

**PRESS RELEASE**

July 23, 2021

For Immediate Release

Contact: Julien Gorbach

Phone: (781) 799-8576

gorbach@hawaii.edu

A history of WWI propaganda earns LSU scholar his second AJHA Book of the Year Award

The American Journalism Historians Association has selected John Maxwell Hamilton of Louisiana State University as 2021 Book of the Year winner for “Manipulating the Masses: Woodrow Wilson and the Birth of American Propaganda.”

The other three Finalists for this year’s award were Stephen Bates of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, for “An Aristocracy of Critics: Luce, Hutchins, Niebuhr, and the Committee That Redefined Freedom of the Press”; Erik S. Gellman of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for “Troublemakers: Chicago Freedom Struggles through the Lens of Art Shay”; and Patrick S. Washburn of Ohio University and Chris Lamb of Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis for “Sports Journalism: A History of Glory, Fame, and Technology.”

The American Journalism Historians Association Book of the Year Award recognizes the best book in journalism history or mass media history published during the previous calendar year. For the 2021 award, the book must have been granted a first-time copyright in 2020.

Hamilton’s book is “a brilliant exposé of the machinations of misbegotten missions of George Creel, his cronies, his Committee on Public Information and their impact on Woodrow Wilson,” explained AJHA member Susan Swanberg. “The throughline from the Creel/Wilson era to our era is unmistakable—right down to the rifling of one’s opponents’ communications. Now, however, we apply Creel’s dark arts to own domestic ‘enemies,’ too. The manufacture of consent continues ...”

Fellow association member Dianne Bragg added that “the importance of this book cannot be overstated,” while Patrick Filé described it as “sweeping in scope but detailed in delivery.”

Hamilton said he was delighted and fortunate to receive a second award for a book. He won the first award in 2010, for “Journalism’s Roving Eye: A History of American Foreign Reporting.”

“But this one is different,” Hamilton said, “in the sense that I hope that the award helps draw attention to the threat posed by government propaganda. It is a thorny subject, not easy to address effectively. But given the threat it poses to democracy, it cries out for attention from scholars and journalists.”

Bates said that he has been fascinated with the subject of his book—the Hutchins Commission—ever since the ‘80s, when he first came across its report, “A Free and Responsible Press,” in a used bookstore. When he started on his research, he was particularly interested how the committee sought to make social responsibility for the press somehow enforceable, given the protections ensured by the First Amendment.

“Finally, I was interested in the reputation of the report in journalism schools, which (the report) sharply disparages,” Bates said. “Journalism teachers mostly hated it at first, but gradually it became part of the canon. A major reason, I think, is that journalism faculties shifted from

practitioners to academics. In other words, journalism professors increasingly respected the report as they became more like the people who wrote it.”

Gellman said he had an opportunity to meet Art Shay, who is well-known for his celebrity photographs, and was surprised to learn that Shay had a largely unpublished and massive archive of social movement photographs of Chicago from the 1940s through the ‘60s.

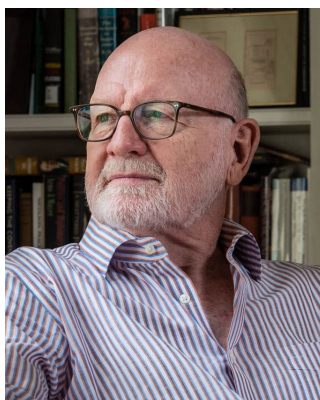
“Our subsequent collaboration turned out to be a perfect pairing because he supplied the incredible photographs that depicted the dynamic energy that erupted on Chicago's streets, and I knew and further researched their history to give these photographs specific context and significance,” Gellman said. “... They show us the ecstasy and agony, frustration and satisfaction, and militancy and repression that sprung up from the streets of Chicago a half century ago.”

Washburn and Lamb said that a great deal of long, hard work went into the book their book on sports journalism. “And the award means that it was worthwhile,” Washburn explained. “It would be a disappointment to write a book that went unnoticed and no one cared about.”

“This book was written because no one had ever done an in-depth examination of the entire history of American sports journalism,” he added. “Various parts of it had been focused on, such as: radio and television and sports journalism; biographies and autobiographies of famous sports journalists; different sports, such as baseball and boxing, and sports journalism; and the contributions of black sports journalists and women sports journalists. But no one had written the entire story and showed how and why sports journalism changed in this country over almost 300 years.”

Lamb said the journalism profession doesn’t give sports reporting the respect it deserves, or there would be a Pulitzer Prize category for sportswriting.

“I hope that someone who has never given much thought to sports or sports journalism will pick up this book, read it, and have a change of opinion about sports and sports journalism,” he said.





Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit <http://www.ajhaonline.org>.

Copyright © 2021 American Journalism Historians Association. All rights reserved.

Contact email: AJHAconvention@gmail.com

You are receiving this message because you opted in at ajhaonline.org