

Introduction

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It has long been acknowledged that the Second World War significantly transformed anthropology and gave rise to applied anthropology as a professional subdiscipline; but, there has been surprisingly little scholarly inquiry into the particulars of this process, during the war or as it gave way to the Cold War. The relative silence, among anthropologists, regarding the contributions of their colleagues to the interests of government during this crucial period, is itself worthy of study. Though it might simply be regarded as a subject whose time has not yet come, whose subject matter has little immediate relevance to the intellectual priorities of our own time, even a tentative excursion into the subject suggests that there are uncomfortable issues just below the surface, issues that reflect ethical and political contradictions that anthropologists must inevitably confront.

At the time, the total nature of the war effort, the conviction that the stakes of victory were so absolute, meant that few anthropologists (among both the Axis and Allied forces) seriously considered the ethical issues involved in the uses of anthropology in their nation's military interest. Partly for this reason—though not exclusively—anthropologists' participation in the Second World War transformed the discipline. In the United States, anthropologists demonstrated to governmental agencies and private research institutions that they had valuable skills, which would take on increasing value as the Cold War expanded the United States' sphere of influence. In the U.S., anthropologists were recruited to agencies such as

the Office of War Information, the Office of Strategic Services, the Military Intelligence Division or the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs and the Division of Cultural Relations.

The war also transformed U.S. colleges and universities, which first accommodated and later, in the post-war era, transformed themselves around the needs of the military. The urgent needs of a country at war began to transform U.S. higher education in ways that few could understand at the time. Thus, the growth of something as simple as wartime campus-based language and culture programmes opened the doors to an increased military-industrial presence on U.S. campuses that blossomed during the Cold War. These wartime programmes not only demonstrated the value of anthropologists to powerful funding sources, but made anthropologists more amenable to choosing research questions and designing projects that were of interest to funding agencies.

This collection of articles seeks to explore some of the ways that anthropologists applied their craft during the Second World War and the early years of the Cold War; or ways that anthropologists can contribute to an understanding of what was taking place during that period, whether or not it involved the work of their discipline. Before the war, anthropologists had long applied their skills in the service of colonialist goals. But, while colonialism gave rise to significant developments in theoretical and applied anthropology, the Second World War both codified, transformed and legitimated the methods of applied anthropology. As the

state of total warfare pressed all involved to use whatever resources were available, anthropologists in all countries found new and often disturbing uses for their discipline, in ways that moved beyond previous experience.

For many U.S. anthropologists, the Nazis' abuses of the scientific anthropological understanding of race demanded a strong response. But, if the war demonstrated anything, it was that, beyond such arguments, there clearly was nothing special about anthropology that made its practitioners the undisputed guardians of a universal vision of humanity. As Gretchen Schafft's article here powerfully demonstrates, the nature of the Nazi regime was such that German anthropologists became willing servants of the national cause, not just to win the war, but to defeat the racial 'enemies' of the German people, and in so doing they used their disciplinary skills to combat the Boasian commitment to the equality of humankind.

German scholars, however, were not alone in betraying an anthropological vision of human equality. As the article by David Price reveals, some U.S. anthropologists were willing to engage in efforts to help defeat the Japanese that did not necessarily respect a vision of common humanity. This is, perhaps, hardly surprising in view of the times. But it raises questions about the threshold of anthropological commitment to its core values in times of war and indicates disciplinary ties to colonial uses of anthropology in previous eras.

Janice Harper's examination of Oak Ridge, Tennessee's contribution to the development of the atomic bomb examines how whole sectors of U.S. society were mobilized against an enemy—German or Japanese—in ways that involved both secrecy and moral ambiguity. This was certainly the case with the atomic bomb project and, while no anthropologists were directly involved in the Manhattan Project, Harper demonstrates that the way the city's wartime role is currently conceived is susceptible to anthropological analysis. Harper's study helps

us understand how U.S. culture has been affected during the nuclear age.

The development and use and the rationalization for further development of nuclear weapons span a morally ambiguous twilight that separated the war against fascism from the beginnings of the Cold War. It was a period when the role of U.S. anthropologists, as citizens of the emergent national-security state and as scholars within universities that were increasingly linked to government policy objectives, was being subtly transformed. But it was not done wholly without conscious intent, at least on the part of some of the discipline's most influential figures. Julian Steward, one of the country's most influential anthropologists, in his unpublished 'Recommendations for Post-War Anthropological Research' (Steward 1943), advised that anthropological expertise would increasingly be required to meet a demand for cultural information; in particular, he observed, there would be a need 'for long-range continuing studies that observe the effect of the impact of the war on world regions and the success or failure of new post-war programs' (Steward 1943: 3).

Those programmes arose in the context of the Cold War and, in its efforts to meet those needs, anthropology moved, almost imperceptibly, from wartime concerns to new ones that reflected Cold War anxieties. Many of the anthropologists involved in this transformation undertook these new projects with the recent experience of the discipline's widespread successful contributions to the Second World War focusing their energies. In this way, U.S. anthropologists' efforts during the Second World War significantly framed their approach to the early Cold War's projects, funded by public and private agencies. In examining the classic project in applied anthropology, Cornell's Vicos Project in highland Peru, Eric Ross discusses how the import of this has never been adequately addressed, though it raised inherently important questions, again, about how the dis-

cipline's universal vision of humanity was subordinated to and tailored to meet policy needs. In the process, his article underscores some of the ways—not least, in its conceptualization of 'peasant conservatism'—in which anthropology has been perennially caught between scientific aims and ideological interests.

These articles grew out of a session on 'World War Two Anthropology: Reconsidering the War's Past in the Present' at the 2005 American Anthropological Association meetings in Washington, D.C. While critically examining anthropology's involvement with the Second World War (and immediate aftermath) in different ways, each is part of a common thematic exploration of how political values shaped anthropology's priorities and perceptions. In Harper's fascinating article, we see how the interpretation of wartime events still echoes through the present in ways that anthropologists may have special means both to understand and question. The other articles provide critical and often disturbing evidence—and a caution—that anthropologists are part of their society and therefore not immune to the forces that shape the think-

ing of its citizens. As a whole, the articles—taken together with work in a similar vein by other anthropologists and scholars in related disciplines—help us to assemble a picture of the practice of social science in time of war, whether the Second World War, the Cold War or, now, the current 'war on terrorism'. It is a step toward asking how social science can and will advance the interests of the poor and excluded in the face of insistent pressures for it to contribute to the dominant ideological concerns of policy-makers and those who fund academic research.

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Reference

- Steward, J. 1943. 'Recommendations for Post-war Anthropological Research', Smithsonian Institution Archives Record Unit 87, Box 29.