

# The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information: A Comprehensive History

The Committee on Public Information (CPI), established during World War I, played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion, galvanizing support for the war effort, and disseminating information to a rapidly changing world. The story of the CPI is one of innovation, controversy, and lasting impact, a tale that has been told and retold over the years.



## How We Advertised America: The First Telling of the Amazing Story of the Committee on Public Information That Carried the Gospel of Americanism to Every Corner of the Globe by George Creel

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 955 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 516 pages  
Screen Reader : Supported



## Origins and Mission

The idea for the CPI originated with President Woodrow Wilson in 1917, as the United States entered World War I. Recognizing the need for a central

agency to coordinate and disseminate war-related information, Wilson appointed journalist George Creel as the CPI's chairman.

Creel's mission was to "tell the truth about the war" and to mobilize public opinion in support of the Allied cause. The CPI's mandate was broad, encompassing everything from propaganda to censorship to public relations.

## **Innovative Approaches**

The CPI employed a range of innovative approaches to fulfill its mission. It established a nationwide network of speakers, writers, and artists who created and distributed war-related materials, from posters and films to pamphlets and newspaper articles.

The CPI also used new technologies to reach the public. It established a motion picture division that produced hundreds of films, and it utilized the burgeoning field of radio to broadcast news and propaganda.

## **Controversies and Criticisms**

The CPI's aggressive tactics and unabashedly pro-war message drew criticism even at the time. Some accused the CPI of propaganda and censorship, while others questioned its effectiveness in swaying public opinion.

Despite these criticisms, the CPI's impact was undeniable. It helped to create a sense of national unity and purpose, and it played a significant role in the Allied victory.

## **Legacy and Impact**

The CPI's legacy is complex and multifaceted. It set a precedent for government involvement in public information during wartime and influenced the development of modern public relations and advertising techniques.

The CPI also left a lasting impact on American society. Its successful use of mass media to shape public opinion foreshadowed the rise of public relations in the 20th century.

The Committee on Public Information's story is a fascinating and important chapter in American history. Its innovative approaches, controversies, and lasting legacy continue to be studied and debated today.

## **Additional Information**

- Library of Congress: World War I: Militarizing America
- Council on Foreign Relations: The Committee on Public Information (CPI)
- Smithsonian Magazine: How the Committee on Public Information Convinced Us to Go to War

## **Image Credits**

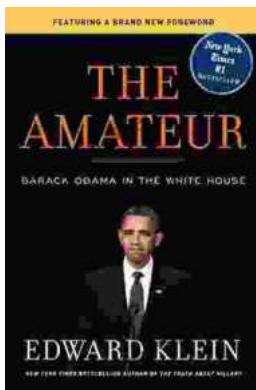
- Library of Congress: George Creel, CPI Chairman
- Library of Congress: CPI Poster



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