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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Cheek	18

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOULEVARD & GROVE RICHMOND 23221

MAIL: 4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

20 June 1983

L. & S. Mumford: Amenia, N.Y.
12501
RR1 - Box 187



Mrs KEITH N. Morgan
39 Benton Road
BELMONT, MASS.
02178

meager & so unimportant
that I fear you'll be more
disappointed than Leslie &
I were when our grandiose
proposals were rejected.

But Salisbury is closed
to Amenia, and our little
village of Leedsville is even
closer. So if you'll phone
before coming on the 29th
you'll be welcome for a
brief, (if disappointing!) chat
on Jan. 29th.

Cordially,
L. & S. Mumford

cross a vast amount of cor-
drawings, perspective
dition Lewis Mumford and I
Modern Art in 1940, at the
c, Jr., then President of
men on the verge of invading
the rest of Europe, and the
whatever they could to
are its defenses.

special exhibition in the
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as possible, for many ex-
s momentarily.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOULEVARD 6 GROVE RICHMOND 23221

MAIL: 4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

20 June 1983

LEWIS MUMFORD : AMENIA : NEW YORK : 12501

Am.

meager & so unimportant
that I fear you'll be more
disappointed than Leslie &
I were when our grandiose
proposals were rejected.

But Salisbury is closed
to Amenia, and our little
village of Leedsville is soon
closed. So if you'll phone
before coming on the 29th,
you'll be welcome for a
brief, (if disappointing!) chat
on Jan. 29th.

Cordially yrs
Lewis & Sophia
Mumford

cross a vast amount of cor-
drawings, perspective
dition Lewis Mumford and I
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then on the verge of invading
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as possible, for many ex-
s momentarily.

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VIRGINIA
BOULEVARD

as Avenue
ginia 23226

American, New York: 12501 -
10 Jan. 1983

Mr.
Boa
Ame
10
New

- - - Your letter of the sixth, dear Mrs Morgan, finds me at the age of 87 without my usual stationery & - even wear - crowded for time.

Dea

What I have to tell you about my brief collaboration with Leslie Cheek is so meager & so unimportant that I fear you'll be more disappointed than Leslie & I were when our grandiose proposals were rejected.

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But Salisbury is closed to Armenia, and our little village of Leedsville is even closer. So if you'll phone before coming on the 29th you'll be welcome for a brief, (if disappointing!) chat on Jan. 29th.

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Mrs & Sophia
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bald MacLeish, Philip Goodwin, Edward Stone, and Alfred Barr, we devised an "experience" through which the American public would be invited to walk as soon as possible, for many expected England to fall to the Nazis momentarily.

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOULEVARD A GROVE RICHMOND 23261

MAIL: 4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

20 June 1983

Mr. Samuel P. Reed, Chairman
Board of Directors
American Heritage Publishing Company
10 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10021

Dear Mr. Reed:

Some years ago you persuaded me to re-subscribe to American Heritage, and I am now an even greater admirer of your magazine which presents such a variety of Americana - even the story about California's Bohemian Grove. Now that a problem with my inner ear prevents me from leaving our Richmond home, I find magazines and television my daily routine. But I am also engaged in researching my files when I was Director of the Baltimore Museum (1939-42) and of the Virginia Museum (1948-68) to aid my daughter Elizabeth (Hollins A.B.; Brown M.A.), who is now Mrs. Keith Morgan, in the preparation of my biography.

In this work I have come across a vast amount of correspondence, texts, architectural drawings, perspective sketches related to a special exhibition Lewis Mumford and I prepared for New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1940, at the request of Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., then President of that Museum's board. Hitler was then on the verge of invading England after taking over most of the rest of Europe, and the MOMA trustees were anxious to do whatever they could to persuade the U.S. to urgently prepare its defenses.

It was then decided that a special exhibition in the MOMA building, and in a large temporary structure in what was then its garden would be the most effective thing to do, and Mumford and I were hurriedly employed for this job, giving up our regular work elsewhere. With the advice of others related to MOMA, like Nelson Rockefeller, Beardsley Ruml, Archibald MacLeish, Philip Goodwin, Edward Stone, and Alfred Barr, we devised an "experience" through which the American public would be invited to walk as soon as possible, for many expected England to fall to the Nazis momentarily.

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Page 2
20 June 1983

Of course, the English aviators held off Hitler, and the emergency was somewhat deflated. Meanwhile, preparations for the special exhibition, tentatively labeled "For Us the Living", had been completed, and the MOMA trustees had to authorize the large expenditure involved - something more than a million dollars, I believe. But this then vast sum seemed to great, and the project was abandoned, with much regret.

My files tell this story with vivid detail, and are the basis of what I believe would be a fascinating illustrated article for American Heritage, which Elizabeth could prepare as she completes my biography. Should your Editors be interested she can send them information, like photocopies of letters and texts and photographs of plans and sketches for their consideration.

Sincerely,

LCjr/dsn

Leslie Cheek, Jr.

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4703 Pocahontas Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226

11 July 1983

Dear Elizabeth,

You, Keith and Julia have not been gone a week as I write this on the afternoon of 9 July, but 4703 seems absolutely deserted to both Mother and me. We wish you had not been required to return to Belmont so soon, but appreciated the privilege of having you so long in July.

Since your departure, I have been at work on the article which I intend to submit to American Heritage, as soon as that magazine, or the Smithsonian(?) says that the proposed piece sounds interesting.

As you will see from the enclosed copy of my letter to Lewis Mumford, I am asking him for his review and criticism; and, enclosed in this package to you, is the second version of the same article, which I hope you, too, will read over and improve before I send it off.

Also in the package is the old bellows envelope containing all of the "papers" I have from the M.O.M.A. affair, including the originals of my pencil perspectives of the proposed exhibition interiors, and the valuable originals of the letters from Mrs. Rockefeller and her son, Nelson, Alfred Barr, Louis Mumford and several others - plus some of my letters to them.

Also, there is one folder devoted to my correspondence with the M.O.M.A. in 1942 when I was in Baltimore, and writing to Alfred Barr, Elolie Courter, Eliot Noyes and others. The rest of my Baltimore correspondence you have in the large cardboard file box which Keith brought up to Belmont Recently.

As you said, you have a number of interviews for the Biography still to do here in Virginia and elsewhere. But these can await your return next Fall, after NO. TWO is with us.

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4703 Pocahontas Avenue · Richmond · Virginia 23226

11 July 1983

Mr. Lewis Mumford
Amenia
New York 12501

Dear Lewis:

Our daughter, Elizabeth (Mrs. Keith Morgan) greatly enjoyed her visit to you in Amenia last Spring, and she is now hard at work on the proposed Biography. In reviewing my files to help her research, I came across a fat folder full of materials related to the ill-fated exhibition proposal you and I labored on for the Museum of Modern Art in New York during July and August of 1940.

As the re-telling of this saga could be quite fascinating to magazine readers of our time, I have put together an article for possible submission to American Heritage. But, before I send it off, I hope that you will review and correct the materials, which I enclose in this heavy package, complete with stamped, return envelope.

I intend to enclose 1940 photographs of the Museum, you, Mrs. Rockefeller, Nelson, Alfred and myself - so, if you can, please send me a shot of yourself.

Mary Tyler and Elizabeth join in sending our greetings to you and Mrs. Mumford.

Sincerely,



Leslie Cheek, Jr.

LCjr/dsn

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Page 2
11 July 1983

Please mail these, with the related bill, to me at my place here in Richmond.

When the article is complete, I intend to send it for review to Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, III, a former neighbor of mine in Williamsburg.

Sincerely,

LCjr/dsn

Leslie Cheek, Jr.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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4703 Pocahontas Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226

11 July 1983

The Research Library
Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York 10019

Gentlemen:

Your assistance is needed in my preparation of an illustrated article for a national magazine in which I am telling the story of a proposed special exhibition entitled, "For Us the Living", to be presented at the Museum of Modern Art in 1940.

This show was designed by myself and the texts were written by Lewis Mumford at the request of the Trustees of this Museum for the purpose of bringing home to Americans of that uncertain day the true dangers of the then-current international contest between the forces of Democracy and Fascism. This exhibition was to be housed in a large, specially-constructed building in the Museum's garden along 54th Street and would use an unusual mixture of printed and spoken words intermixed with projected light pictures, automated dummies, movies, and various galleries of changing sizes, levels, colors, and temperatures.

After some two months of feverish work during July and August, the exhibition "scenario" was presented to the Trustees of the Museum for the needed financing. But by that date the British had finally blunted Hitler's legions, and the cost of the proposed exhibition was estimated to exceed one million dollars. So, with apparent regret, on 4 October, 1940, the Trustees decided not to authorize this rare show.

Now, I need 8"x10" photographs of the following things in the 1940 era:

1. The Museum of Modern Art, West 53rd Street facade
2. Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr.
3. Nelson Rockefeller
4. Alfred Barr
5. Lewis Mumford

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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Page 2
11 July 1983

Please mail these, with the related bill, to me at my place here in Richmond.

When the article is complete, I intend to send it for review to Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, III, a former neighbor of mine in Williamsburg.

Sincerely,

Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Leslie Cheek, Jr.

LCjr/dsn

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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4703 Pocahontas Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226

11 July 1983

Miss Elizabeth Stacy, Head Librarian
The Virginia Museum
Boulevard and Grove Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221

Dear Miss Stacy:

I hope you had a restful vacation; welcome back!

Elizabeth has returned to Boston, and I continue to try to help her with the Biography, which she says she will begin drafting late next Autumn. There is a chance that American Heritage will publish an article on the exhibition I did for the Museum of Modern Art in the Summer of 1940, at the request of the M.O.M.A. Trustees, of which I happened to keep all related correspondence, the floor plans, some pencil perspectives, and all texts. And now, I believe that Connoisseur might be interested in a color picture story on our exhibition, Habiliments for Heroines, of which you have so carefully preserved the 2"x2" slides (and, perhaps, some 8"x10" black and white photographs).

So, I am now starting to work on such an article; and, as usual, I will need your help. I hope to send to pick up from you at the Library the following (as soon as you 'phone that they are ready):

1. all 2"x2" Kodachrome slides of the Exhibition
2. All 8"x10" B. & W. prints of the Exhibition.
3. All file materials on the Exhibition, such as:
 - a. Names of the Heroines, and quotations of descriptions of them by their Authors.
 - b. Correspondence related to the special mannequins used in the Exhibition (their source in New York (New Jersey)

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Page 2
11 July 1983

- c. The acquisition of the specially-made Trigere dress, and its donation to the Valentine Museum.
- d. The speech by Trigere at the Preview, and related publicity.

To send this completed material to the Editor of Connoisseur, I will need to know more about Thomas Hoving, in addition to the fact that he was once Director of the Metropolitan Museum in New York. In particular, the proper title of his book about the uncertain ancestry of the costly painting acquired by the Met.

Thank you, Miss Stacy.

Sincerely,

LCJr

Leslie Cheek, Jr.

LCjr/dsn

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AMERICAN HERITAGE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

10 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10020

(212) 399-8494

SAMUEL P. REED
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

July 12, 1983

Mr. Leslie Cheek, Jr.
4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226

Dear Mr. Cheek:

Forgive me for not replying to your letter of June 20 before now. Your letter was received when I was abroad and only now am I catching up with my correspondence.

Naturally I am interested by your suggestion that the once-proposed special exhibition 'For Us the Living' has, it would appear on the surface, all the proper ingredients for an AMERICAN HERITAGE article. I have turned your letter over to the magazine's editor, Byron Dobell, who has also expressed interest, and you will be hearing from him.

Once, some years ago -- I shudder at the thought of how many -- my wife Annette and I, in the company of Jack and Anya Robertson, visited you in your Richmond home. The occasion was made memorable as somehow you found a German battle flag of World War II vintage and hoisted it to the top of your flagpole -- no doubt to the considerable surprise of your neighbors. Jackie remains a close, personal friend, and we see him often...actually not often enough. His life runs at full throttle what with his UVA duties and his architectural business. My mother Permelia continues her vigorous ways and all is, on occasion, tranquil.

If you have any Civil War material or anything else that you think might be of interest to our audience, please advise.

Thank you for writing.

With best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Sam
S. P. Reed

SPR/bc

How you?

M.I.

14 July 83

please return

Ⓟ

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AMERICAN HERITAGE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

10 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10020

PHONE (212) 399-8900

July 18, 1983

Mr. Leslie Cheek, Jr.
4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

Dear Mr. Cheek:

Thank you for your interesting letter about the exhibit, "For Us the Living." This might well make a good story for us, but a decision primarily depends on the pictures. I would be delighted to have a look at whatever copies of the original material your daughter would like to send along.

Sincerely,

Carla Davidson
Picture Editor

CD/pk

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4703 Pocahontas Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226

23 July, 1983

Ms. Carlo Davidson

to bring ~~the~~ back that effort
to revive your brilliant original
fantasy.

I conveyed this negative
judgment ~~and~~ in my first
letter to Elizabeth: so it
would be unscrupulous for
me to take part in your
proposed revival in any
fashion.

With friendly greetings
again to your family &
not least to yourself —

Lewis

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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LEWIS MUMFORD: AMENIA: NEW YORK: 12501

21 July 1983

... It is a pleasure, dear Leslie,
to be in touch with you again:
for your message brings back my
quite vague memories of our
long forgotten past.

As you know I have already
imparted my present judgment
to Elizabeth Morgan; and
The mass of material in your
final scenario — striking
though it visually is — has
not changed my negative
opinion of your ~~entire~~ plan

on some paper near
Also enclosed, is a self addressed, stamped,
return envelope for you.

Thank you.

Leslie Cheek, Inc.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
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4703 Pocahontas Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23226

23 July, 1983

Ms. Carol Davidson
 American Heritage Publishing, Corp., Inc.
 10 Rockefeller Plaza
 New York 10020

Dear Ms. Davidson:

Thank you for your letter of 18 July.
 Enclosed herewith are materials related to the
 proposed article, "From the King".

My daughter, Elizabeth, is now having another
 baby, & she has asked me to "take over" this
 project.

The original pencil drawings are only slightly
 larger than the 8" x 10" glasses, and the original
 tracings are now so tattered that the blue prints
 are really clearer—though the originals are yours,
 if you want them, along with Mrs. Rockefeller's letter.

The quotations from the original text
 can be "set aside" from the main text by borders,
 or toned paper areas (i.e. like magazines).

Also enclosed is a self-addressed, stamped
 return envelope for you use.

Thank you.

Best to Chuck, etc.

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AMERICAN HERITAGE PUBLISHING CO., INC.

10 ROCKEFELLER PLAZA · NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10020

PHONE (212) 399-8900

August 22, 1983

Mr. Leslie Cheek, Jr.
4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

Dear Mr. Cheek,

Thank you very much for letting us see the material on "For Us the Living."

The story is most lively and intriguing, but I'm sorry to say that, after a good deal of discussion, the editorial consensus went against our doing it. The problem is that the project was dropped so early in the game: had it even gotten as far as the model-building stage, we might have had the sort of illustrative material the article requires. But of what remains, the blueprints seem a bit too abstruse for our readers, and the drawings a bit too insubstantial.

Therefore we are returning this interesting material with our thanks, and in hopes that you might consider American Heritage for other ideas that occur to you.

Sincerely yours,

Richard F. Snow
Managing Editor

27 Aug '83

Mrs M

please FILE this stuff.
~~File the stuff~~ proposed article
(re ~~Mrs M~~ 1940 exhibition design)

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOULEVARD & GROVE - RICHMOND

Leslie Cheek, Jr

DIRECTOR EMERITUS

THE VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

as Avenue
ginia 23226

29 August 1983

MUSEUM Magazine
Office of the Editor
260 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Sir:

As a subscriber to your magazine, I note that your cover a wide variety of museum-oriented subjects. Perhaps you would be interested in the enclosed article on the proposed 1940 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York - a presentation urged by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and her son, Nelson, to lead America to a more warlike attitude toward the then-looming menace of Hitler.

I was commissioned to head a team of designers, including Lewis Mumford, Ed Stone, Alfred Barr, and others, who were requested to create a special "experience" in a large special addition to be constructed in the garden area of the museum building on East 53rd Street.

The attached material includes a brief description of this unusual project, together with an outline of the text of the resulting "scenario", and the related installation, drawings and architectural plans - plus a photograph of myself (to which, of course, should be added pictures of the Museum of Modern Art, of Abby and Nelson Rockefeller, Lewis Mumford - all available from the MOMA Library.)

Also enclosed, is a stamped, self-addressed return envelope for your use in returning this material, for some of it is historically unique - in case you decide against publication.

Sincerely,

Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Director Emeritus

LCjr/dsn

enclosures

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF HISTORY
BOULEVARD & GROVE RICHMOND

Elizabeth: 10 July 83
As you will see, I hope
to do a story about our
glorious "Habitat 67"
House & exhibit. Daddy

260 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10017

29 August 1983

MUSEUM Magazine
Office of the Editor
260 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Sir:

As a subscriber to your magazine, I note that your cover a wide variety of museum-oriented subjects. Perhaps you would be interested in the enclosed article on the proposed 1940 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York - a presentation urged by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and her son, Nelson, to lead America to a more warlike attitude toward the then-looming menace of Hitler.

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Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Director Emeritus

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
BOULEVARD & GROVE • RICHMOND 23221

MAIL: 4703 Pocahontas Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23226

29 August 1983

MUSEUM Magazine
Office of the Editor
260 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10016

Dear Sir:

As a subscriber to your magazine, I note that your cover a wide variety of museum-oriented subjects. Perhaps you would be interested in the enclosed article on the proposed 1940 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York - a presentation urged by Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and her son, Nelson, to lead America to a more warlike attitude toward the then-looming menace of Hitler.

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Sincerely,

Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Leslie Cheek, Jr.
Director Emeritus

LCjr/dsn

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Anthony Rhodes - Propaganda. The Art of Persuasion: World War II - An Allied + Axial Visual Record, 1933-1945. ed. by Victor Margolin. Chelsea House Publishers, N.Y., 1976

Americans "regard propaganda as a method of persuasion, un-American which they to doctrines in

Franklin Roosevelt politician to the totalitarian knew equally of this world

- Was Roosevelt
- Was interested (ie., were to democratic partisan
- How did he begin to
- His thoughts
- Re Long etc

Mrs IV 18 Sept 83
 Please clip this sheet to the cover sheet of the story I wrote on the MOMA exhibit for "For this the living"
 RICHARD R. BENNET
 when the report asked to arrange the music to the exhibition. He had set that point, arranged the records of Melby Broadway Musicals.

ent American to America from rope. But he to countrymen "peace." (pp. 139-141)

lectual movement? to see the threat interventionism as a and when did he did he have to move slowly + democracy

Isolationist groups: Protestant War Veterans of America
 Catholic Irish-Americans
 Father Coughlin
 American Crusaders
 Silver Shirts
 Christian Front
 "America First" Committee which engaged N.Y. ad agency, Batton, Barton, Durstine + Osborn, "to mount a propaganda campaign against intervention + aid to Britain" (p. 141)

causing by for fear of imitating the reverse effect.

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Anthony Rhodes - Propaganda. The Art of Persuasion:
 World War II - An Allied + Axial Visual
 Record, 1933-1945. ed. by Victor Margolin.
 Chelsea House Publishers, N. Y., 1976

Americans "regard propaganda as an alien, un-American method of persuading people to subscribe to doctrines in which they have no interest." (p. 139)

Franklin Roosevelt "was the first eminent American politician to be fully aware of the danger to America from the totalitarian states emerging in Europe. But he knew equally well that to persuade his countrymen of this would require time, tact, and patience." (pp. 139-141)

- Was Roosevelt the first?
- Was interventionism basically an intellectual movement? (ie., were intellectuals the only people to see the threat to democracy per se, as opposed to interventionism as a partisan issue)
- How did Daddy perceive the danger and when did he begin to sense it?
- His thoughts on Americans + propaganda - did he have to move slowly +
- ~~Re~~ Long standing relationship of Rockefellers + democracy

Isolationist groups: Protestant War Veterans of America
 Catholic Irish-Americans
 Father Coughlin
 American Crusaders
 Silver Shirts
 Christian Front

"America First" Committee which engaged N.Y. ad agency, Batton, Barton, Durstine + Osborn, "to mount a propaganda campaign against intervention + aid to Britain" (p. 141)

caused only by fear of inciting the reverse effect.

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2).

- Was Daddy aware of these groups + the "Am. First" campaign?
- Were Americans suspicious of Britain because they felt she had dragged them into W. W. I w/ their propaganda? Lindbergh said, "The greatest advocates of bringing us into the war are the British, the Jews, and President Roosevelt." (p. 141)
- What was Am. feeling towards Jews? Roosevelt?
- Why were Am. unwilling to get involved in the war?
- What would be the tone^("pitch") of the exhibition to conquer the reservations on so many levels of Am. society + bring them together? Wouldn't it have to be very subtle?

~~How soon did Am. become aware of concentration camps~~

German propaganda - Americans impervious to the "big lie" and the heavy-handed tactics of German propaganda - (p. 142)

- Did Am. not fear Germany? Why, because we were so far ~~rem~~ removed fr. Europe or because we thought we could beat them?
- Weren't Americans outraged by the pogroms + anti-Semitic statements? What caused them to hold back? When did Am. become aware of concentration camps?

(Roosevelt's)
 "To convince his countrymen that Britain must at all costs be saved for America's own safety proved to be extremely difficult." (p. 142) [This after the fall of France in 1940] "Moreover,

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"FOR US THE LIVING"

"She says it is Mrs. Rockefeller", panted the rural groceryman whom some unknown lady had persuaded to take a telephone message to his recent neighbor, strangely named Cheek. "She says that" in New York, and she

Well, I did know when I was working in William she would be trying to take Vermont. I did eventually said: the Trustees of the that that Museum would present exhibition dangers ofperate necessities inevitable unusual exhibitions come at once special John D. Rockefeller which they and its Director, Alfred Barr. I was to come on loan from my then-current position as Director of the Baltimore Museum of Art to head this urgent display, and I was authorized to employ others of my choice to help.

Sept 29
 9/10
 2-13
 2-20

For Us the Living
 write Mumford for text

James E. Ekdahl
 1-212-956-7237
 Librarian
 MOMA

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I was wo [redacted] lady of that name when she woul [redacted] a, but I wondered why she woul [redacted] y 1940 summer vacation in Vermont.

said: th [redacted] ck, and this is what she said: th [redacted] dern Art had just decided that tha [redacted] a large

exhibiti [redacted] the true dangers [redacted] of the des-

perate n [redacted] self for the inevitab [redacted] t this most

unusual [redacted] plored me to come at [redacted] of a large

special [redacted] with Mrs. John D. [redacted] this proposal,

which they assured me would be given top priority by the Museum and its Director, Alfred Barr. I was to come on loan from my then-current position as Director of the Baltimore Museum of Art to head this urgent display, and I was authorized to employ others of my choice to help.

*Hi! Welcome home
We're at the
park. Could you
please check
the gumbo on
the stove to make
sure it's not boiling?
It should simmer only.
Please stir, too.
Come join us!*

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"FOR US THE LIVING"

"She says it is Mrs. Rockefeller", panted the rural groceryman whom some unknown lady had persuaded to take a telephone message to his recent neighbor, strangely named Cheek. "She says that you are to call her back at her number in New York, and she says it is very important."

Well, I did know a gracious lady of that name when I was working in Williamsburg, Virginia, but I wondered why she would be trying to talk to me on my 1940 summer vacation in Vermont. I did eventually call her back, and this is what she said: the Trustees of the Museum of Modern Art had just decided that that Museum would present, as soon as possible, a large exhibition devoted to telling the American public of the true dangers of Hitler's assault on the Free World, and of the desperate necessity for the United States to prepare itself for the inevitable war; that the Trustees wanted me to direct this most unusual exhibition in their Museum; and that they implored me to come at once to Manhattan to start this urgent work.

So, I did take the overnight train to talk with Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and her son, Nelson, about this proposal, which they assured me would be given top priority by the Museum and its Director, Alfred Barr. I was to come on loan from my then-current position as Director of the Baltimore Museum of Art to head this urgent display, and I was authorized to employ others of my choice to help.

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I accepted this unusual position, moved to the Dorset Hotel, and asked Lewis Mumford to come down from Amenia, New York, to help, which he did promptly. Other assistance was given by Edward Stone, the architect of the then recently-completed Museum of Modern Art. And that Museum's Director, Alfred Barr, and his assistant, John Abbott, also gave up their summer to join the rapidly forming special team. We immediately began by drawing a series of "scenarios" for what was called "Exhibition X". The proposals were then reviewed by Mrs. Rockefeller and Nelson, and by others requested to help - like Archibald MacLeish, Beardsley Rund, Philip Good, win, etc. After a month of frantic work one scheme, complete with descriptive text and scale plan, was ready for hasty review by the Executive Committee of the Trustees. Finally, in early September of 1940, a proposal (see the attached "Notes on Scenario No.3") was presented to the Museum Trustees by the special team, who entitled the exhibition, "For Us the Living". The plan involved the construction of a large special building more than doubling the Museum's size, occupying the large garden along 54th Street. Into this carefully designed structure would go the display, which was really an "experience" through which groups of the public were to be taken, via an automated taped voice, through a series of areas of varying size, color, texture, lighting, smell, and sound to view the displays of illumined texts, movies, mannequins, motion pictures, etc.

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Notes on Exhibition No. 1 of Sketches, distributed on 17 Nov 3

The route through the exhibition began with an elegantly carpeted "Waiting Room"*, from which the visitors were invited to an "Introduction Room"* with light-projected texts and pictures, followed by an "Avenue of Fascism"*. In contrast, the group then traversed an "Avenue of American Characters and History"*, which, in turn, was followed by areas devoted to "The Citizens' Responsibility". From these, the visitors were led up flights of steps to "Goals for Tomorrow" displayed on three levels. Finally, the theme of the exhibition was concluded by a walk down a gentle ramp into a handsome "Hall of Human Values"*, where great gold-lettered panels restated the ageless truths of mankind. At the end, the visitors would pass through a peaceful flowering Garden back through the Museum building into New York's busy 53rd Street.

Note: The * sign indicates pencil perspective sketches shown in this article.

The Executive Committee of the Trustees considered the proposed exhibition carefully; but, on 4 October, 1940, they notified Cheek and Mumford that the project would regretfully have to be abandoned - due, chiefly perhaps, to the now million dollar cost. But, also, England's magnificent Air Force had, by then, deflected the expected Nazi assault across the Channel.

The letter from Abby A. Rockefeller (reproduced in this article) effectively says what she and the other Trustees felt about this aborted project - a fascinating episode in American art museum history.

... it is a part of "Pilgrimage Progress" for the American citizen. He confronts the crisis in which he is called to take part.

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Notes on Scenario No, 3 of Exhibition, distributed on 19 August, 1940

The impulse to create this exhibition came spontaneously from the Trustees of the Museum. It was a direct response to the catastrophic events of June, and it arose out of the belief that our American democracy was still unawakened to the emergency that confronts it, and was inactive and irresolute and lacking in purpose at a moment when national action was imperative.

Since July the crisis has deepened and the need for a positive faith in our American democracy has grown more apparent. The American people through Congress have voted to protect themselves with vast physical armaments. A good part of that military equipment, however, will not be ready for use during the next three years and therefore it seems even more urgent to fill in the weakest part of our rearmament program - namely, that which has to do with our plans and purposes as a people.

Since an exhibition on the meaning of American democracy was obviously outside the scope and competence of the Museum's staff, Messrs. Cheek and Mumford were commissioned toward the end of July to prepare a plan and outline of the exhibition. The following scenario is the result of seven weeks' intensive study on their part with the aid of the Museum staff and special advisory group. The show as at present conceived is not in any usual sense a Museum exhibition. It is a new form of dramatic presentation in which the spectator is both a witness and an actor in the scenes that unfold.

The show divides itself into twelve main scenes. Each one of these is a unit and each in turn is an organic part in the drama as a whole. It is a sort of "Pilgrims Progress" for the American citizen. He confronts the crisis in which he is forced to take part.

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This scenario of the exhibition is the result of intensive study. It is sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to provide the outlines of a working plan, which has been translated into a rough floor plan (attached) for the exhibition. Behind many of its sketchy suggestions lies a great deal of more concrete detail, to include which in the present scheme would be confusing.

This exhibition will differ from the usual museum show in that it will employ every medium possible to reach the visitor. By relying upon music and the spoken word and the motion picture no less than upon photographs, models and backgrounds, we hope to keep the attention of the visitor actively engaged, and to appeal to him on the emotional not less than on the intellectual level. In this exhibition, the visitor is not a passive spectator but an actor; and the aim of it is to indicate the character and scope of further activity that demands his participation as a citizen.

This exhibition is conceived as a drama. It is divided into a series of scenes, each one of which is a unity, and should be taken in as a whole. In order to make use of the spoken voice, visitors will go through the exhibition in groups of fifty or sixty, moving more or less as a unit; although provision is made for those who wish to linger or repeat a particular experience. Hence the Waiting Room at the beginning of the exhibition. We conceive that a queue on the street would not be a handicap, but rather an exhibition of the show's success.

This show, by its magnitude, will give courage. Beyond a doubt it will put all its sponsors and supporters on record as real Americans, willing to give unstintedly for the country which made possible their wealth. By throwing all the necessary financial and moral

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The wall comes directly under FASCISM slide back and a burst of martial music floods into the Introduction Room. A gay and brilliant flag-draped "Avenue of Fascism" greets the visitors' gaze and draws them into its excitement. Nazi flags everywhere. Hitler's picture dominates the end of the avenue. (Stalin, Mussolini, Franco will be introduced but not emphasized). The Avenue is lined at equal distances by Storm Troopers, laborers, technicians, clerks, mothers, children: life-sized dummies dressed in real clothing, but with rudimentary faces.

From time to time a rearing voice with a strong German accent cries out: Attention! Our Führer, Adolf Hitler! At this point all the dummies mechanically face toward Hitler's picture. Hitler's hysterical voice cries out: I Trust that no mother will ever have cause to weep in consequence of any action of mine! All the dummies raise their arms and shout Heil! This cycle is repeated with different speeches by Hitler, every two minutes, for a period that covers in specific of the exhibit.

The Avenue is an analysis of the actual workings of fascism as compared with its claims and principles. It will cover treatment of children and women, employment and health, religion, art, science, education, justice, national strength and economy, foreign policy, racial theories, leadership. Each category would have its label and statements quoted from Nazi teachings. In front of each category stands a dummy, dressed in accordance with the topic in that category.

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Scene III from the exhibition "scenario" - AVENUE OF FASCISM

The wall doors directly under FASCISM slide back and a burst of martial music floods into the Introduction Room. A gay and brilliant flag-draped "Avenue of Fascism" greets the visitors' gaze and draws them into its excitement. Nazi flags everywhere. Hitler's picture dominates the end of the Avenue. (Stalin, Mussolini, Franco will be introduced but not emphasized). The Avenue is lined at equal distances by Storm Troopers, laborers, technicians, clerks, mothers, children: life-sized dummies dressed in real clothing, but with rudimentary faces.

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Beside each of these divisions is a doorway with "Verboten" written above it. Each doorway leads to an alcove devoted to a realistic factual analysis of the Nazi claims. The picture of Hitler which dominates the end of the Avenue is above the category of Leaders, flanked on each side of the doorway with slick statements by Stalin and Mussolini: all of them demonstrably false. The interior of the LEADERS'ROOM is lined with crazy shots of Hitler, Goering, and other leaders accompanied by solemn assertions such as Hitler's "I have no more territorial demands in all Europe."

The curving wall of the Leaders' Room takes the visitor toward double swinging doors. He is urged on through by a dummy Storm Trooper who beckons with a rigid movement. Upon opening the doors, the lettering on the wall ahead, spotlighted, says:

You have fascism in Germany today. With the aid of Italy, Russia, Japan, and Spain it has spread like a cancer over the social tissue of Europe, Asia, and South America and the ocean is no barrier to its propogation in the United States. You have already seen it operating here.

The visitors file into a small movie theater provided with benches (FASCISM UNDERMINES AMERICA). The short movie they witness is on the theme, "It has Begun to Happen Here". This picture would be pieced together from newsreels and other pictures already in existence. It would picture automatism and regimentation and passivity in daily life. It would show organized, mass violence, anti-democratic demagogues and organizations, "appeasers" making their plausible appeals. The picture would last five minutes: it should

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recall familiar facts, and by cutbacks to Europe establish the deadly parallels. Hitler appears at the end, smiling and bowing. His appearance is greeted with cheers and heils from the audience - being actually a series of loudspeakers under the seats.

Since July 1941 the United States has developed and the need for a positive faith in our American democracy has become more apparent. The American people through various means have tried to protect themselves with vast physical armaments. A vast part of that military equipment, however, will not be ready for use during the next three years and therefore it seems even more urgent to fill in the weakest part of our rearmament program - namely, that which has to do with our plans and purposes as a people.

Since an exhibition on the meaning of American Democracy was obviously outside the scope and competence of the Museum's Staff, Messrs. Cheek and Sanford were commissioned toward the end of July to prepare a plan and outline of two exhibitions. The following paragraph is the result of seven weeks' intensive study on their part with the aid of the Museum staff and several advisory groups. The type as at present conceived is not in any way a new type of museum exhibition. It is a new form of dramatic presentation in which the operative is both a witness and a participant in the events that unfold.

The new exhibition will involve both actors and audience. The use of drama as a means of presenting history is an original part of the program as a whole. It is a part of the "Integrated Program" for the Theater Building, by Lawrence Sanders, in which the audience is to take part.

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