

PARKER - “Hearts, Minds, Voices” - Long Abstract:

The Cold War superpowers endeavored mightily to “win hearts and minds” abroad through what came to be called public diplomacy. Many of the target audiences were on the conflict’s original front-lines in Europe. However, other, larger audiences resided in areas outside Europe then in the throes of decolonization. Among the latter, for all the blood and drama of war, intervention, crisis, and revolution, the vast majority experienced the Cold War as public diplomacy— as a media war for their allegiance rather than as a violent war for their lives. In these areas, superpower public diplomacy encountered volatile issues of race, empire, poverty, and decolonization— all of which were in flux as they intersected with the dynamics of the Cold War and with anti-imperialist currents long coursing. The challenge to U.S. public diplomacy was acute. At a time when the United States’ image was inseparable from Jim Crow and from Washington’s European-imperial alliances, the cresting of these issues put U.S. outreach unavoidably on the defensive.

Yet the greater consequence of these Cold War campaigns was not for U.S. foreign policy, but rather for international history— when the non-European world responded to this media war by joining it. Newly independent voices launched public-diplomacy campaigns of their own, making for a crowded field. In addition to offering a roundabout validation of the strategic importance of public diplomacy, this proliferation of voices articulated a different vision of the postwar world. Reappropriating the geopolitical and intellectual space left between the poles of the superpower conflict, this global conversation formulated the “Third World project” around a nucleus of nonalignment, post-imperial economic development, and anti-colonial racial solidarity. The global-South response to the injection of the Cold War into their environs thereby helped to coalesce the “Third World” as a transnational imagined community on the postwar global landscape.

PARKER - “Hearts, Minds, Voices” - Short Abstract:

The Cold War superpowers endeavored mightily to “win hearts and minds” abroad through public diplomacy. The non-European world responded to this media war by joining it, rejecting the Cold War in favor of forging an imagined community grounded in nonalignment, economic development, and racialized solidarity: the “Third World.”