significant opportunity. As he notes, the distinguished political scientist Gabriel

¹ Noam Chomsky, “The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” *New York Review of Books*, 23 February 1967.

Almond was a member of Speier's circle. While discussing some of Almond's activities, Bessner does not discuss his breakthrough book, *The American People and Foreign Policy*,² which argued that the public's views were shallow, inconsistent, and could not be relied on to provide solid foundations for foreign policy in these perilous times, and which supplied strong empirical evidence for Speier's fundamental outlook. Even more interestingly, this book was later challenged as ideologically-driven and fundamentally incorrect, a criticism that has stood the test of time.³

If our reviewers find Bessner's portrait of Speier convincing, they are less persuaded by the claim that he had much influence. As Johnstone points out, Bessner himself notes that finding his impact is "a difficult task" (265). Where his ideas coincided with government policies, they were widely shared, making credit (or claim) hard to allocate. Even Speier's role as an institution-builder yielded only modest results. As Daniel Immerwahr puts it, "Speier's CV was undeniably long, but I will confess to wondering how central he was." Perhaps most interesting were Speier's efforts at RAND to counter-balance the strong role of the physicists and economists by insisting that analyses that lacked any consideration of culture, psychology, and individual decision-making were at best incomplete and usually misleading. He then developed games that relied more on role-playing than algorithms, and these became popular in Washington and still are in wide use.

One of Bessner's criticisms of Speier and his conception of the role of intellectuals is their lack of accountability, especially when they act behind the scenes. Our reviewers agree that this is an important topic for both empirical and normative analyses, but question whether others who seek to guide public opinion and influence government policy are held accountable today. Even elected officials may escape punishment for their errors and be thrown out of office for unfortunate events that are outside of their control.

Finally, James Davis raises the interesting question of what Speier, who turned back to traditional humanistic scholarship at the end of his career and died in 1990, would have thought about the role of intellectuals, public opinion, and propaganda in the post-Cold War years. Would he have concluded that the threats, at least to the West, were now manageable without the questionable techniques he previously thought were required, or might he see the dangers, either in the form of terrorism or "right-wing populism," as so severe as to put Western nations back into a state of exception?

Participants:

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² Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950).

³ William Caspar, "The 'Mood Theory': A Study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy," *American Political Science Review* 64:2 (June 1970): 536-547.

Robert Jervis is Adlai E. Stevenson Professor of International Politics at Columbia University and Founding Editor of ISSF. His most recent book is *How Statesmen Think* (Princeton University Press, 2017). He was President of the American Political Science Association in 2000-01 and is the founding editor of the International Security Studies Forum. He has received career achievement awards from the International Society of Political Psychology and ISA's Security Studies Section, the Grawemeyer Award for the book with the Best Ideas for Improving World Order, and the National Academy of Science's tri-annual award for behavioral sciences contributions to avoiding nuclear war.

James W. Davis is Professor of International Politics and Dean of the School of Economics and Political Science at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland. An Associate Editor at *Security Studies*, his research interests are in the fields of International Relations Theory, International Security, Political Psychology and the disciplinary history of political science. Together with Christopher Daase he recently published *Clausewitz on Small War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), which contains the first English-language translation of Clausewitz's writings on irregular conflict.

Nils Gilman is Vice President for Programs at the Berggruen Institute. A founding member of the editorial collective of *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, he is also the author of *Mandarins of Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America* (Johns Hopkins, 2004) and a regular contributor to *The American Interest*. He is the former Associate Chancellor of UC Berkeley.

Daniel Immerwahr (Ph.D., Berkeley) is an associate professor in the history department at Northwestern University. He is the author of *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). His second book, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States*, is forthcoming with Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Andrew Johnstone is an Associate Professor in American History at the University of Leicester. He is the author of *Against Immediate Evil: American Internationalists and the Four Freedoms on the Eve of World War II* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014) and *Dilemmas of Internationalism: The American Association for the United Nations and US Foreign Policy, 1941-1948*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009). He is also the co-editor (with Andrew Priest) of *US Presidential Elections and Foreign Policy: Candidates, Campaigns and Global Politics from FDR to Bill Clinton* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017) and (with Helen Laville) of *The US Public and American Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 2010), and his articles have appeared in *Diplomatic History*, *Global Society*, the *Journal of American Studies*, and the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*.

Review by James W. Davis, University of St. Gallen

Already recognized by contemporaneous observers, including then President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the emergence of the US national security state in the mid-twentieth century continues to generate important scholarship devoted to identifying the conditions that made it possible. Milestones on the road to what in the American context comprised an unprecedented growth in executive authority and the militarization of foreign policy include the U.S. entry into and an eventual victory in the Second World War; the breakdown of allied cooperation and the division of Europe between East and West in the early post-war years; the passing of the National Security Act of 1947; the development of atomic weapons and the successful test of an atomic bomb by the Soviet Union in 1949; the ‘fall’ of China to the Communist forces under Mao Zedong in October 1949; and North Korea’s invasion of the South in June 1950. To support the dramatically expanded executive branch in the prosecution of what would come to be known as the Cold War, the government intensified its links to defense-related university-based research and expanded its funding of what would come to be known as “think tanks”—non-profit institutions devoted to providing policy advice to the government, of which the RAND Corporation is perhaps the best known.¹ But whereas the historical, cultural, and structural conditions giving rise to the institutional features of the national security state have been researched widely, relatively little scholarship exists on the origins of the particular role that emerged for individuals within these institutions, namely that of the defense intellectual.²

Through an excellent example of intellectual biography, Daniel Bessner makes significant strides in closing this lacuna. The focus of his study is Hans Speier, a central but largely forgotten figure in many of the most significant developments associated with the emergence of the defense intellectual: emigration from Hitler’s Europe; the establishment of an émigré intellectual community in the United States devoted to understanding Hitler’s rise to power and preserving the intellectual patrimony of the enlightenment through his defeat; the institutionalized commitment of scholarly analysis to the purposes of the national security state, thereby bridging the gap between basic and applied research; and the introduction, if not integration, of Jews, Catholics and scholars of working-class backgrounds into foreign and defense policy making, areas of American life that long had been the preserve of the East Coast WASP elite.

Born on 3 February 1905 to a conservative, imperialist and Protestant family in Berlin, Speier was not an obvious candidate for the role. But Speier broke with his family to attend the University of Heidelberg where he was introduced to the ideas of prominent Marxist and Liberal economists, sociologists, and philosophers, many of whom were Jewish, including Emil Lederer and Karl Mannheim, the latter ultimately serving as Speier’s dissertation advisor.

¹ Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013); Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Ron Theodore Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military Intellectual Complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993); and Fred Kaplan, *Wizards of Armageddon* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1983).

² But see Bruce Kucklik, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Having developed an affinity for social democratic politics as a teenager and been increasingly drawn to Marxist social theory as a student, Speier eventually joined and became a frequent contributor to publications of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), his articles largely devoted to bridging the gap between theory and policy (or to use the German term, *praxis*). Particularly interested in the relationship of knowledge to power, as well as the role of the intellectual in society, the young Speier was optimistic about the prospects of educating liberals and the mass of the working class in pursuit of democratic socialism. It was from this intellectual perch that Speier observed the failure of both the German elites and the working classes to support the Weimar Republic. Whereas the former group's reluctance to move in the desired direction could be reconciled with Marxist theory, the failure of attempts to educate the working classes, and their failure to draw the conclusions that Marxist theory expected, led Speier to conclude that "if Karl Marx was the greatest critic of the proletariat, the history of the proletariat is the only objectively qualified critic of Marx" (40). Meanwhile the militant agitation of the communists in Weimar Germany led to Speier's equating communism with fascism, "an intellectual framework that informed his thought for the duration of his career" (26).

Observing Weimar's collapse led Speier to abandon socialist theory and politics as well as his commitment to enlightening the masses through education. Nonetheless, his links to prominent Jewish socialists, a history of anti-fascist writings, and the fact that he was now awaiting a child with his wife, a Jewish pediatrician whom the Nazi's quickly dismissed from her job in Berlin's welfare office, led him to conclude that there was no future for his family in Germany (51). In 1933, an invitation to help Alvin Johnson build the University in Exile at the New School for Social Research in New York City provided the necessary opportunity to leave.

Speier's intellectual and physical migration from the world of Weimar social democratic thought, through the collapse of the Republic and the beginnings of the Nazi dictatorship, to wartime and Cold War America provides the prism through which Bessner develops his central argument about the necessary bearing or demeanor of the American defense intellectual. Although Speier left his fascination with socialism in Germany, the interest in the connection of ideas to power that had been planted and cultivated by his interactions with Mannheim survived the trip to the New World. For it was Speier's disillusionment with the SPD and the masses, coupled with his abhorrence of communists and fascists in Weimar, that led him to conclude that in times of emergency, the responsibility of the intellectual is not to speak truth to power from a position of remove, but rather to inform, advise, and indeed collude with power to save democracy. Ironically, the Nazi legal theorist Carl Schmitt provided much of the conceptual framework that led Speier to conclude that in times of extreme emergency, democratic processes could be suspended to the higher-order goal of saving the state.³ In the darkest days of the Second World War and the Cold War, the material and moral power of the United States were essential to the ultimate survival of the democratic ideal, hence Speier was comfortable leaving the academy for a career in and near the U.S. government.

In detailing Speier's move from the faculty of the New School to the wartime government of the United States, Bessner explores interesting and consequential rifts within the German exile community. Whereas Speier's political program of saving democracy required integration into the American academic community and ultimately assimilation into U.S. society, others, most importantly those exiled members of the Frankfurt School, maintained greater distance from both American academics and the state, their political project being the rescue of Marxist thought through the incorporation of psychoanalysis and social critique (60). Though

³ Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Dunker und Humblot, 2009 [1932]).

affiliated with Columbia University, Horkheimer and his colleagues in the Institute for Social Research conceived themselves to be the caretakers of a distinct German intellectual tradition. They were biding their time before returning to Europe. By contrast, building a network of U.S. and émigré collaborators that included such luminaries as Gabriel Almond, Ruth Benedict, Bernard Brodie, William T. R. Fox, Alexander George, Paul Kecskemeti, Ernst Kris, Harold Lasswell, Nathan Leites, Jacob Viner, Albert Wohlstetter, and Arnold Wolfers, Speier facilitated intellectual exchange amongst academics trained in German and American universities.

Having built a reputation as an expert on propaganda working for the wartime government and American occupation forces of Germany, Speier was recruited in 1948 by Frank Collbohm and John D. Williams to lead the newly established Social Science Division at RAND, a position he held until 1960. At RAND, Speier had access both to the resources needed to promote the kind of policy-oriented research he thought the U.S. needed to survive and ultimately win the Cold War as well as to those in positions of power whom he sought to influence. A good example was H. Rowan Gaither Jr., a wealthy San Francisco lawyer and Chairman of the RAND Board of Trustees. The connection to Gaither provided Speier an additional means of influencing the course of academic research when the Ford Foundation engaged Gaither to chair a committee to advise the foundation on how best to invest its resources. With Gaither's support, Speier laid the foundation for what would become the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (since 2008 at Stanford University) and the Research Program in International Communication at MIT, institutions that subsequently funded generations of social scientists on a meritocratic basis, thus providing an entry for previously under-represented groups to academic and policy circles that traditionally had been dominated by the largely East Coast WASP elite.

Throughout these endeavors, Speier remained committed to a broader vision of social science than that represented in the other divisions of RAND, where formal and mathematical models, systems analysis, and game theory dominated. Although the analogy is too simple, the current quantitative/qualitative divide in American political science echoes the debate that took place within RAND between figures like Herman Kahn and Charles Hitch who sought formal solutions to national security questions and those like Brodie, Kecskemeti and Speier, who regarded "any analysis that ignored politics, culture, and psychology or attempted to elide judgement," to be little more than "*Unfug*" ('nonsense,' 213-214).

Discovering the link between Speier and figures such as Alexander George and Gabriel Almond leads to interesting questions, such as whether George's commitment to bridging the gap between theory and practice and Almond's interest in the public virtues necessary to sustain democracy in part can be traced back to Speier's reaction to the failure of Marxist theory to inform and explain political developments in Weimar.⁴ Other links between Speier's experiences in Weimar and his activities at RAND are clearer. Drawing on a pedagogical exercise he had experienced in Mannheim's classroom in Heidelberg, Speier and his collaborators in RAND developed a political-military simulation game that resisted what they regarded to be the oversimplification of game theoretical approaches to strategic analyses. Speier's political-military simulation,

⁴ Alexander L. George, *Bridging the Gap: Theory and Practice in Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1993); Gabriel A. Almond and Sydney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (New York: Sage, 1963).

which is still in use within the Pentagon, is perhaps his most lasting contribution to American strategic thought.

Speier returned to the university for a few years after his retirement from RAND, but he does not seem to have used the time to reflect systematically on the paradoxes or indeed incoherencies in the way he linked knowledge to power. And though Bessner concludes this captivating book with a few thoughts on such matters, one wishes he had provided the reader with more insight into his own judgments, for his study inspires as many questions as it answers.

If the national security state originally was premised on the claim of existential threat, how do we explain its continuing existence in the period after the end of the Cold War? Is the answer to be found in path dependent institutional developments or has the national security state mastered the propaganda techniques Speier studied so as to convince the masses of ever new existential threats? If the latter, what is the role of the contemporary defense intellectual in perpetuating the claim of ongoing defense emergency? Having turned his back on the project of mass education in favor of a tight connection between intellectuals and those in positions of power, did Speier help pave the way for the sort of populist rebellion against the longstanding elite consensus on core American values and interests in the world represented by the election of Donald Trump?

Review by Nils Gilman, Berggruen Institute

One of the most momentous intellectual episodes of the twentieth century was the mass migration of intellectuals fleeing fascism in central Europe to the United States during the 1930s and 1940s. On the one hand, Germany, which had been the epicenter of North Atlantic *Wissenschaft* (in fields from philosophy to physics), and possessed the greatest research universities in the world, imploded intellectually in ways that eighty-five years later it has yet to fully recover from. On the other hand, the United States, the recipient of the large majority of these fleeing intellectuals, was remade from a provincial backwater in North Atlantic intellectual life into the intellectual superpower it remains today.¹

This intellectual migration has been a major subject of intellectual histories since the 1970s, when the subfield formed around Laura Fermi's breezy *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-41*, Martin Jay's tightly focused *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950*, and Jay's doctoral advisor H. Stuart Hughes's more expansive but today largely forgotten *Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought 1930-1965*.² Following the lead of Fermi, Jay, and Hughes, much of the initial historiography on this migration focused on mostly Jewish and mostly leftist intellectuals, from physicists like Albert Einstein, Hans Bethe, and Emilio Segrè to philosophers like Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, and Erich Fromm.³

Over the last decade or so, however, a broader picture of the intellectual migration has emerged, focusing on other categories of intellectuals with distinctly different political and methodological commitments, from Austrians like business guru Peter Drucker and godfather-of-neoliberalism Friedrich von Hayek to the Russian-born "Objectivist" novelist Ayn Rand and the Romanian Iron Guard-supporting religious historian

¹ The rise of the United States as an intellectual superpower of course had wider causes than just the reception of this wave of talent. At least as important was the enormous state and federal investment in the archipelago of research universities, done in part to provide seats at universities for millions of military veterans under the 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act (also known as the G.I. Bill), and in part to prime the intellectual pump of Cold War competition with the Soviet Union. See Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Jonathan R. Cole, *The Great American University* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2009); David F. Labaree, *A Perfect Mess: The Unlikely Ascendancy of American Higher Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2017).

² Laura Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-41* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research 1923-1950* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 1973); H. Stuart Hughes, *Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought 1930-1965* (New York: HarperCollins, 1975).

³ For a global view of intellectual migrations, see Johan Heilbron, Nicolas Guilhot, and Laurent Jeanpierre, "Toward a Transnational History of the Social Sciences," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 44:2 (2008): 146-160; and Peter Burke, *Expiles and Expatriates in the History of Knowledge, 1500-2000* (Hanover: Brandeis, 2017). The deleterious effects of intellectual emigration on the country of departure is the subject of a vast literature on 'brain drains,' much of which might be usefully reframed as part of the global history of intellectual migration and circulation; see AnnaLee Saxenian, "From Brain Drain to Brain Circulation: Transnational Communities and Regional Upgrading in India and China," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 40:2 (2005): 35-61.

Mircea Eliade. The emerging awareness of this more center-right or even nakedly rightwing dimension of the intellectual migration has also been accompanied by a growing appreciation that in many cases the impacts of these ‘other’ intellectual migrants was in arenas outside academia, above all in practical areas such as industry or policymaking. For every Einstein, Marcuse, or Arendt, there was a Wernher von Braun, a Ludwig von Mises, and a Henry Kissinger. Intellectual tastes and ethical niceties aside, with what confidence can we claim that the historical significance of the former set has ultimately been greater than that of the latter?⁴

Into this enriched historiographic landscape arrives Daniel Bessner’s excellent new book, *Democracy in Exile: Hans Speier and the Rise of the Defense Intellectual*. In the interest of both full disclosure and due modesty, I will confess that before I read Bessner’s book in manuscript for Cornell University Press, I was only dimly aware of Hans Speier, knowing him mainly as one of the stalwarts at the RAND Corporation during its Cold War heyday. I knew next to nothing of his background, and was unaware of his influence within RAND, where his reputation has been overshadowed by the likes of legendary strategists like Albert Wohlstetter and Herman Kahn, on the one hand, and economists like Kenneth Arrow, Robert Aumann, Edmund Phelps, and Herbert Simon (Economics Nobel Prize winners all), on the other.⁵

⁴ Like Bessner’s book, many of these new volumes on more right-of-center migrants have focused on single figures. See for example, Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) and Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (Oxford, 2011) or Christian Wedemeyer and Wendy Doniger, *Hermeneutics, Politics, and the History of Religions: The Contested Legacies of Joachim Wach and Mircea Eliade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). For broader accounts of transatlantic networks of right-leaning intellectuals, see Angus Burgin, *The Great Persuasion: Reinventing Free Markets since the Depression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012) and Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁵ The intellectual and institutional history of the RAND Corporation is now the subject of a significant literature. See notably: Fred Kaplan, *Wizards of Armageddon* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983); David Hounshell, “The Cold War, RAND, and the Generation of Knowledge, 1946-1962,” *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences* 27:2 (1997): 237-267; Martin J. Collins, *Cold War Laboratory: RAND, the Air Force, and the American State* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2002); Jennifer Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); S.M. Amadae, *Rationalizing Capitalism Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2003); Virginia Campbell, “How RAND Invented the Postwar World: Satellites, Systems Analysis, Computing, the Internet—Almost All the Defining Features of the Information Age Were Shaped in Part at the RAND Corporation,” *Invention and Technology* (Summer 2004); Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, *The Worlds of Hermann Kahn: The Intuitive Science of Thermonuclear War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Janet Farrell Brodie, “Learning Secrecy in the Early Cold War: The RAND Corporation,” *Diplomatic History* 35:4 (2011): 643-670; Joy Rohde, *Armed with Expertise: The Militarization of American Social Research during the Cold War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Ron Robin, *The Cold War They Made: The Strategic Legacy of Roberta and Albert Wohlstetter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016). Perhaps leery of the hermeneutic of suspicion which has defined most academic writing about RAND, the RAND Corporation has also been producing its own in-house histories, including Bruno Augenstein, “A Brief History of RAND’s Mathematics Department and Some of Its Accomplishments” (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1993); David R. Jardini, “Out of the Blue Yonder: How RAND Diversified into Social Welfare Research,” *RAND Review* (1998); Willis H Ware, Peter Chalk, Richard Warnes, Lindsay Clutterbuck, Aidan Kirby Winn, and Sheila Nataraj Kirby, *RAND and the Information Evolution: A History in Essays and Vignettes* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008); Austin G. Long, *Deterrence: From Cold War to Long War: Lessons from Six Decades of RAND*

The question Bessner asks is how an idea that (at least until the Trump presidency) had long been taken for granted—that social scientists should have a voice in policymaking, and military-diplomatic strategy in particular—came to be institutionalized. Put another way, where did an expert-based foreign policy come from? Bessner's choice of Speier to address this question turns out to be inspired, not only because Speier has been an unfairly neglected figure in terms of the institutional development of RAND, one of the most protean and generative sites in postwar American policy-intellectual life, but also because his intellectual biography both illuminates and challenges many of the binaries that have hitherto structured the field of transatlantic intellectual migration studies: Jews vs. gentiles, alienated vs. connected, left vs. right, humanistic vs. scientific, adversarial vs. advisorial, and so on.

As a student in Weimer Germany, Speier was a member of Karl Mannheim's '*kreis*.' Reinterpreting the traditionally conservative German idea of *Bildung*, Mannheim had argued that intellectuals made better political choices than members of any other social group, and that they possessed a unique capacity to see the social totality and thus to speak for the totality of society, which in turn made intellectuals' decision-making compatible, with if not a proxy for, democracy. For Speier, Mannheim's influence would prompt a lifelong commitment to the leading role and political responsibility of intellectuals in guiding social democracy.

The rise of the Nazis was the signal event in Speier's life. It not only drove him into exile, but also ruined his confidence about the integrity and stability of republican forms of democracy. Mugged by the reality of Nazi popularity in Germany, Speier took away four general lessons: first, that democracy was an inherently weak institutional form that could fall prey to radical threats; second, that he and other socialist intellectuals had been naïve to believe that the masses could be educated to political wisdom; third, that Marxism was theoretically irrelevant, and that anyone who still believed in it was either naïve, or downright pernicious, if they were Communists; and finally, that democracy needed to be defined not in terms of substantive economic, cultural, and political equality, but rather as a "vague, negative image of authoritarianism" (17). His disillusionment with the political wisdom of the common people "persuaded him that political extremism could be overcome only if democracy became rule *for* the people, whose interests were determined by expert-influenced elites" (2).

After Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, Speier moved to New York. There he initially joined the community of German exiles at and around the New School for Social Research, which included several leading members of the Frankfurt School, including Max Horkheimer and Franz Neumann, some of whom he had known in Weimar. Speier's initial claim to fame in New York was his connection to Mannheim, whose American reception was then just beginning. Speier became an important figure in importing Mannheim to the United States as an intellectual figure whose thinking could be posed as a grand theoretical alternative to the Marxist tradition.⁶ At the same time, however, Speier's skepticism about Marxism (as well as psychoanalysis) pushed him to criticize the Frankfurt School and what he took to be their purely "critical" view of American society and politics. Bessner speculates that the break may also have been connected to the fact that Speier was a

Deterrence Research (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008); and Mai Elliott, *RAND in Southeast Asia: A History of the Vietnam War Era* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2010).

⁶ On the reception of Mannheim in the United States, see David Kettler and Volker Meja, "That Typically German Kind of Sociology Which Verges towards Philosophy": The Dispute about *Ideology and Utopia* in the United States," *Sociological Theory* 12:3 (1994): 279-303.

gentile, which made it easier for him to assimilate into the dominant WASP intellectual culture of the United States, and because he quickly mastered English, which some others in the German exile community struggled to do.

In America, Speier continued to develop his critique of democracy, specifically via a series of interventions in American debates over democracy, such as the one between philosopher John Dewey and journalist-cum-political-commentator Walter Lippmann. In highlighting Speier's interventions in these debates, Bessner also usefully shows how these mid-twentieth century debates were truly transatlantic in nature. Bessner's work thus participates in the 'global turn' in contemporary intellectual history. During WWII, Speier served as one of the leading U.S. analysts of Nazi propaganda—an experience that would ironically provide him with the tools for reverse-engineering how propaganda techniques might be deployed to defend democracy.⁷ After the war, Speier briefly returned to academia, before deciding in 1948 to move to a brand new Los Angeles-based think tank, the RAND Corporation, as the Director of its Social Science Division. His goal in doing so was to move beyond mere analysis and critique, and into a position where he might be able to actually affect the course of geopolitical events.

It is worth pausing to reflect on just how bold Speier's move to RAND was, at two levels. First, although Speier would himself remain in Washington, DC, the fact that RAND was an academically unaffiliated institution located on the West Coast required a leap of faith. Los Angeles in the 1940s was far removed from the center of intellectual life in the United States, which was heavily concentrated in the Northeast and Chicago. Attempting to wield policy influence at that kind of distance, particularly in an era before jet travel, was a gamble, to say the least.

Second, beyond geographic challenges, the idea of social scientists outside both government and academia trying to influence policy in Washington, DC, was more than a little peculiar. Speier was essentially making a bet that he could help invent a new category, that of the "policy intellectual"—a concept that would grow out of the concept of "the policy sciences" which political scientist and fellow RAND affiliate Harold Lasswell was promoting at just that moment.⁸ Lasswell's concept of the policy sciences resonated with the theory of intellectual influence that Speier was in the process of developing. Whereas the traditional mode in which intellectuals had attempted to exercise political influence was through public discourse, Speier believed that intellectuals could be more effective if they instead cultivated specialized expertise that could be peddled to those in political power via private, insider connections. For Speier, "RAND represented the culmination of a decades-old project to insulate experts from public opinion and to furnish a home for intellectuals dedicated to using knowledge in the state's service" (128). RAND became a place where an intellectual like Speier could not only imagine himself as 'free-floating' in Mannheim's sense, but also and in the same breath take on an avowedly political project.

⁷ However, as Fred Turner has shown in *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2013), the propaganda techniques that the U.S. government developed and deployed were not simply mirror images of fascism's mass rallies and blaring movies, but in fact took the form of new kinds of collective events intended to promote a powerful experience of American democracy in action.

⁸ Daniel Lerner and Harold Dwight Lasswell, eds., *The Policy Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Method* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951).

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Bessner points out that the RAND staff was much more diverse than either the foreign service or the elite universities of the day, integrating people with working class, immigrant, and Jewish backgrounds (though there were very few African-Americans or women). Speier's goal at RAND was to ensure that what he took to be this *echt* meritocratic elite would be the 'primary drivers' of U.S. foreign policies, cocooned away from not only the day-to-day press of political machinations in Washington, but also from democratic accountability. Put differently, Speier saw in RAND an opportunity to build what today's American alt-right refers to as 'the Deep State,' that is, a meritocratic community of experts determining policies above the heads of the mis- or dis-informed *hoi polloi*. Speier's vision of the national security state was an unabashedly elitist project.

Speier emerges from Bessner's account as a perfect *bête noire* for a certain post-1960s-vintage species of radical scholarship, which would excoriate men like Speier as the intellectually craven abettors of American empire and anti-radical oppression.⁹ As Noam Chomsky famously acid line had it, these were "modern intellectuals" whose "failure of skepticism" reflected a "will to power... not so much cloaked in idealism as it is drowned in fatuity."¹⁰

Undoubtedly, Speier was a man more interested in influencing power than in criticizing its use, but half a century on from 1968, are we really so sure that 'outsider' intellectuals like Chomsky are less fatuous than 'insider' ones like Speier? The oppositional intellectual may be morally righteous, but he is also typically alienated, marginalized, and above all impotent. By contrast, the policy intellectual is someone who at least aspires to 'get stuff done.' Whatever else one can say about the RAND Corporation, it was filled with intellectuals who saw themselves as pragmatists and problem-solvers, not as abstract thinkers and critics.

Aiming to move past Chomskyite normative assertions about the responsibility of intellectuals, Bessner presents his account of Speier and defense intellectuals generally as part of a "new historiographical movement that takes a more nuanced and sympathetic, if still critical, view of these figures' motivations and contributions" (13). Speier is an effective figure with which to make this case. He was self-consciously animated by what Max Weber called the "ethic of responsibility" (*Verantwortungsethik*) rather than the "ethic of moral conviction" (*Gesinnungsethik*). As Weber archly observed, subscribers to ethics of moral conviction always see those who claim to be acting responsibly as morally compromised, but in fact may merely be reflecting a rage at their own lack of political power.¹¹ Following Weber's dictum, Speier argued that the political role of intellectuals was to "present several courses of action and their potential outcomes to a policymaker, who, having accepted responsibility (*Verantwortung*) for his or her decision, could heed or ignore the intellectual's counsel" (70). As Bessner observes, unlike many "left" intellectuals during this same

⁹ For characteristic examples of this prior generation of scholarship that was instinctually hostile to the national security state, and above all to intellectual collaboration with the national security state, see Christopher Simpson, *Science of Coercion: Communication Research and Psychological Warfare, 1945-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Noam Chomsky, David Barsamian, and Howard Zinn, eds., *The Cold War and the University* (New York: The New Press, 1997); Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences during the Cold War* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

¹⁰ "On the Responsibility of Intellectuals," <https://chomsky.info/19670223/>.

¹¹ Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," <http://anthropos-lab.net/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Weber-Politics-as-a-Vocation.pdf>.

period, Speier “displayed little reticence about using his knowledge in the service of the American state. His trust in the state reflected the lingering influence of the German *Staatswissenschaften* on his thought” (71).

If Speier is an inspired choice for exposing this historiographical faultline concerning the social and political role of intellectuals, he is alas somewhat limited as an example of an intellectual who exercised real policy influence. Bessner offers few definitive examples of Speier actually moving the needle of policy in Washington. Indeed, the only real policy outcomes that Bessner claims Speier significantly influenced were U.S. psychological strategy and tactics against the Soviet Union (information about which remains classified) and the U.S. psychological warfare effort against the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the first half of 1953, which helped spur the failed East German uprising of June.

Part of what may have limited Speier’s influence, Bessner suggests, was Speier’s commitment to qualitative methods, in an environment at RAND in which a fervid commitment to mathematical modeling was increasingly the dominant ethos. An internal rivalry emerged in particular with Herman Kahn, who typified the “view held by many RAND analysts: the social sciences were not really sciences but rather were inchoate and unproved opinions [masquerading] as facts” (211). Given that the so-called ‘whiz kids’ that Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara recruited from RAND all came from the quant-heavy Economics and Strategic Planning divisions, this commitment to qualitative methods may also be the reason why Speier failed to parlay his position at RAND into an appointment within the Kennedy administration. In the end, unlike policy intellectuals turned policy-makers such as Walt Rostow, Henry Kissinger, or Zbigniew Brzezinski, Speier remained true to his Mannheimian roots—an advisor to power, rather than the operator himself.

Review by Daniel Immerwahr, Northwestern University

If the postwar intelligentsia stood for one thing, it was freedom. This was an artifact of their proximity to the levers of power in the Cold War, but it was also related to the special features of their class. Intellectuals flourish, it would seem, in a habitat marked by openness, transparency, and debate.

And yet, postwar thinkers did not prove to be perfect stewards of a free and open public sphere. On Valentine's Day 1967, the *New York Times* ran a front-page exposé of the Central Intelligence Agency for secretly funding the National Student Association. This was the first crack in the dam. Quite soon, it would emerge that not just the students but their professors had taken CIA money. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, a bastion of Cold War thought, was a CIA operation, making such leading thinkers as Lionel Trilling, Dwight Macdonald, Robert Oppenheimer, Hannah Arendt, Sidney Hook, Daniel Bell, Edward Shils, and Mary McCarthy beneficiaries of the agency's largesse, some certainly wittingly and some perhaps not.¹ What had appeared to be an open discussion was, it turned out, state propaganda swathed in secrets.

1967 was the start of the crisis for the security state, when its veil of secrecy was ripped off. The crisis culminated in the *New York Times*' publication of the leaked Pentagon Papers, exposing the squalid details of Washington's covert meddling in Southeast Asia. The revelations of the late 1960s and early 1970s raised pointed questions about how much the country's elite could be trusted. Once the secrets came tumbling out, those in power seemed to be less stalwart defenders of freedom and more deceitful proponents of a narrow version of the national interest. The intelligentsia, in this light, appeared fully complicit. In a much-noted 1967 essay, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," the linguist Noam Chomsky accused powerful intellectuals—he named names—of having unabashedly lied in the service of unchecked U.S. imperialism, and he accused others of having let them do it.²

How had this happened? How had a generation of thinkers, many of whom were radical socialists in the 1930s, come to uphold the security state in its secret and antidemocratic actions around the world? One way to tell the story would be to narrate it as a tale of corruption. These men and women, seeking relevance, made Faustian bargains. They were absorbed into the growing U.S. hegemonic state, but the power they gained came at the cost of their ideals.

Yet that is not the answer that Daniel Bessner provides. He focuses us on one thinker, Hans Speier, who made the journey typical of his cohort. Speier began as a socialist and a democrat, who came of intellectual age in Weimar Germany, convinced that public education was the key. Yet with time he came to look less like the radical democrat John Dewey and more like the fascist Carl Schmitt, whose core assumptions he largely adopted. Speier traded his faith in the public for a faith in the state, particularly the U.S. postwar state, and he served it eagerly from his positions within government, in the nonprofit world, and working for the RAND think tank.

¹ Tity de Vries, "The 1967 Central Intelligence Agency Scandal: Catalyst in a Transforming Relationship between State and People," *Journal of American History* 98:4 (2012): 1075-1092.

² Noam Chomsky, "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," *New York Review of Books*, 23 February 1967.

But Bessner does not explain Speier's transformations as the result of a Faustian bargain. Though Speier relinquished the ideals of his youth, he did not sacrifice them. Rather, he abandoned them willingly. Speier did not jettison his commitment to thoroughgoing democracy because he became a defense intellectual. Just the opposite. He became a defense intellectual because he had rethought his commitment to democracy.

As Bessner explains, the important context was not North American, but European. It was living through the rise of National Socialism that gave Speier doubts about the capacities of an informed public to make decisions. He'd watched a robust intellectual ecosystem collapse in the face of fascist propaganda. And so he came to feel that, at least in times of crisis, democracy must defend itself by adopting its adversary's weapons. Hence his work as a propagandist in the European theater of World War II, and hence his continued service, including as a propagandist, in the Cold War.

This focus on Weimar is welcome. With it, Bessner makes good on the core methodological claim of "U.S. and the world" historians, which is that often U.S. history cannot be understood without looking past the U.S. borders. Bessner notes that Speier was not the only U.S. defense intellectual of European provenance. As Stanley Kubrick grasped in his satire, *Doctor Strangelove* (1963), a number of them, especially those who specialized in security rather than promoting democracy, spoke with European accents. National Security Advisors Henry Kissinger and Zbigniew Brzezinski; physicists Edward Teller, Leo Szilard, and Enrico Fermi; rocket scientists Arthur Rudolph and Wernher von Braun; and game theorists John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern all fit this mold—European-born scholars who served the security state in various technical and political capacities. Hovering above, on a more philosophical plane, were such political theorists as Hans Morgenthau, Karl Deutsch, and Leo Strauss. These men had seen democracies fail. Their worldviews were battle-hardened.

But why Speier, particularly? Bessner concedes that Speier has heretofore been a "lister," someone "mentioned in lists of midcentury intellectuals (and usually toward the end)" (ix). He never wrote a book, nor has anyone written a book about him before Bessner. So, of all the defense intellectuals that might be chosen, why him?

This is the question biographers inevitably face. There are two possible answers. One is that Speier is a specimen, exemplary of a larger trend. As such, he functions beautifully. In Hans Speier, the journey from democracy to defense could not be more clear. Not only did he accept the imperatives of propaganda and secrecy, he actively embraced them, though with the caveat that they were appropriate only for times of emergency (which he deemed the entire midcentury period to be). In offering a condensation of Speier's reasoning, Bessner extracts a reasoned defense of the role of intellectuals in the security state. This is a valuable contribution, one that places the U.S. intelligentsia discernibly within global history.

Yet Bessner's case for Speier's relevance goes beyond his service as a token of the type. Speier, Bessner claims, "did as much as anyone to create the community of American defense intellectuals" (3). He may not have been well-known, but he was a looming backstage presence who "stood at the center of—and shaped—most of the twentieth century's most vibrant intellectual and government institutions" despite the fact that few had heard of him (x). This arrangement fit Speier's political vision well, for he saw little to be achieved by fame. Policymakers, not voters, were the audience that mattered to him.

The argument for Speier's centrality starts with his post at the New School for Social Research, where he edited the journal *Social Research* and served as a broker, introducing European ideas and particularly those of

the sociologist Karl Mannheim to a U.S. audience. Speier then served the U.S. government, first decoding Nazi propaganda and then helping to shape Allied messaging during the postwar German occupation. The Cold War found him as the head of RAND's Social Science Division. In this and related capacities, he advised the government on its anti-Soviet psychological warfare campaign and pushed MIT's Center for International Studies (CIS) to research communications and psychological warfare. Speier also helped to start Stanford's Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS). Finally, Speier helped to design a political crisis simulation exercise in which numerous high-level officials participated.

Speier's CV was undeniably long, but I will confess to wondering how central he was. His direct advice to decisionmakers was limited, and it is hard to say what affect it had; he was not the one who decided where the bombs would go. Bessner argues that Speier had greater relevance as an institution-builder, but even here he was constrained by countervailing forces. At RAND, Speier's social scientists were significantly less funded and less prestigious than their better-known colleagues in engineering, physics, and mathematics. His attempts to "have universities serve as the basic research units of the military-industrial complex," as at MIT's CIS, proved "unsuccessful"—the MIT researchers took the money and went in another direction (196). Also unsuccessful was his vision for Stanford's CASBS. Speier had wanted it to be a research institute that trained postdoctoral scholars, but it became, as he feared, a high-altitude society of fellows.

What is more, Speier's influence was quickly curtailed. The 1960s were the heyday of the defense intellectual, yet by that decade Speier found himself marginalized at RAND and out-of-step more generally. The Cold War in the Global South was fought more with development aid than propaganda broadcasts, and here Speier had little to offer. His pessimism regarding democratic society rendered him ill-suited to contribute to modernization theory or any other developmentalist project that proposed to imprint U.S. norms upon Southern societies. Rather, Speier seemed stuck in the past, railing against Vietnam War protestors, whom he likened to Nazis.

But whether *Democracy in Exile* successfully elevates Speier into the pantheon of U.S. defense intellectuals is not ultimately the point. What is striking about this book is its probing examination of a thoughtful man who gave up on his democratic ideals in a quest to make liberal societies more resilient and secure. Bessner's portrait of Speier is sympathetic, though he ultimately rejects Speier's conclusions. "U.S. and Western democracy confront no external existential threats," Bessner insists, and thus Speier-style "concerns about democracy's weakness" must be "rethought" (230). That is a debatable proposition in this age of President Donald Trump. But Bessner's book, by intelligently and sensitively examining these issues, provides a useful occasion to reflect on them.

Review by Andrew Johnstone, University of Leicester

At a time when the value of expert knowledge is under question, and when elite influence is increasingly under attack, it is timely to see a book that examines the role of experts in the twentieth century. Daniel Bessner's *Democracy in Exile* is at heart an intellectual biography of Hans Speier, but it also examines intellectual life in the mid-twentieth century more broadly through considerations of intellectual Atlantic crossings, the exile experience, connections between the government and academics, the rise of the 'defense intellectual,' and the institutions of the military industrial complex. The book is ambitious in its coverage, and while that ultimately leaves some areas where more depth would have been beneficial, it is still a fascinating and illuminating story.

The book traces Speier's life from his early years in Germany to his retirement years, with the bulk of the text focused on the mid-century years from 1930-1960. It charts Speier's intellectual evolution, his exile from Germany, and his engagement with American intellectual life. The first two chapters highlight two themes in particular: Speier's commitment to political engagement as an intellectual, and his increasing lack of faith in democracy and public opinion through the early 1930s (as evidenced by what was happening in Weimar Germany). Without understanding this pre-war experience, Bessner argues, you cannot understand Speier's subsequent career. That career would see Speier work to influence government directly as an intellectual, both as an individual and through non-governmental organisations that harnessed the power of experts. That work was necessary to ensure the survival of democracy, even if that meant using means that could be seen as undemocratic.

Chapter three outlines Speier's interest in propaganda. Speier argued that propaganda could be utilised at moments of crisis to counter undemocratic forces, but must be rejected once the crisis had passed. This assumed that the period of crisis would in fact pass. The next four chapters reveal Speier's years of greatest political significance, which coincided with decades of crisis – or perceived crisis. This significance is seen through Speier's propaganda roles in government in wartime and beyond, but more notably in his connections to government as a private citizen, and his role as an institution builder in organisations of the military-industrial complex such as the RAND Corporation. These Cold War roles are particularly notable to Bessner as they represent an attempt to influence government through largely unaccountable means. The lack of elite accountability is just one of the themes that comes through strongly in these chapters. The acceptance by those elites of the Cold War as an era of permanent crisis is another theme, as is the fact that this was an era of institution building, with numerous organisational structures created by elites to counter the permanent crisis.

Democracy in Exile is an excellent story of mid-century continuity, and it avoids rigid historical boundaries. The book successfully highlights continuity between the war years and the Cold War years in terms of structures; it also highlights intellectual continuity between the pre-war years and the Cold War. For Bessner, the idea that the Cold War became an era of permanent crisis that enabled the rise of the defense intellectual and establishment of the military-industry complex is important, but it cannot be understood without what came before. Indeed, Bessner's argument that "WWII was the crucible in which the defense intellectual was forged" (101) is particularly convincing. Admittedly, there was not a seamless evolution from Speier's attitudes about Nazi Germany to his concerns about the Soviet Union. But Speier's ideas about the USSR built upon his experience of Nazi Germany, and from 1949 onwards he saw the Soviets as an existential threat to western democratic life in much the same way the Nazis had been during World War II.

In assessing Speier's view of the Cold War, Bessner notes the contradictions in how Speier viewed democratic values. Given the era of permanent crisis, Speier thought it appropriate to suspend democratic norms on a temporary basis to save democracy in the long run. Speier deemed the U.S. to be the only nation capable of ensuring the survival of enlightenment values. To secure those values, "he desired to limit the open society at home in order to guarantee its (eventual) domestic survival and (eventual) spread abroad" (130). The main way Bessner writes about Speier's limiting of the open society is through the creation of institutions such as RAND and the Center for International Studies (CIS). This raises bigger questions about exactly what an open society is and should be. How much influence should these institutions have, if any? To what extent does their existence limit an open society? Bessner argues that there should be greater accountability of experts, and greater transparency. But perhaps wary of Speier's excessive influence, Bessner offers no easy answers to the question of how much power is too much. I share his concerns about excessive influence and the creation of a 'shadow state.' Yet I am also concerned with the broader institutional structures that allow such influence to exist and continue. Was it not the government that was ultimately responsible for adopting policies that were created in organisations such as RAND? True, RAND analysts were neither elected nor appointed, but nor did the government have to listen to them or follow their advice. How did those relationships and interconnections work?

Indeed, one reservation I have with the book is that those connections are not examined in more detail, though I concede this is partly a question of methodology. The intellectual biography approach means that the actual political influence of intellectuals is somewhat taken for granted. I would have liked to see more on this, partly as a result of my own interest in the connections between non-state institutions and the U.S. government. In contrast, it appears that Bessner is more interested in ideas. But there is more to this than simply carping that Bessner did not write the book on Speier that I would have. Given that political engagement was also *Speier's* aim, it is unfortunate that more is not made of his connections to government and his influence through institutions such as RAND, where it is sometimes difficult to see just what role he played. How exactly did the links between the government and organisations like RAND function? How much influence did they actually have? How did ideas and research work their way up Speier's pyramidal vision for the military-industrial complex, with universities at the bottom, institutions like RAND in the middle, and the government at the top?

Bessner writes that "Speier's career reveals that nongovernmental advisers could shape U.S. foreign policy in the early Cold War" (157). The sentence is followed by an endnote that understandably concedes that assessing Speier's precise impact on policy "a difficult task." Bessner admits that "only rarely can one trace Speier's ideas from a report he wrote or a meeting he had through the government bureaucracy and into a policy paper" (265). His approach—"the best a historian can do" in the circumstances - is to examine similarities between Speier's writings and ultimate government policies. And this reveals that Speier did have some influence. But another way to examine influence could have been to draw out the institutional connections made by Speier in greater detail. The last two pages of chapter eight reveal the influence of Speier's intellectual war games on the Kennedy administration, but this reads as an afterthought in a chapter that focuses more narrowly on internal intellectual debates within RAND. Similarly, it would have been fascinating to hear more about the connections between MIT's CIS (if not necessarily Speier himself) and the government.

This might also have done more to illuminate Speier's ultimate significance. In the preface, Bessner writes that "to understand the rise of the defense intellectual, we must understand Hans Speier" (x). Speier's story and the story of the rise of the defense intellectual are certainly interlinked. Yet I was left wondering just how

essential Speier was to the broader defense intellectual story. Was he as crucial as Bessner suggests? Or was he one of many important figures or ‘listers’ about whom a similar claim could be made? As Bessner points out, Speier was not the only academic who looked to solve problems of war and peace in the years surrounding the Second World War. This is not to dismiss Speier’s role - it is clear that Speier’s story is worth telling, whether he is essential or otherwise – but to ask just how pivotal he really was.

In his conclusion, Bessner calls for greater accountability of experts in the hope of regaining “certain practices of democracy” that have been in exile since the early Cold War (231). Again, I agree with the call for accountability, but I am not so sure the conduct of American foreign relations has ever been especially democratic. Still, *Democracy in Exile* does an excellent job of revealing what happens when the pendulum swings too far in the other direction. Perhaps the greater challenge is moving forward in a way that balances the need for transparency with respect for expertise in all its forms.

Author's Response by Daniel Bessner, University of Washington

It is a pleasure and honor to have my first book be the subject of an H-Diplo roundtable. Before I turn to the substance of my response, I want to thank James W. Davis, Nils Gilman, Daniel Immerwahr, and Andrew Johnstone for their thoughtful reviews. I would also like to thank Robert Jervis for his introduction and Diane Labrosse for organizing the roundtable. Since the reviewers have explicated the major themes and arguments of *Democracy in Exile* so well, I will focus here on addressing their critiques.

The major criticism of the book, made by both Immerwahr and Johnstone, concerns the question of Speier's influence. If Speier "was not the one who decided where the bombs would go," as Immerwahr pithily puts it, how central could he possibly be to the history of the defense intellectual?

To my mind, such a statement reflects our field's (sometimes counterproductive) assumption that policy influence is the ultimate subject of the intellectual history of U.S. foreign relations. It is this assumption that leads historians to write manifold biographies of George Kennan and Henry Kissinger, the two most prominent defense intellectuals of the Cold War.¹ Admittedly, compared to giants like Kennan and Kissinger, Speier did not have a sizable impact on U.S. foreign policy.² But this does not mean that he was without influence. Instead of shaping foreign policy itself, he shaped the process by which it was made. Specifically, without Speier's efforts, the idea that social scientists should have a voice in foreign policymaking—an idea that, as Gilman notes, has "long been taken for granted"—might never have been institutionalized. It is for this reason that Speier is central to the history of the defense intellectual and why he should interest historians of U.S. foreign relations.

To understand Speier's importance, one must appreciate how tenuous the position of social science was in the early national security state.³ Though social scientists insisted they had contributed to the U.S. victory in

¹ Books about Kennan and Kissinger could fill a small library. Recent books on Kennan include John Lukacs, *George Kennan: A Study of Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Lee Congdon, *George Kennan: A Writing Life* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2008); Nicholas Thompson, *The Hawk and the Dove: Paul Nitze, George Kennan, and the History of the Cold War* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2009); John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011); David Felix, *Kennan and the Cold War: An Unauthorized Biography* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2015). Recent books on Kissinger include Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007); Mario del Pero, *The Eccentric Realist: Henry Kissinger and the Shaping of American Foreign Policy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Niall Ferguson, *Kissinger: 1923-1968: The Idealist* (New York: Penguin Press, 2015); Greg Grandin, *Kissinger's Shadow: The Long Reach of America's Most Controversial Statesman* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015).

² He was, however, instrumental in developing U.S. psychological strategy during World War II and the early Cold War. See chapters 4 and 6 of my book.

³ In this response, as in my book, "'social science' generally refers to the disciplines whose members belonged to RAND's Social Science Division, which included sociology, political science, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and history. It does not refer to economics, the representatives of which had their own Economics Division, a fact that reflected economics' privileged disciplinary position at midcentury" (275n2).

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World War II, this was hardly a widely accepted opinion.⁴ Indeed, many members of the postwar foreign policy establishment considered the social sciences to be a bit backward. For example, John D. Williams, the chief of the RAND Corporation's Mathematics Division, was convinced that the social sciences were "in the fourteenth century as compared with the physical sciences, with engineering, and so on."⁵ If Williams, who was instrumental in recruiting social scientists to RAND, could make this claim, one can only imagine what those more hostile to the social sciences believed.⁶

This is all to say that it was by no means a foregone conclusion that social scientists would find a home in the emergent national security state. When Speier was offered the directorship of RAND's Social Science Division (SSD) in 1947-1948, he was in essence being asked to secure social scientists' recently won seat at the foreign policymaking table. The success of this project depended upon Speier's ability to mediate between RAND's management, policymakers, and social scientists themselves. If the SSD had collapsed due to Speier's poor management, it is very possible that policymakers and think-tank administrators alike would have concluded that the social sciences were more trouble than they were worth. Moreover, an unsuccessful SSD likely would have suggested to social scientists that working at a think tank was not a viable career option. To be sure, RAND was not the only organization of the nascent national security state to hire social scientists.⁷ It was, however, the most influential, and observers both within and without the military-intellectual complex followed its progress closely.⁸ Simply put, if Speier had failed to establish the legitimacy of the idea of the defense intellectual at RAND, several of the twentieth century's most important foreign policymakers—Kissinger, National Security Advisors Zbigniew Brzezinski and Walt Rostow, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, etc.—might never have had the policy careers they did. Though Speier did not produce a document like Kennan's Long Telegram or become secretary of state like Kissinger, he was nevertheless crucial to the history of U.S. foreign policymaking.

Johnstone also correctly highlights that I did not explore in detail how "the links between the government and organizations like RAND function[ed]," but instead emphasized institutional and intellectual history. There were two primary reasons for this focus. First, there are legions of works on RAND and its policy

⁴ See, for example, Edward L. Bowles, "Editorial for Proceedings of the I.R.E. and Waves and Electrons," February 1, 1946, Edward Lindley Bowles Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 31, Folder 4. Toward the end of this editorial, Bowles pleads for Americans to recognize that not only natural science, but also social science, is crucial to U.S. national security.

⁵ Vaughn D. Bornet, *John Williams: A Personal Reminiscence (August, 1962)* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, D-19036, 12 August 1969), 22. Williams was here referring to how he felt after World War II.

⁶ For more on the degradation of the social sciences at RAND, see chapter 8 of my book.

⁷ Other groups to utilize social scientists included the State Department's Policy Planning Staff, the Research and Development Board, and the National Resources Planning Board, among others.

⁸ On RAND as the model Cold War think tank, see Bruce Kuklick, *Blind Oracles: Intellectuals and War from Kennan to Kissinger* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 79; Thomas Medvetz, *Think Tanks in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 26, 70-72.

impact, and I did not want to reread previously covered ground if I did not have access to new materials.⁹ (In the last several years, however, RAND has begun to open its archives to scholars, and thousands of new documents have become, or are in the process of becoming, available. I intend to utilize these documents in my next book, which will be a full-scale history of RAND.) Second, I hoped to make the methodological point that historians of U.S. foreign relations have much to gain by adopting institutional and intellectual approaches that do not fetishize policy influence. Only readers can judge whether or not I succeeded in this effort.

In their reviews, Davis and Immerwahr suggest that the fascist jurist Carl Schmitt shaped Speier's thought.¹⁰ For instance, Davis states that "Schmitt provided much of the conceptual framework that led Speier to conclude that in times of extreme emergency [i.e., in states of exception], democratic processes could be suspended to the higher-order goal of saving the state." In my opinion this is not quite right. Though Davis accurately conveys Speier's beliefs, it is important to emphasize that Speier did not derive his arguments from Schmitt, but rather came to them by dint of his own experiences and readings in social and political theory. Indeed, Speier was only one of many thinkers across the Weimar political spectrum who adopted a "decisionist" theory of politics that contemporary scholars trace primarily to Schmitt.¹¹ In other words, Schmitt's originality did not lie in his discovery of the state of exception, but rather in his ability to forcefully and succinctly express ideas held by many of his contemporaries.

In his introduction, Jervis criticizes *Democracy in Exile* for ignoring Gabriel Almond's *The American People and Foreign Policy*, which, he notes, "supplied strong empirical evidence for Speier's fundamental outlook."¹² I agree that it is unfortunate I could not find an appropriate space to discuss Almond's work in my book. In fact, Almond was not the only thinker besides Speier who in the early Cold War argued against public participation in foreign affairs: Thomas Bailey, George Kennan, Walter Lippmann, and Hans Morgenthau also released books that were similarly skeptical of public opinion's wisdom.¹³ Indeed, one might say that

⁹ For the scholarship on RAND, see the fifth footnote in Nils Gilman's review in this forum.

¹⁰ Schmitt's specter haunts the literature on émigré defense intellectuals. See William Scheuerman, *Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009); Udi Greenberg, *The Weimar Century: German Émigrés and the Ideological Foundations of the Cold War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Nicolas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

¹¹ Other Weimar-era decisionists included the liberal Karl Mannheim and the social democrat Otto Kirchheimer. See Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot, "Who Decides?" in *The Decisionist Imagination: Sovereignty, Social Science, and Democracy in the 20th Century*, ed. Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 4-5. See also Rüdiger Graf, "Either-Or: The Narrative of 'Crisis' in Weimar Germany and Its Historiography," *Central European History* 43:4 (December 2010): 592-615.

¹² Gabriel Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1950).

¹³ Thomas A. Bailey, *The Man in the Street: The Impact of American Public Opinion on Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1948); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1948); George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950* (New York: New American Library, 1951);

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Speier, Almond, Bailey, et al., comprised a discursive community organized around the idea that the public was too ignorant and feckless to serve as a guide for U.S. foreign affairs. It remains for future scholars to explore the diversity of ways in which members of this group reframed and reformed the theory and practice of foreign policymaking.¹⁴

Several of the reviewers conclude their essays with provocative questions that, for reasons of space, I can only briefly address. Davis asks why the national security state continued to exist after the Cold War. I believe it continued due to institutional inertia, the fact that the U.S. government leads a world-spanning empire whose management depends upon a large bureaucratic base, and because it provides jobs to thousands of officials and analysts. Davis also inquires as to whether the epistocracy established by Speier and others “help[ed] pave the way for the sort of populist rebellion” that engendered Donald J. Trump’s presidential victory. In my opinion, it did; in particular, the lack of elite accountability after the failures of Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya undermined the public’s faith in expertise and enabled the emergence of an anti-establishment demagogue like Trump.¹⁵

For his part, Johnstone ends his review by posing several penetrating questions about the nature of expertise in an open society. Though I cannot provide a blueprint for how experts should operate in a democracy, I would like to state clearly that I am convinced that post-industrial and knowledge-driven societies like our own require expertise. As Bruce Kuklick writes in *Blind Oracles*, “if we give up on knowledge and thus, to some degree, social science as even a partial guide in human affairs, we leave decisions to habit, authority, or chance. What alternatives do we have to the patient and systematic investigation of phenomena and the exploration of causes and consequences?”¹⁶

I would like to again thank the reviewers for their thoughtful and comprehensive remarks. It has truly been a pleasure to participate in this roundtable.

Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy in the United States* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952); Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1955).

¹⁴ Nicolas Guilhot and I recently analyzed how Morgenthau’s skepticism of public opinion informed both his classical realism and Kenneth Waltz’s neorealism. See Daniel Bessner and Nicolas Guilhot, “How Realism Waltzed Off: Liberalism and Decisionmaking in Kenneth Waltz’s Neorealism,” *International Security* 40:2 (Fall 2015): 87-118.

¹⁵ See Daniel Bessner and Stephen Wertheim, “Democratizing U.S. Foreign Policy: Bringing Experts and the Public Back Together,” *Foreign Affairs* (5 April 2017), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2017-04-05/democratizing-us-foreign-policy>.

¹⁶ Kuklick, *Blind Oracles*, 16.