

**Universität Zürich
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**Abstract zur Seminararbeit von Gian Peter Ochsner,
eingereicht bei Prof. Dr. Philipp Sarasin**

**“The Narrative Realization of the Discourse about the ‘American Way of Life’ in the
1948 Animated Propaganda Film *Make Mine Freedom*”**

George Stuart Benson was a domestic cold warrior who started to propagate his vision of the ‘American Way of Life’ through animated cartoons in the ‘Second Red Scare’ of the late 1940s. This paper examines what elements of the discourse about the ‘American Way of Life’ are accentuated in the narrative of his 1948 animated short *Make Mine Freedom* and how the press reacted to his construction of Americanism. Results show that the animated cartoon tells a narrative of an affluent ‘American Way’ that is based on individual freedoms, characterized by a successful system of free enterprise, shaped by patriarchal gender roles, endangered by internal dissent and a Communist subversive, and saved by a heroically represented racist red-baiter who unifies labor, management, and government. Benson’s narrative corresponded with a pro-business, anti-Communist, white southern segregationist, and Christian conservative vision of Americanism. In contrast to the hostile reception by left-liberal journalists, the conservative and business-friendly press praised Benson’s animated narrative in the late 1940s. Since the reception was controversial, the paper concludes that the meaning of the ‘American Way’ was not solidified in the early Cold War era.