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The Not-So-Far Right: Radical Right-Wing Politics in the United States, 1941-1977

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Colin E. Reynolds
M.A., University of Chicago, 2009
B.A., Grinnell College, 2007

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

The Not-So-Far Right: Radical Right-Wing Politics in the United States, 1941-1977
By Colin E. Reynolds

This dissertation examines how U.S. anti-Communist conspiracy theorists, particularly those involved in and close to the John Birch Society, contributed to and helped to shape conservative political positions and ideas about social change during the second half of the twentieth century. It examines the long political diaspora of what is usually called "McCarthyism." While most Americans thought of themselves as anti-Communists during the Cold War, radical rightists were uniquely focused on subversion in American government, culture, and social institutions. They believed that American policymakers would accomplish little by "containing" Communism militarily because Communism spread not by military force, but by subversion. This dissertation argues that radical rightists were a significant force on the right of American politics for several decades, and it traces several ways that radical rightists interpreted social and cultural changes, as well as foreign and domestic government policies, during the second half of the twentieth century. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that ideas about Communist cultural and institutional subversion helped to shape the conservative perspective in what later became known as the "culture wars."

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My dissertation committee consists of three scholars who had influenced my intellectual development before I met any of them. I came to Emory to work with Joe Crespino, whose book *In Search of Another Country* changed the way I understood the relationship between the Southern anti-civil rights movement and the New Right. He approached my dissertation with a mix of vision and practicality, of thorough criticism and encouragement, and I doubt I would have completed it without his promotion of this balance. I discovered Patrick Allitt's Teaching Company series, "The Conservative Tradition," before I applied to Emory's graduate program, and I hoped before I met him to emulate his intellectual and personal charisma. As a committee member, he balanced friendliness and ease with intellectual rigor, always direct, but never discouraging. It now seems obvious that U.S. federal support for the civil rights movement was influenced by concerns about the global "image of American democracy," but it was Mary Dudziak's *Cold War Civil Rights* that introduced me to this idea while I was still an undergraduate student. Mary's contributions to the historiography of the twentieth century United States are enormous, but I have never met anyone who combines encouraging kindness with detailed constructive criticism as skillfully as she does. As a group, my committee has been both wonderfully supportive and hands-off, leaving me far more intellectual freedom than I would have expected. Despite stereotypes about graduate school, I have never been made to feel intellectually unworthy or discouraged, and for that I am grateful.

Vincent Cornell, a scholar of Islam, first suggested to me that the John Birch Society was worth historical study, and my dissertation grew from a paper I wrote during

his Fall 2011 seminar on religious fundamentalism. Besides those who formed my dissertation committee, my prospectus committee included Fraser Harbutt, with whom I had my first teaching assistantship and who never failed to be encouraging about both my teaching and my early attempts at scholarship. Randall Strahan introduced me to the subfield of American Political Development and encouraged me not to forget the long history and patterns of American conspiracy theory. Sadly, he passed away far too young, not long after I left Atlanta for research.

Several of my colleagues in the graduate program offered constructive criticism on my prospectus and various parts of my dissertation, especially Michael Camp, Andrea Scionti, Louis Fagnan, Scott Libson, Hanne Blank, Danielle Wiggins, Corey Goettsch, Jennifer Morgan, and Danny LaChance. Danny, though a faculty member and rising star, has been like a peer to me, so I include him in this list. My friend James Steffen, a scholar of Soviet film, has been a constant source of moral support in the dissertation-writing process. Other members of my graduate cohort have been sources of sanity and friendliness, besides being impressive intellectuals. They include Ashleigh Dean, Emma Meyer, Ben Nobbs-Thiessen, Rebekah Ramsay, and Jessica Reuther. The History Department's Graduate Program Coordinator, Katie Wilson, has thoroughly overhauled the program and made it work like a well-oiled machine. At the moment I write, she is doing everything in her power to see that my dissertation is submitted on time. I will be a very lucky man if I ever serve on a faculty of people like the ones I've met at Emory.

I had more luck with research than I ever imagined I would. I am especially indebted to John Birch's niece, Ruth Birch Sykes, who donated over one hundred reel-to-reel recordings of conservative speakers from the 1960s and early 1970s, and who

allowed me to scan her personal collection of letters documenting her uncle's life and death, as well as the creation of the John Birch Society. Sarah Gardner of Mercer University told me about and put me in touch with Ruth, Josephine Bennett of Georgia Public Broadcasting in Macon facilitated the transfer of Ruth's recordings from the radio station to Emory, and Randy Gue, Trey Bunn, and Laura Starratt supported and oversaw my digitization of the recordings for Emory's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. This source enhanced my project immeasurably.

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I am grateful to have received several sources of funding in addition to my five-year graduate fellowship from Emory University. Emory's Professional Development Support funds covered the cost of initial research at UCLA and USC in Los Angeles

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A 2015-16 Mellon Graduate Teaching Fellowship allowed me to teach for a year at Spelman College while completing the dissertation. I cannot imagine a more collegial and supportive group of faculty colleagues than those who compose Spelman's History Department: Charissa Threat, Kathleen Phillips-Lewis, Dalila de Sousa, Margery Ganz, Yan Xu, Nafeesa Muhammad, Erin Moore, and administrative assistant Antisha Burns. Emory faculty Ben Reiss and Brett Gadsden oversaw the professionalization seminar connected to the Mellon Fellowship, and they provided the fellows with a relaxed space to discuss concerns about both teaching and the job market.

Friends and family outside the academy are also essential to graduate work. I was able to do my research in Washington, DC, on the cheap with the month-long use of Lacey Johnson's apartment. My old friends and housemates at the Concord Co-op organized an off-season a two-month sublet for my research in Chicago. I began writing my dissertation on the balcony of my brother Owen's apartment. My parents have been supportive through years of my seeking higher education with dubious career prospects, and I am grateful for this. More fundamentally, however, my parents—good liberals that they are—gave me an ideology and then taught me to question it by learning about and respecting ideas different from my own. Their example has inspired this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

During the summer of 2014, a hammer-and-sickle adorned a billboard on the eastbound side of Interstate 40 in western Arkansas. The billboard criticized Democratic Senator Mark Pryor for refusing to support a balanced budget amendment, referred to him as "Comrade Pryor," and warned Democrats that their party had been "hijacked by socialists."[1] It is questionable whether this ad resonated with many passing Democrats that summer, but it is also remarkable that anyone thought it a useful attack more than two decades after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the fall of Communism as a global economic and political system. The following November, Senator Pryor lost his reelection bid to Republican Tom Cotton, a young Iraq War veteran. In January 2015, for the first time since the end of Reconstruction, Arkansas sent two Republican senators to Washington. Like most other Republican lawmakers elected in 2014, Senator Cotton had based his campaign largely on criticism of Democrat Barack Obama's presidency.[2]

Criticism of a sitting president by the opposition party is constant in American politics, but criticism of Obama has been particular virulent, with some detractors—including 2016 Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump—lending support to the idea that Obama was born outside the United States and is therefore ineligible for his office.[3] Those who make such claims often believe that a powerful circle of kingmakers

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[1] I noticed this billboard while driving west on I-40 that summer, for initial dissertation research. For an

[2] John Dickerson, "Midterm Election 2014: Why Tom Cotton Defeated Mark Pryor," *CBS News*, November 4, 2014, accessed April 25, 2016, http://www.cbsnews.com/news/midterm-election-2014-why-tom-cotton-defeated-mark-pryor/.

[3] Rachel Weiner, "Donald Trump Calls Wolf Blitzer 'Ridiculous,' Defends Birtherism," *The Washington Post*, May 29, 2012, accessed April 26, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/the-fix/post/donald-trump-calls-wolf-blitzer-ridiculous-defends-birtherism/2012/05/29/gJQAJBOkzU_blog.html.

anointed Obama for the presidency, determined to keep his origins hidden so that they might carry out secret "un-American" plans.

Related thinking is common even among more sophisticated conservative commentators like Dinesh D'Souza, who argued in his 2010 book *The Roots of Obama's Rage* that the president's ideology made him hostile to American interests. While D'Souza dismissed the idea that Obama was an economic socialist, he argued that the president's approach to foreign and domestic policy was shaped by an "anti-colonial ideology" that identified the U.S. as a neocolonial global power and neoliberal capitalism as its tool of domination. Obama, D'Souza argued, was engaged in "a private war that started far away and goes back to the middle of the last century, with roots that are even earlier." Obama's policies were therefore designed to weaken the United States' economy and its status as a world power.[4]

Such thinking is typical of a significant political culture in the United States, one that continues to speak in a language forged during the Cold War, despite the fact that the Cold War has long been over. Its tenacity lies in the fact that its spokespeople have never been much concerned with the diplomatic and military struggle between capitalism and Communism, but focused instead on an institutional and cultural struggle within the United States, one that sees capitalism pitted against socialism, religiosity against secularism, "Americanism" against internationalism, civilization against barbarism, order against disorder. Participants in and contributors to this political culture tend to believe that many or most American elected officials since the 1930s have been loyal not to American interests, but rather to the interests of an international cabal of power-hungry

[4] Dinesh D'Souza, *The Roots of Obama's Rage* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2010): 15, 22, 34-35.

conspirators. During the heady days of the Cold War, these conspirators were usually identified as Communists. Today, they are often called socialists or promoters of a "new world order."[5] In every case, they are thought to be people who claim to work in the interests of the United States, but whose true and hidden interests are otherwise directed.

Just in time for the presidential election of 1964, and inspired by the conservative insurgency behind Republican Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy, Richard Hofstadter published his famous essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics." "The paranoid style," Hofstadter wrote, "is an old and recurrent phenomenon in our public life…far from new and not necessarily right-wing."[6] My project is inspired by a more recent conservative insurgency. Rather than describe a recurrent political style, I will examine the intellectual and tactical connections among those who shaped the "paranoid" end of conservative politics from the beginning of the Cold War to the rise of the "culture wars" of the 1970s.

My project therefore examines the long political diaspora of what is often called "McCarthyism," namely the belief that "un-American" subversives influence U.S. foreign and domestic policy, as well as American social and cultural institutions. As several scholars have demonstrated, the outspoken Senator who gave his name to this political phenomenon had a career far too short to encompass it.[7] Joseph McCarthy was merely one of its representatives, one who became a monster to many of his critics and a

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[5] See Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001, 2013).
[6] Richard Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *Harper's Magazine*, November 1964: 77.
[7] See Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998); Alex Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty: American Countersubversion from World War I to the McCarthy Era*. Goodall's recent book in particular has expanded the reach of American countersubversion to the period before World War II, which is also outside the scope of my project.

martyr to many of those who followed in his footsteps. Instead of the word McCarthyism, I will use terms popular with Hofstadter and his academic contemporaries: "far right" or "radical right."[8] While most Americans thought of themselves as anti-Communists during the Cold War, radical rightists were uniquely focused on subversion in American government, culture, and social institutions. They believed that American statesmen would accomplish little with their policy of "containing" Communism militarily, because Communism spread not by military force, but by institutional and cultural subversion.

I use the terms "radical right" and "far right" interchangeably, as terms common among political commentators of the early 1960s to describe those who believed the federal government was under the influence of subversives. Even so, I distinguish "radical rightists" from those on the "extreme right." I find Martin Durham's distinction between these terms helpful. While both radical rightists and extreme rightists usually imagine that a subversive enemy threatens their nation, extreme rightists tend to define this enemy racially.[9] For all their apparent paranoia, radical rightists of the second half of the twentieth century have generally felt obliged to deny racism, and many have criticized it, however much it might undergird aspects of their worldview.

The John Birch Society—probably the best-recognized radical right organization during the 1960s—is a major focus of my dissertation. It was tarnished nearly from its foundation by the discovery that its leader, Robert Welch, had referred to President

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[8] These terms are especially associated with Daniel Bell's *The Radical Right: The New American Right, Updated and Expanded* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1964). Scholars of the "New Right" during the early 2000s, beginning with Jonathan M. Schoenwald's, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), have tended to use the terms "far right" and "radical right" especially to designate groups of activists who continued to promote McCarthy's ideas about subversion in government during the 1960s and afterwards.

[9] Martin Durham, *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.

Dwight Eisenhower as "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy." From 1960 forward, the John Birch Society was associated not only with the character assassination of a popular president, but also with the racism and anti-Semitism characteristic of the extreme right. This was a fair description of one of the organization's most influential leaders, the classicist Revilo Oliver. Oliver was allowed to remain in a position of influence on the John Birch Society's National Council until he made a brazenly racist speech at the 1966 New England Rally for God, Family, and Country, concluding with the observation, "All men are created unequal. There is nothing we can do about that."[10] By the early 1970s, Oliver had joined the white supremacist National Alliance and spent the rest of his career publishing works of virulent anti-Semitism.[11]

On the whole, however, most of the leadership and ranks of the John Birch Society worked to distance themselves from explicit racism. Samuel Brenner, who has made an extensive study of correspondence by ordinary members of the John Birch Society to the organization's headquarters at Belmont, Massachusetts, has noted that Birchers were generally less racist and anti-Semitic than political commentators of the 1960s suggested they were. Especially during the early 1960s, Birchers tended to be eager grassroots activists interested in building a unified anti-Communist movement, but

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[10] Revilo P. Oliver, "Conspiracy or Degeneracy?" New England Rally for God, Family, and Country, July 2, 1966, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. This speech was well received at the Rally and subsequently distributed by the Power Products company as a vinyl record.

[11] See www.revilo-oliver.com. Oliver's papers—of value for any study of the inner-workings of the John Birch Society during the 1960s—are now maintained by white supremacist Kevin Alfred Strom.

few of them expressed "explicitly hate-filled, racist, anti-Semitic, or bigoted thoughts to [JBS headquarters] at Belmont."[12]

During the second half of the twentieth century, radical rightists were often on what came in retrospect to seem like the wrong side of history. Most prominently, they mingled with and supported Southern intransigents who refused to comply with court-ordered school desegregation, and they spoke and organized against federal civil rights legislation. Frequently, they were apologists for European imperialism even as overt imperialism became unacceptable to the American political mainstream. However, most took care to avoid defending segregation and imperialism in explicitly racist terms. This approach was useful to some Southern politicians who, after World War II, sought to support the "Southern way of life" against federal interference without overtly supporting white supremacy.

In his recent biography of North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms, Bryan Hardin Thrift has emphasized the late Senator's use of "pious incitement" to motivate his constituents. Before his election to the Senate, Helms used television to manipulate messages about race, replacing "an explicitly racist language" with "a moralistic discourse" and substituting "a moral community for a racial one," all while promoting market-based alternatives to New Deal federal programs.[13] From Thrift's narrative it is clear that Helms's "pious incitement" was based in part on the anti-Communist conspiracy theory that he had imbibed from the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee

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[12] Samuel Lawrence Brenner, "Shouting at the Rain: The Voices and Ideas of Right-Wing Anti-Communist Americanists in the Era of Modern American Conservatism, 1950-1974" (PhD Diss.: Brown University, 2009), 289.

[13] Bryan Hardin Thrift, *Conservative Bias: How Jesse Helms Pioneered the Rise of Right-Wing Media and Realigned the Republican Party* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 59.

during the 1950s.[14] Whether or not Helms genuinely believed such conspiracy theory, he found it worked to great effect on North Carolina voters, especially as broad cultural changes and civic disorder emerged during the second half of the 1960s.

Among radical rightists, "pious incitement" worked not only because it fanned resentment of civil rights activists, urban and college radicals, and the "undeserving poor" supported by taxes. Radical rightists were also eager to spread a culture of fear and a sense of desperation among conservative activists. The world they described was one in which destruction lurked around the corner: destruction of "American culture" and "Christian civilization," and perhaps even the systematic murder of "patriots" like themselves. A sense of liberals as enemies, as those who wish harm to their country and their countrymen, has endured in the anger that continues to characterize the rhetoric of many of those on the right of the U.S. political spectrum.

Addressing Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade Convention in 1966, the British-American novelist and John Birch Society member Taylor Caldwell portrayed liberals not simply as people with bad ideas, but as people who lusted for political and social control. Liberalism, Caldwell told her audience, "is an old and deadly disease" that "always brings down its country, when the people become too fat with gifts from the government which they did not earn." Government gifts were followed by "the knout and the whip...the sword and fire and the club, [and] finally, guns and concentration camps and massacres." Caldwell concluded,

> The fat sheep have neither the strength nor the will to resist their murderers; they bawl a little and cringe and sob under their breaths. But it is too late. Now the

[14] Ibid., 20.

> dark iron of slavery closes about them, and it is the end of their nation and the end of the old dream.[15]

With a political culture that imagined a step-by-step process of subversion, increased government power, social disorder, and despotism, radical rightists understood the many cultural changes of the 1960s and 1970s as fulfillments of their own prophecies. Indeed, just as many of them had predicted during the 1940s and 1950s, the following two decades did see increased federal authority and centralization, increased crime, increased urban and campus disorder, and decreased respect for traditional morality.

Many radical rightist leaders had become politically aware during the Great Depression, and this fact marked their sensibilities in later years. As Eric Hobsbawm has argued, during the 1930s "the politics of the West—from the U.S.S.R. through Europe to the Americas—can be best understood, not through the contest of states, but as an international ideological civil war…Never has there been a period when patriotism, in the sense of automatic loyalty to a citizen's national government, counted for less."[16] Radical rightists tended to be those who had looked on this development with fear. During the 1930s they saw Hitler ascend in Germany and the revolutionary dream in the Soviet Union become a nightmare, and with the U.S. economy in shambles, politically active Americans seemed to be choosing sides on one extreme or the other. They held fast to "Americanism."

Radical rightists often referred to themselves as "Americanists" to contrast themselves with those "internationalists" they believed had exercised a distinctly negative

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[15] Taylor Caldwell, "The Yellow Travelers," speech to the Eighth Annual Convention of the Christian Crusade, Friday, August 5, 1966 (Wichita: Citizens Against Communism), Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 74, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

[16] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 144.

influence on American government and culture since the early twentieth century.[17] Though most understood their primary ideology to be anti-Communism, radical rightists also fought an intellectual and political battle against the increasing interconnectedness of the world. Knowing that Marxist-Leninist theoreticians had identified Communism as the vanguard of a new, internationalized world, they sometimes chose to oppose all manifestations of internationalism, whether or not these benefitted existing Communist regimes. The John Birch Society is representative of this trend. It was founded in 1958 as an anti-Communist organization, but by the late 1960s its official line was against nearly all forms of international cooperation, to the point that it might be thought of as opposing not only international Communism, but also transnational capitalism, lumping both together as aspects of the global conspiracy.

My project is inspired by and draws on two decades of scholarship that has sought to explain conservatism's electoral success in the United States.[18] From Newt Gingrich's

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[17] In his dissertation "Shouting at the Rain," Samuel Brenner prefers the term "Americanist" to describe many of the same activists that I will group under the term "radical right."

[18] The earliest works in this line of scholarship characterized conservatism as an "intellectual movement." The foundational text was George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 1976). John P. Diggins, *Up From Communism: Conservative Odysseys in American Intellectual History* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975) emphasized the importance of repentant former Communists in building the conservative movement. Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) showcased the importance of Catholic intellectuals to the conservative movement in light of conservatism's political success during the 1980s. Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *The American Historical Review* 99/2 (April 1994): 409-429, launched a flood of new scholarship that explicitly sought to challenge the idea that "the progressive-liberal state" and the "modern, cosmopolitan sensibility" had in fact triumphed in American politics. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) characterized grassroots conservatism a "strange mixture of traditionalism and modernity" especially well adapted to suburban U.S. life and culture, while Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011) described the politics McGirr highlighted as part of the experience of a migration of evangelical Christians from the "western South" to suburban enclaves. Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) described how the segregationist Governor of Alabama harnessed national white resentment of federal power and social disorder during the second half of the 1960s. Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007)

1994 "Republican Revolution" in Congress, and through George W. Bush's two-term presidency, conservatism seemed to have established itself as the United States' dominant political persuasion. Near the end of Barack Obama's second term in the White House, and with the balance of power in Congress as thin as ever, conservative triumph in American politics—at least at the federal level—seems far less clear now than it did in 1994 or 2004. My project is therefore focused on the tenacity of the radical right's political culture, rather than on its electoral success or lack thereof. Within the radical right worldview, electoral success has often seemed less important than persistence. Whether or not compromise made for good politics has mattered little, because to compromise on matters concerning the power of the federal government entails compromising with conspirators who wish to destroy capitalism and the republican form of government.

Commentators are often confused by a continuing conservative sense of failure or persecution in American culture and politics. Political liberals, especially, often wonder why members of a movement that has been successful in undoing important features of the New Deal era's welfare state and in reversing the long mid-twentieth century trend toward decreasing economic inequality would have such a strong sense of their own failure and of liberal dominance in public life. But as Kim Phillips-Fein has argued, the true victors of the conservative movement—those who managed not only to win elections, but also to change policies—have been economic conservatives. As Phillips-Fein puts the matter, "[The] most striking and lasting victories of the right have come in

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demonstrated that Southern segregationists sought to preserve aspects of racial segregation by dropping an explicit defense of the practice and emphasizing other conservative concerns of the 1960s and 1970s. Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) argued that right-wing Christian political power was built not only on "moral legislation," but also on opposition to the economic and foreign policy of the liberal consensus.

the realm of political economy rather than culture."[19] The conservative movement has not managed to reverse the social and cultural changes of recent decades, nor has it restored American "independence" from an ever-more interconnected world.

During the past fifteen years, historians of conservatism have recognized the significance of the John Birch Society and other radical right groups to the rise of the New Right in American politics. For Jonathan Schoenwald, the JBS was "the premier example of right-wing activism in the early 1960s."[20] That is, it proved particularly adept at mobilizing activists, and it gave these activists concrete political causes behind which to rally. Schoenwald also believed that the JBS was also the premier example of "extremist conservatism" during the early 1960s. Despite the fact that the organization helped to give the New Right an energetic activist base, it became important for political operatives in the Republican Party to distance themselves from it, especially after Robert Welch's opinions about Dwight Eisenhower were aired publicly.[21] In her study of the grassroots conservative activists of Orange County, California, Lisa McGirr has noted a similar tension. While Birchers were important players in the rise of the New Right in Orange County, they were politically significant mostly to the degree that they "did not share the paranoid theories of their leader" and used the JBS as a vehicle for political organizing.[22]

In his recent study of the JBS's political ideology, D. J. Mulloy essentially agrees. To Mulloy, the term "Communist conspiracy" functioned as "a kind of rhetorical

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[19] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), xii.
[20] Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 62.
[21] Ibid., 4, 7.
[22] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 10.

shorthand, encapsulating within it a broader—and perhaps deeper—concern with collectivism in all its forms and 'big government' in particular."[23] In short, those who joined and cooperated with the John Birch Society during the 1960s often did so because it gave them a political vehicle to oppose the economics or foreign policy of the liberal consensus, or because it grouped declining respect for traditional morality under the rubric of opposing Communist influence and infiltration in American institutions.

While most previous studies have sought to distinguish Robert Welch's paranoia from his followers' more "reasonable" conservatism, and to differentiate the JBS and other radical right organizations from mainstream conservatism, my study takes anti-Communist conspiracy theory more seriously. Those active in the John Birch Society and similar organizations generally did believe that Communism was a global revolutionary force. Moreover, they believed that it was a highly successful revolutionary force, responsible for many of the cultural and social changes that took place in American life during the second half of the twentieth century. Even as more mainstream conservatives tried to distance themselves, the radical right's ideas and grassroots influence were never far away.

Moreover, one cannot sufficiently understand the radical right mindset without considering its participants' belief that theirs was a global struggle. Therefore, anti-Communist conspiracy theorists were eager to compare what they saw happening in the United States to what was happening in the rest of the world. As many activists of the American left saw themselves as part of a global movement against racism and colonialism during the second half of the twentieth century, so radical rightists believed

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[23] D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 11.

themselves part of a global anti-Communist movement, and a global movement to preserve their notion of "civilization." As far as they were concerned, American diplomats and policymakers were not merely wrong on domestic issues; they were also terribly misled on international diplomacy. Domestic and international concerns were always connected in the radical right mindset.

Chapter 1 describes a discontent born of World War II. I argue that the war's diplomatic aftermath blended two distinct kinds of conservative thought and activism. Economic conservatives who had been involved with the "isolationist" America First Committee had opposed Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal and feared that participation in the war would introduce European political philosophies into the United States. Simultaneously, those concerned with the progress of "Christian civilization" in China—and those who had business interests there—looked warily at that country's insurgent Communist movement. After mainland China's "fall" to Communism in 1949, these anti-Communist interventionists popularized the idea that Communist subversives influential in the State Department had deliberately scuttled nationalist China's cause. Senator Joseph McCarthy's political style drew on both of these strains of conservatism.

Chapter 2 describes the development of ideas about Communist mind control under the rubric of "brainwashing." During the 1950s, this word became a cultural sensation that transcended political lines, but it had unique influence in the development of right-wing ideas about cultural change. Subversion no longer required the direct, conscious involvement of Communists in existing institutions. Communist ideas were now dangerous by themselves, and the concept of brainwashing allowed anti-Communists to accuse government officials of implementing the Communist program

without accusing those officials of being Communists. Moreover, while the initial promoters of this idea were those who had criticized U.S. foreign policy after World War II, the concept of brainwashing came to be applied to other areas of American life in which counter-subversives had historically directed their attention, especially religion and education.

Chapter 3 describes the rise of the John Birch Society, the best-known organization of the radical right during the early 1960s. The Birch Society's reputation was tarnished after it was revealed that the organization's leader, Robert Welch, had referred to the sitting President, Dwight Eisenhower, as "a conscious, dedicated agent of the Communist conspiracy" in print. After trying unsuccessfully to distance the Birch Society from this claim, the organization's leaders decided to publish Welch's offending book, *The Politician*, with subtle changes that reflected a changing sense of the conspiracy. Simultaneously, Robert Welch attempted to distance the John Birch Society from the anti-Semitism common in the counter-subversive tradition to which he was a relative latecomer.

Chapter 4 describes the John Birch Society's campaign against the civil rights movement and civil rights legislation. This campaign was the result of a compromise between those who wanted the John Birch Society to mount a defense of "Western civilization" in the form of imperialism, and those who wished to focus more on the alleged Communist threat at home. As part of this compromise, Robert Welch forged a dual campaign against the civil rights movement and federal civil rights legislation, while simultaneously distancing the Birch Society from ideas about white racial superiority and linking the civil rights movement to anti-colonial movements elsewhere in the world.

Chapter 5 describes how the radical right connected ideas about Communist influence in the civil rights movement to the late 1960s campaign in favor of "law and order." I describe how the John Birch Society and other radical right groups—along with federal officials like J. Edgar Hoover—popularized the belief that increasing "civil turmoil" was a natural outgrowth of the civil rights movement and an aspect of the global Communist conspiracy.

Chapter 6 connects the "law and order" movement to the sudden rise of the "culture wars," with its emphasis on traditional morality, through an analysis of the John Birch Society's campaign against sex education in public schools. This chapter illustrates how the much vaunted "sex panic" of the early 1970s was built on preceding themes of anti-Communist conspiracy theory, especially the brainwashing scare of the 1950s.

The arc of my dissertation is especially indebted to historian Lisa McGirr's 2001 book *Suburban Warriors*, which describes how grassroots conservatism evolved from "a marginal force preoccupied with communism in the early 1960s into a viable electoral contender by the decade's end."[24] One important aspect of McGirr's argument is that because the radical right was never a viable electoral contender at the national level, conservatives who wished to be electorally viable had to shed their image as a confraternity of conspiracy theorists. However, one of McGirr's most interesting observations is that part of this process involved shifting "the package of conservative concerns" from "a discursive preoccupation with public, political, and international

[24] McGirr, 4.

enemies…to enemies within our own communities and families," a shift from Joseph McCarthy's style of anti-Communism to the "culture wars" of the 1970s.[25]

I argue that radical rightists understood Communist subversives to be "in our own communities and families" from the beginning. According to their worldview, this was part of the nature of subversion. Moreover, even as the identity of grassroots conservatives' "enemies" changed, radical rightists remained critical drivers of activism, organizing campaigns against nuclear disarmament, civil rights legislation, and sex education, and promoting the idea that it was reasonable to link these causes to one another. During the second half of the twentieth century, what many Americans saw as enhanced personal freedom seemed to some conservatives like the unseen tightening of shackles.

[25] Ibid., 15.

CHAPTER 1

Building Birchism: China, Anti-Statist Isolationism, and Anti-Communist Interventionism after World War II

Before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Clarence Manion, the Dean of Notre Dame Law School, recalled World War I not only with horror at the human cost, but also as a time when the United States had foolishly become involved for the first time in its history in a conflict that did not concern it. Manion joined the America First Committee, the largest antiwar organization in U.S. history.[26] He was motivated less by an aversion to war than by a strong anti-statism. He believed that American participation in the new European war threatened to infect the United States with European political ideas inimical to "Americanism." Both European wars, Manion believed, had resulted from nationalism and the idea that human rights emanate from national citizenship. To him, European nationalism was dangerous and entirely different from American patriotism, which encouraged Americans of different backgrounds to look past their differences and to embrace common values.

The transnational textile merchant Alfred Kohlberg had his own criticisms of American policymakers. He believed that the United States was focusing too much on Europe and not enough on East Asia. During and after World War II, Kohlberg represented the "China Lobby," whose most famous and mainstream backer was media

[26] Bill Kauffman, Editor's Introduction to Ruth Sarles, *A Story of America First: The Men and Women Who Opposed U.S. Intervention in World War II* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), xvi.

mogul Henry Luce.[27] Though he did not criticize the Roosevelt Administration's policies leading to the war, Kohlberg became concerned during the war that people sympathetic to Communism were at work in the administration, directing foreign policy to the detriment of the Chinese government and in favor of that country's insurgent Communist movement.

The discovery that a few people sympathetic to Chinese Communism were involved in U.S. foreign policy during World War II and the early Cold War fused these two political ideologies into an anti-Communism based on conspiracy theory, what would later become known as "McCarthyism" and, later still, as the "radical right." Joseph McCarthy raised his voice in a Congress and a culture already saturated with anti-Communism, but his distinctive contribution was to popularize the idea that Communists and pro-Communists were directing U.S. foreign policy to the benefit of global Communism. It was this claim—that because of disloyal agents within its ranks, the federal government had effectively become traitorous to its own people—that would fire right-wing activism in the United States for the next several decades.

This claim would also bind anti-Communism to anti-statism, uniting an influential group of conservative commentators across the categories generally thought of as "isolationist" and "interventionist." During and after World War II, members of these differently interested groups would come together to denounce Communism and the federal government in similar terms. Charges of Communist infiltration of government during the 1940s would spill over into 1950s critiques of foreign policy that recognized the Soviet Union as a significant player on the world stage and encouraged containment

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[27] Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce,* Time, *and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 68, 82; Alan Brinkley, *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 3.

of Communism, rather than direct confrontation with it. It was for this reason that members of the 1950s radical right often looked at *realpolitik* and saw treason.

Clarence Manion and Anti-Europeanism

Clarence Manion, the Dean of Notre Dame Law School, a founding member of the John Birch Society, and one of those most responsible for Barry Goldwater's rise to prominence, made some of his earliest social connections in conservative politics as a member of the America First Committee. In this organization, he kept company with William H. Regnery, the father of Henry Regnery who later founded the prominent conservative publishing company that bore the family name, and John T. Flynn, leader of the New York branch of America First and a self-styled liberal who wrote copiously on the fascist tendencies he saw in Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Also among this group was the former Indiana Congressman Samuel B. Pettengill, head of the Committee for Constitutional Government, originally founded in 1937 to oppose Roosevelt's court-packing scheme.[28]

As the largest anti-war organization in U.S. history, America First's membership was ideologically diverse, including socialists, pacifists, Midwest progressives, and anti-New Deal businessmen. Its original executive committee included future President Gerald Ford and future Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart. It was politically broad enough to bring together even future nemeses William F. Buckley, Jr., and Gore Vidal.[29] R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., son of the vice president of Chicago's Quaker Oats company, founded America First in 1940 while a law student at Yale.[30] Sixty years later, Stuart

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[28] Kauffman, Editor's Introduction to Sarles, xxvii, xxix.
[29] Sarles, 5, 12; Kauffman, Editor's Introduction to Sarles, xxxiv.
[30] Ruth Sarles, *A Story of America First: The Men and Women Who Opposed U.S. Intervention in World War II* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), lx.

recalled his motivation in simple terms: "We lived through the results and promises of the first war and didn't want to be dragged again into Europe's business."[31] Thus has the America First Committee generally been remembered: as a large group of well-intentioned people, wary of war, who did not understand the dangers that the Axis Powers posed to the world, generally lumped into the category of "isolationism" and forever tarnished by chief spokesman Charles Lindbergh's denunciation of intervention's Jewish promoters.[32]

Though it was a politically diverse group, the bulk of AFC's leadership came from the Midwest and looked askance at the New Deal.[33] Clarence Manion found himself among a broad group disturbed by the growth of federal power, particularly the federal power that President Roosevelt's administration had assumed during the 1930s. If such people were anti-Communists, their anti-Communism existed secondarily to a broader anti-statism that saw revolutionary tendencies in the New Deal.

During the second half of the 1930s, this anti-statism was perhaps best articulated by the journalist Garet Garrett, an economic commentator for the *Saturday Evening Post* and later a member of America First. Garrett believed that the revolutionary nature of the New Deal had gone largely unnoticed because it constituted "a revolution within the form" of constitutional republicanism. Garrett believed that Roosevelt's administration portended the gradual devolution of the United States from a republic into an empire, as had gradually happened to the Roman Republic.[34]

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[31] William H. Regnery II, Preface to Ruth Sarles, *A Story of America First: The Men and Women Who Opposed U.S. Intervention in World War II* (Westport: Praeger, 2003), xi.
[32] Sarles, 55. Lindbergh gave his most controversial speech on September 11, 1941, in Des Moines, Iowa.
[33] Ibid., 1, 32.
[34] Garet Garrett, *The People's Pottage* (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1952), 119.

In his writings, Garrett presaged many aspects of 1950s right-wing anti-Communism. Although he strongly implied that the welfare state "revolutionaries" were Marxist-Leninist intellectuals, and that they were building a totalitarian government in the name of "recovery," Garrett explicitly denied that the Communist Party had enough influence to oversee the trouble. He believed that the welfare state planners' chief influence came from Western Europe, not Soviet Russia. It was a disease of the mind in his view, not a coordinated plot.[35]

Clarence Manion also believed that the chief threat to "Americanism," even more than Soviet Communism, was the European idea of democracy. "When a European speaks of 'Democracy' he generally means something that is entirely different from our traditional concept of democracy in the United States," Manion told the annual convention of the National Catholic Education Association in March 1940. In Europe, "rights" were understood to be those granted to the people by the state, on the basis of national identity. In the United States, rights were not to be granted, but to be defended as a gift from God. Though such "natural rights" had first been articulated by European philosophers, the growth of nationalism in Europe and the misplaced ideals of the French Revolution had swept away their teachings, and the United States, once a European colony, had preserved the finest traditions of natural law philosophy.[36]

Manion extolled the Declaration of Independence as a foundational expression of the "Americanism" he promoted in his opposition to involvement in Europe's new war. Because Europeans had "lost their dignity as men and assumed their man-created status

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[35] Ibid., 15.
[36] Clarence Manion, "The Education of an American," address to the annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association, Kansas City, Missouri, March 27, 1940, 4-5, 11, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

as 'nationals'," substituting "the rights of nations" for "the rights of man," Europe would always face the specter of violence. "[W]hen Europe subscribes, as we subscribed, to the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence," Manion continued, "then Europeans will learn, as Americans have learned, to live peaceably with one another…"[37] To Manion, the rise of dictators in Europe was the symptom of a European intellectual disease that threatened to infect the United States. "I know that many of my good Jewish friends feel that tyranny in Germany would end if someone would just knock Hitler off the leaves of German society," Manion told the Catholic educators, "but Hitler, Stalin, and all other social parasites are not the *cause* of tyranny; they are the *effects of soil deficiency*."[38]

Like Garrett, Manion believed that Roosevelt's New Deal had been a quiet revolution, one that would continue with U.S. entry into the European war. A similar opposition to "revolution within the form" spurred his involvement in the America First Committee, and his sense of urgency quickened when Germany broke its pact with the Soviet Union in the middle of 1941. The revolution now threatened to become real in the United States because the Roosevelt administration had all but formed an alliance with the Soviet Union. "Bloody Soviet Russia," Manion wrote in the *Chicago Herald American* that August, "is now represented by the administration at Washington as a 'democracy' fighting for the 'rights of democratic peoples'." American Communists

[37] Ibid., 11.
[38] Ibid., 13.

would surely seize this "golden opportunity" to confuse Americans and to promote "the conspiracy to undermine and destroy America."[39]

Manion's hope that "the issue of war or peace be made the controlling issue of the 1942 elections" ended with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor.[40] America First's leadership disbanded a mere two days after the attack. Ruth Sarles, head of the AFC's research department, set to work on a seven hundred-page history of the organization, completing it in 1942. She opted to leave it unpublished, awaiting a friendlier political climate.[41]

J. Frank Norris, John Birch, and Fundamentalist Interventionism

As Clarence Manion warned of destructive European political influence in the United States, others promoted American political and religious influence in China. Those who desired U.S. intervention in the Chinese war against the Japanese consisted especially of evangelical Christian missionaries and their supporters. During the course of a war that is remembered as a test of democracy against fascism, their eyes were trained on the fate of "civilization" in the Far East. Henry R. Luce, born near the coast of Shandong Province to Presbyterian missionary parents in 1898, and later the owner of *Time*, *Life*, and *Fortune* magazines, was perhaps the most influential representative of this varied group. Promoting "Americanism" in China was a lifelong religious obsession for him, and it informed the interventionist ideology he famously promoted in his 1941 essay "The American Century."[42]

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[39] Clarence Manion, "We Must Understand Freedom to Stay Free," *The Chicago Herald American* (reprint), August 20, 1941, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[40] Clarence Manion to R. Douglas Stewart, Jr., November 19, 1941, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 1, Folder 5, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[41] Sarles, lix.
[42] Robert E. Herzstein, *Henry R. Luce*, Time, *and the American Crusade in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1, 2.

Fundamentalist Christian leaders were also interested in Chinese mission work, and some had indulged in their own anti-Communist conspiracy theory long before the rise of McCarthyism. The historical John Birch, after whom the John Birch Society was later named, was a disciple of J. Frank Norris, one of the most outspoken of these anti-Communist fundamentalists and the head of "fundamental" Baptist congregations in Fort Worth and Detroit. Norris combatted religious modernism in his weekly newsletter *The Fundamentalist*, but he also spent much of his career combatting it on foreign soil.

In a 1932 article for *The Fundamentalist,* Norris's colleague T. F. McCrea wrote of disturbing tendencies he had witnessed while a missionary in China some fifteen years earlier. "I felt sure that we had substituted a man-made method for God's method," he wrote, "a method of expediency, of indirection, of short cuts, of human culture for the direct forthright grappling with heathenism in its strongholds shown by the apostles and the New Testament churches led and empowered by the Spirit of the living Christ."[43] Norris took this sentiment to heart, founding the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship in 1933. It would be committed to saving souls for Christ first, building congregations second, and only then ministering to the needs of its communities.[44]

For Norris, the Christian doctrinal controversy between fundamentalism and modernism mapped easily onto the prominent political divisions of the early twentieth century. One of the chief religious subversive organizations, he believed, was the inter-denominational Federal Council of Churches (FCC). In 1936, Norris wrote in *The Fundamentalist* that the FCC was "financed by one of the most subversive aggregations

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[43] T. F. McCrea, "Was I Right?" April 26, 1932, J. Frank Norris Papers, Box 28, Folder: "Mc-Misc., 1932," Southern Baptist Historical Library & Archives, Nashville, Tennessee.
[44] "Increasing Growth of Mission Fellowship," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XXI, No. 16, January 21, 1944, 1, 5.

of socialists, communists, and other radicals in the United States. In response to this accusation, the FCC's General Secretary issued a writ against Norris for libel.[45] Throughout the 1930s, Norris also routinely compared the Roosevelt administration to Stalin's Soviet regime, most notoriously in his *New Dealism (Russian Communism) Exposed*, which he based on a 1935 speech to a group of Detroit businessmen. As Norris's biographer Barry Hankins put it, "For [Norris], modernism, communism, and New Dealism were merely three names for the same threat to American political institutions and Christian orthodoxy."[46]

Even as a college student, John Birch fought against religious modernism. In 1939, he and twelve other students brought charges of heresy against six professors at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.[47] Birch graduated from Mercer in 1939 and enrolled in J. Frank Norris's new Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute in Fort Worth, Texas, which Norris had founded to train missionaries who would spread fundamentalism abroad. After one year Birch was bound for China. He learned Mandarin quickly and began teaching at a boys' school in Hangzhou, a major city of the Zhejiang Province, near the Pacific Coast.

Japan's invasion of China in 1937 made missionaries' efforts at evangelism challenging, to say the least. To enter Hangzhou was to enter a war zone, and John Birch wrote home in December 1940 of being awakened by the sound of Japanese artillery. He interpreted these difficult circumstances in religious terms, comparing the lives of those

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[45] Rev. William Fraser, "Southern Baptist Leadership Endorses Kagawa the Evolutionist and Communist," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XIII, No. 35, January 17, 1936.
[46] Barry Hankins, *God's Rascal: J. Frank Norris and the Beginnings of Southern Fundamentalism* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 100.
[47] "Proceedings of Investigation Conducted by Executive Committee, Board of Trustees of Mercer University, in Connection with Heresy Charges Alleged Against the Following: Dr. John D. Freeman, Dr. Josiah Crudup, Prof. W. T. Smalley, Prof. John D. Allen, and Mr. James Wallace (Macon: Mercer University, 1939), 2.

in his fledgling Christian group to the lives of the New Testament saints, writing of a recently converted man who had miraculously escaped his Japanese captors, of curing a baby of fever, and of exorcizing a woman possessed by a demon.[48] Roughly a year before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, two fundamental Baptist congregations southwest of Hangzhou carried on in spite of "fighting, burning, looting, and all the other horrors of war, along with all sorts of persecutions from the unbelievers."[49]

John Birch was interested in the Chinese war effort against the Japanese, but he remained a missionary first. In February 1941, he wrote with enthusiasm about the possibility that the United States might enter the war against "the dictators," which at that time included both Hitler and Stalin, Hitler not yet having broken the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by invading the USSR. Birch lamented the Chinese people's suffering from war and famine, but he simultaneously saw these conditions as opportunities, hoping that "all this suffering may bring multitudes of Chinese to Christ."[50]

On April 16, 1942, as U.S. planes began bombarding Tokyo, Birch went to visit some of the rural congregations near Hangzhou, hoping to relay a message to Dr. Norris about his mission work. Near the river, he encountered Colonel James H. Doolittle, along with his crew, who had parachuted behind Chinese lines to gather intelligence. Doolittle offered to carry the message back to Norris himself. Thus began John Birch's work in the military. He sought service as a military chaplain in the hopes of gaining "the double opportunity to serve God and country."[51] However, regulations from Washington temporarily prevented further missionary work, and he was placed in

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[48] John Birch to "Aunt May and Grandma," December 10, 1940, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[49] John Birch to Mrs. Pope Taylor, January 20, 1941, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[50] John Birch to "Friends," February 8, 1941, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[51] John Birch to George and Ethel Birch, April 27, May 4, and June 24, 1942, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.

intelligence work instead.[52] He also joined General Claire Chennault's 14th Air Force, originally a group of volunteer fighter pilots popular known as the "Flying Tigers."[53]

In November 1944, Chennault presented Birch with a Legion of Merit award. His fluency in Mandarin, which he had used to his advantage as a missionary, was now serving the Chinese Nationalist war effort. Madame Chiang Kai-shek—who had spent much of her childhood in Birch's hometown of Macon, Georgia, and was the daughter of a Methodist missionary—took notice. On a diplomatic trip to Washington she allegedly remarked to the editor of the *Macon Telegraph*, "He is the finest young man that ever came to us, and please send us some more."[54]

When Japan surrendered to the Allies in August 1945, John Birch was ordered along with other American military intelligence officers to report to the closest railroad for evacuation back to headquarters. Along the way, on the rail line to Yan'an province, he and his companions met a group of Chinese Communists, who ordered them to disarm. Birch refused, reportedly becoming aggressive, and the Communists shot him in the leg and bayoneted his face repeatedly, rendering him unrecognizable. He was left to die in a grass heap, next to a Chinese Nationalist soldier who unexpectedly survived to tell the story.[55]

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[52] John Birch to Ethel Birch, September 8, 1942, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[53] Memorandum from Wilfred J. Smith, regarding Award of Silver Star Medal, June 26, 1947, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[54] "Captain John Birch Cited and Decorated With Highest Honors," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XXII, No. 5, November 17, 1944, 1, 8. Madame Chiang, the former Mei-ling Soong, had lived in Macon while her older sisters attended Wesleyan College. Young Mei-ling developed a Georgia dialect and, according to one *New York Times* biopic, "an aversion for William Tecumseh Sherman" that followed her even into Yankee territory during her college years at Wellesley. "Dainty and Strong: Mme. Chiang Kai-shek," *The New York Times*, Friday, July 11, 1958.
[55] Albert C. Wedemeyer to George S. Birch, December 24, 1962, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 115, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Robert Welch, Birch's biographer and the founder of the John Birch Society, would later emphasize the distinctiveness of John Birch's death, describing him as the first American victim of calculated Communist murder and the first casualty of the Cold War. But in 1945, Birch's death was but one tragedy in a region fraught with peril for missionaries. Conditions made J. Frank Norris recall the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, during which Chinese nationalists had risen up against Christian missionaries, whom they characterized as agents of Western imperialism.[56] Another of Norris's associated missionaries, Josephine Sweet—"Mother Sweet" to her admirers—who had survived the Boxer Rebellion, had recently starved to death in a Japanese prison camp after more than fifty years of missionary work in China. Her co-worker Fred Donnelson had been imprisoned along with his wife and children. Their lives were spared only by U.S. government intervention, and only after Norris personally brought their case to the State Department's attention.[57]

Despite his years of demonizing Communism, criticizing the New Deal, and looking for subversion among his fellow Baptists, Norris showed little interest in rallying a national anti-Communist movement around John Birch. Birch seemed less distinctive in death than he had been in life. At the Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, where Birch had been a student, Norris named a new lecture hall for him. He drew up plans for an indoor memorial that would feature a picture on one side of the room of the Donnelson family, the "living missionaries" by the grace of God, Norris, and the State Department.

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[56] J. Frank Norris, "Why All Missionaries Should Come Out of China Immediately," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XV, No. 5, February 27, 1948, 3.
[57] J. Frank Norris to Paul Donnelson, "The Serious Condition in China," *The Fundamentalist,* Vol. XXIV, No. 8, February 14, 1947.

The other side of the room would depict John Birch and Mother Sweet, Norris's two "glorified missionaries."[58]

At the end of February 1948, Norris warned all of his missionaries to get out of China immediately. If it was clear to the State Department that the Communists would soon gain the upper hand over the Nationalist forces, there was no use in more missionaries risking their lives there. "The Communists murdered in cold blood that fine young missionary, John Birch," Norris wrote. "Mother W. S. Sweet died of starvation in a Japanese prison. The Donnelsons were imprisoned by the Japanese for many months…There are plenty of mission fields where missionaries can go and be safe—the Philippines, Japan, and the ten republics of South Africa are wide open."[59]

Discontent in the Fog of Victory

As John Birch slipped from the minds of all except his family and closest confidants, his commanding officer Claire Chennault returned from China a hero. *The Shreveport Times* reported that Chennault's September 1945 homecoming to New Orleans rivaled Mardi Gras in its revelry. Chennault elicited such excitement not only for his heroism in having commanded the Flying Tigers, but also for having built a reputation among the Chinese. "He is China's national hero, even above its own leaders in the hearts of the Chinese," the *Times* marveled.[60] *The Salt Lake City Tribune* praised Chennault to an even greater degree, reporting that the New Orleans festivities were "a record breaking, street filling, tumultuous throng of enthusiastic citizens, soldiers and tourists." One of nationalist China's highest-ranking government officials remarked that

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[58] J. Frank Norris, "Captain John Birch Memorial Hall: 'He Being Death Yet Speaketh' (Heb. 11:4)," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XXII, No. 45, September 21, 1945, 1.
[59] J. Frank Norris, "Why All Missionaries Should Come Our of China Immediately," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XV, No. 5, February 27, 1948, 3.
[60] "Chennault's Welcome," *The Shreveport Times*, Friday, September 14, 1945.

Chennault had "endeared himself to China more than any other foreigner since Marco Polo."[61]

But amidst the revelry of V-J Day and the return of heroes from abroad, some saw dark clouds on the diplomatic horizon. These were not merely the harbingers of an "iron curtain" soon to descend across Europe. As most Americans celebrated Japan's surrender, others nervously watched developments in China as the war against the Japanese turned into a civil war between "Generalissimo" Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists and Mao Tse-tung's Communists. It was an open secret that General Chennault, though fifty-four years old and nearly deaf from constant exposure to the roar of close-range aircraft engines, had retired from the military under some duress. "It has been suggested Chennault is too sympathetic with Chiang Kai-shek's wish to have Chinese troops rather than Americans bear the brunt of the fight against the Japs," the *Philadelphia Record* had reported just before the war's end. Moreover, Chennault was an unabashed anti-Communist and supporter of the Nationalists, a position that many influential officials in the State Department did not share.[62]

Alfred Kohlberg, a textile importer who had made his fortune in the Chinese silk trade, did more than anyone else to popularize the political style that later became known as McCarthyism. In the midst of the euphoria surrounding the war's end, Kohlberg had already come to believe that trouble was brewing in China because of decisions made by high-ranking officials in the United States government, and especially in the State Department. He had become convinced that these officials were more interested in the welfare of global Communism than in that of China or the United States. The "China

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[61] "New Orleans Welcomes General Chennault," *The Salt Lake City Journal*, Wednesday, September 12, 1945.
[62] "Only Japs Will Rejoice as Chennault Retires," *The Philadelphia Record*, Sunday, July 29, 1945.

Lobby" that Kohlberg represented came to form a conservative intellectual subculture. Its members contributed to conservative journals such as *Plain Talk, The Freeman*, and *The American Mercury*.[63] Kohlberg became an important financial contributor first to *Plain Talk* and then to *The Freeman* after the former journal merged with it in 1950.[64]

Just after V-J Day, Kohlberg wrote to General Chennault that his voice was needed in the civilian world as much as his aviation skills had been in the Pacific Theater. "We have been so flooded with lies about China," Kohlberg wrote Chennault in August 1945, "that a voice like yours will be needed to straighten us out if we are not to abandon China to civil war and communism and lose forever the friendship of 500,000,000 people…"[65] General Chennault had his own complaints about the civilian diplomats with whom had had worked in China. He accused them of failing to learn the languages or cultural norms of those with whom they worked, of drinking and carousing, of "post-hopping" from one part of East Asia to another, and of enjoying what amounted to a vacation at government expense.[66]

Kohlberg suspected more than mere incompetence. He had begun to suspect Communist influence in U.S. foreign policy as early as 1943, and he later used China's "loss" to shape the far right anti-Communism of the 1950s. He founded the American China Policy Association in 1946 to promote Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government, to protect American business interests in China, and to oppose the American-supported Institute of Pacific Relations, which he believed was tainted by Communist sympathies.[67]

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[63] George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 1976, 2006), 135.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Alfred Kohlberg to Claire Chennault, August 20, 1945, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 28, Folder "Chennault, Maj. Gen. Claire Lee," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[66] Fulton Lewis, Jr., "Chennault 'Ghost' Raps U.S. Aides, The Mirror, August 4, 1958.
[67] Herzstein, 68.

Though Kohlberg questioned the motivations of President Roosevelt's diplomats, he was no isolationist when it came to China. Starting in 1940 he had repeatedly offered his services to anti-Japanese forces as a fighter pilot. Fifty-three years old, he was usually rebuffed, eventually accepting a position with the Civil Air Patrol to carry out antisubmarine missions in the Gulf of Mexico.[68] In 1943, Kohlberg was troubled by charges that the American Bureau for Medical Aid to China (ABMAC) was financially corrupt and incompetent in its medical work. Kohlberg had been a generous donor to ABMAC for several years, and in 1941 he had served as Chairman of its Executive Committee. Traveling into the Chinese interior to investigate, he was impressed by ABMAC's continuing humanitarian efforts and concluded that the charges were "either completely untrue or greatly exaggerated."[69]

It was an American dentist, Dr. Maurice William, who first led Kohlberg to suspect that American hands were deliberately smearing ABMAC and engineering a Communist future in China.[70] Dr. William had been an unlikely driver of Chinese political history. A socialist before 1917, in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution he had turned against "the social interpretation of history," which he used as the title of a 1921 book. In it, he argued that Karl Marx had been wrong about the industrial proletariat's place in history. He theorized that the consumer, rather than the proletariat, would be the driving political force in the modern world. Sun Yat-sen, leader of the 1911 Chinese republican revolution, had been sympathetic to Marxism, but he took to Dr.

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[68] "Institute of Pacific Relations," Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eight-Second Congress, Second Session, Part 14, May 2 to June 20, 1952 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), 4935-4936.
[69] Ibid., 4936.
[70] Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969), 75.

William's theories.[71] Though William's book was never well known in the United States, it infused Chinese anti-Communist ideology with a distinctly American flavor. Shortly before his death in 1924, Sun Yat-sen gave a final series of lectures articulating a vision for a republican Chinese way of life, one newly shriven of Marxist economic theory.[72]

Dr. William showed Kohlberg an article from a 1943 issue of one of the IPR's magazines, *Far Eastern Survey*. Entitled "China's Part in a Coalition War," it would have tremendous influence on the China Lobby's characterization of those believed to be sympathetic toward or "soft" on Communism. Though the article began with a frank assessment of the war's progress among the Allies, it soon turned to an assessment of the "two Chinas" locked in an uneasy alliance against Japan. "Communist China," the author argued, should not really be thought of as Communist at all. Having freed the peasants in its territory from "the crushing weight of rent, taxes and usurious interest charges," and having set up "elected councils [with] elected executive officials," the so-called Communist government was in fact "the essence of *bourgeois* democracy, applied mainly to agrarian conditions." Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, on the other hand, were stuck in the feudal past, producing inefficient bureaucratic regulations, poor military performance, and the squelching of entrepreneurial initiative.[73] For years to come, conservative anti-Communists would lambast this assertion that Chinese Communists were democratic "agrarian reformers."

Now suspecting foul play within the IPR, of which he was a member, Kohlberg began to investigate the matter with Dr. William's encouragement. At the New York

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[71] Note on the Maurice William Archives, University of California Los Angeles, International Institute, accessed January 19, 2015, http://www.international.ucla.edu/china/MauriceWilliamsArchives/bio.
[72] Keeley, 72, 73.
[73] T. A. Bisson, "China's Part in a Coalition War," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. 12, No. 14 (July 14, 1943): 138-140.

Public Library, he researched back issues of the IPR's two regular publications, *Pacific Affairs* and *Far Eastern Survey*. He concluded that the IPR's support or lack of support for Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists seemed always to follow the Communist Party's official line. Thus, during the Popular Front period, the IPR had lauded the Chinese Nationalists. Between the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 and Hitler's violation of the Pact in 1941, the IPR routinely criticized the Nationalists. Then, between 1941 and 1943, the organization reversed positions again. By 1943, with an Allied victory over the Axis powers seeming likely, IPR writers decided once again to promote Chinese Communism as the hope of the people.[74] Kohlberg's suspicions were, of course, a matter of correlation rather than proof of Communist subversion, but they had an impact. Henry Luce was no red-baiter, but on the basis of Kohlberg's evidence he decided to cut his financial ties to the IPR.[75]

Kohlberg was also troubled by the influence that IPR publications and personnel seemed to exercise on State Department policy, especially in the pressure being placed on Chiang Kai-shek to form a coalition government with his Communist enemies. Kohlberg was most suspicious of Owen Lattimore, Professor of International Relations at Johns Hopkins and onetime editor of *Pacific Affairs*. It was under Lattimore's editorship that the magazine had repeatedly changed its collective attitude toward the Chinese Nationalists. No sooner had Hitler turned against Stalin in 1941 than Lattimore was bound for China at President Roosevelt's invitation, to be an advisor to Chiang Kai-shek.[76]

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[74] Herzstein, 66.
[75] Brinkley, 344.
[76] Alfred Kohlberg, "Owen Lattimore: 'Expert's Expert'," *The China Monthly*, Vol. VI, No. 10 (October 1945): 11-12.

Kohlberg must have believed his suspicions were vindicated when an analyst with the Office of Strategic Services noticed that one of his organization's classified reports had turned up verbatim in the January 26, 1945, issue of *Amerasia* magazine, for which Lattimore was a member of the editorial board. The ensuing "*Amerasia* case" resulted in the discovery that hundreds of classified documents had materialized at the magazine's headquarters. Emmanuel Larsen, a member of the State Department's Far Eastern Division, was arrested and charged with forwarding the documents to editor Philip Jaffe. Larsen, Jaffe, and several other defendants pleaded journalistic zeal rather than disloyalty, but whatever their motives the *Amerasia* case seemed to fit the scenario Kohlberg imagined, in which subversives sought to shape public perceptions of Chinese politics to the benefit of the Communists.[77]

Kohlberg worked to bring other counter-subversives into his network. Westbrook Pegler, a journalist with King Features Syndicate, published a series of editorials toward the war's end about the Soviet Union's continued threats to U.S. security through its American agents. Anyone who remembered the buildup to the current war, he argued, should recall that American Communists were turncoats. They had agitated against American intervention until Hitler broke his pact with Stalin, at which point they "set up a clamor for open, all-out war against the Nazis."[78] *The Daily Worker* had declared plainly that Hitler's defeat would see an immediate resumption of the proletarian struggle in the United States. "The new manifesto," Pegler wrote, "frankly calls for a resumption of the riots and sabotage which delighted the Palace Guard of the New Deal and the

[77] Griffith, 35-36, 37.
[78] Westbrook Pegler, "Russia Still Plots Against Nations Who Trust Her," *New York Journal American*, December 5, 1944.

Kremlin in the organizing days of the CIO." Strikes, pickets, and other work stoppages in the name of "dynamic democracy" were bound to reappear.[79]

In April 1945, Kohlberg wrote to Pegler to commend him for one of his columns. But while Pegler had warned of American Communist influence in labor unions, Kohlberg believed he had missed the fact that "the most important penetration of our Government by the Communists is in the State Department and its various affiliations and related bureaus." From the State Department and its affiliated agencies—especially the Office of War Information—Communists were working to divide up the postwar world in favor of the Soviet Union. "The plan," Kohlberg wrote, "is for the Sovietization of Europe from the western shores of Italy and Central Germany eastward, including Turkey and Iran in the south, and half of China, Korea and possibly Japan on the east."[80]

Discontent over the February 1945 Yalta Conference began among those concerned about the postwar fate of Poland. The major point of contention was an agreement to place the Polish eastern border along the so-called "Curzon Line," by which Germany and the Soviet Union had divided Poland by the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939. Poland would now regain western territory it had lost to Germany, but the Soviet Union would hold Polish territory east of the Curzon Line.[81] The disgruntled former Ambassador to Poland, Arthur Bliss Lane, portrayed Yalta as the final blow in a string of "betrayals." He alleged that during the Election of 1944, the Roosevelt Administration had gone so far as to display maps of Poland with its prewar

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[79] Westbrook Pegler, "Russia's War Ended, U.S. Reds Revert to Old Hostility to Our System," *New York Journal American*, May 29, 1945.
[80] Alfred Kohlberg to Westbrook Pegler, April 26, 1945, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 141, Folder: "Westbrook Pegler, 1944/51," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[81] Arthur Bliss Lane, *I Saw Poland Betrayed: An Ambassador Reports to the American People* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1948), 81.

boundaries to groups of interested Polish-Americans, despite knowing that the postwar boundaries had already been set in place at the 1943 Teheran Conference.[82] Worse than this, Lane alleged that a general "spirit of appeasement" pervaded Yalta, such that Roosevelt and Churchill stood ready to acquiesce to any of Stalin's demands.[83]

Another prominent member of the China Lobby was Walter Judd, a Republican Congressman and physician from Minnesota. Judd had spent ten years as a medical missionary in various parts of China, initially under the auspices of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, an interdenominational Protestant group.[84] He returned to the United States in 1938 and began to tell of his experiences in the war against the Japanese. Such early interest in aiding China put Judd at odds with anti-interventionists like Clarence Manion and John Flynn. Judd believed that the best way to aid China would be to encourage U.S. aid to Britain in its war against Germany, and he recalled having traveled "up and down this country urging assistance for England two years before most Americans would admit her fate was any of our business."[85]

On March 15, 1945, with victory in Europe all but certain, Judd urged his fellow congressmen to turn their attention to the war effort in China and to recognize Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists as the U.S.'s true ally there. Judd's experiences as a missionary had made him an early opponent of Chinese Communism. He had spent eight months in 1930 in a region under Communist control. "I saw first-hand their utterly ruthless purges and slaughterings of anyone who crossed their will," he said.[86]

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[82] Ibid., 55, 60.
[83] Ibid., 79.
[84] Walter Judd, "The World Conflict is Moving Toward a Climax," WBML Radio, Macon, Georgia, February 29, 1964, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[85] Walter Judd, untitled speech in *Congressional Record*, Thursday, March 15, 1945, 2294, 2297.
[86] Ibid., 2298.

Recently the Nationalists had faced criticism for un-democratic practices, but Judd argued that Americans should be slow to judge a nation suffering so heavily under what Winston Churchill called "the diseases of defeat." Americans, after all, had not suffered in war as the Chinese had. Even in France, the war had forced "people of the noblest birth and background and the finest education…to abandon step by step all the niceties of civilization and become almost like hungry dogs in the street, fighting for a bone in order to live."[87] How then could Americans criticize Chiang's Nationalists for not respecting democratic practices common in the United States? He was "in the midst of a cruel war for sheer survival in a country which has never before held an election in its 4,000 years of history," and his country was half-occupied by the Japanese.[88] American policymakers criticized Chiang for not cooperating with Communists in their fight against the Japanese. Judd believed that these policymakers failed to understand that the Chinese Communists were a rebel faction. They maintained a separate army and, like American Communists, were more loyal to the Soviet Union than they were to China. Moreover, their tactics could hardly be called more "democratic" than Chiang's.[89]

Judd insisted that Chiang Kai-shek stood ready to accept a coalition government with his enemies, provided they "give up their separate army and their separate government." But to ask him to form a coalition with a rebel government within his own country was too much.[90] Less than two years later, this was precisely what President Truman's Secretary of State, George C. Marshall, would do.[91] To Marshall and many others this seemed a matter of realistic diplomacy. To Kohlberg and members of the

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[87] Ibid., 2295.
[88] Ibid., 2296.
[89] Ibid., 2296.
[90] Ibid., 2299.
[91] Herzstein, 79.

China Lobby, it seemed that Marshall had imbibed the "lies" about the Nationalists that Owen Lattimore and his ilk had deliberately spread.

Joseph McCarthy, the Fall of China, and the Korean War

1945 was also the year that an American spy for the Soviet Union, Elizabeth Bentley, broke with the Communist Party and began to turn over the names of her accomplices to the FBI, eventually implicating over one hundred people and thirty-seven federal employees.[92] Though the FBI initially kept Bentley's revelations secret, by 1948 some of her accusations had appeared in print, and she volunteered to testify before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Overnight she became a media celebrity, dubbed the "Blonde Spy Queen." Among those she named were Lauchlin Currie, President Roosevelt's administrative assistant who had originally told Kohlberg about the alleged corruption in the ABMAC; Harry Dexter White, a former member of the Treasury Department who had overseen the Bretton Woods Conference; and Kohlberg's arch-suspect, Owen Lattimore.[93]

That same year, Whittaker Chambers accused State Department official Alger Hiss of having been a Communist and spy for the Soviet Union. Hiss denied the charges for two years and over the course of two trials. Because the statute of limitations had expired, in 1950 he was convicted of perjury rather than espionage, but critics believed his guilt was plain.[94] The jury's conclusion that Hiss had been loyal to the Soviets erupted like a firecracker on the American political scene. Here was a man who had sat

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[92] Amy W. Knight, *How the Cold War Began: The Igor Gouzenko Affair and the Hunt for Soviet Spies* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005), 93.
[93] David M. Oshinksky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: The Free Press, 1983), 98; John T. Flynn, *While You Slept: Our Tragedy in Asia and Those Who Made It* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1951), 132.
[94] Oshinsky, 104.

at President Roosevelt's side during the Yalta Conference in 1945, when Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin negotiated the postwar division of Europe. Hiss had also been instrumental in the formation of the United Nations, serving as its provisional Secretary General at the founding meeting in San Francisco.[95]

Two weeks after Hiss's conviction, Senator Joseph McCarthy made his Lincoln Day speech to the Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia. Brandishing a piece of paper, he claimed to hold "in [his] hands" a list of the names of 205 Communists employed by the State Department. McCarthy immediately brought trouble on himself by appearing to fling arbitrary numbers at various different audiences. The list he claimed to possess was one he had merely heard about, compiled by Robert Lee, a former White House staffer, alleging the presence of 108 "poor risks" in the State Department, several of whom were suspected not of Communism, but of homosexuality. Another source had alleged the presence of 284 "security risks," 79 of whom had recently been dismissed, yielding the number 205. More significant than the exactness of McCarthy's number, which changed in subsequent reprints, speeches, and interviews, was the fact that his declaration gave voice to a by-then popular and damning assessment of the entire New Deal political order. Despite having instituted a security program, the Truman Administration seemed insufficiently concerned about the loyalty of those working in its State Department.[96]

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[95] Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 27-28.

[96] Herman, 99-110. In February 1950, when the Senate Appropriations Committee questioned Undersecretary of State John Peurifoy, he admitted that the ninety-one "security risks" dismissed from the State Department since 1947 had been suspected not of Communist sympathies, but of homosexuality. Before the Tydings Committee, McCarthy admitted that alleged homosexuals had composed a substantial portion of his "list." K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 49.

Another important spur to right-wing activism emerged from the United Nations "police action" in Korea, so closely following the fall of the Chinese mainland to Mao Tse-tung's Communist forces in 1949. General Douglas MacArthur was already considered a spokesman for the China Lobby before he became commander of U.S. forces in Korea in 1950.[97] Within a year, railing against restrictions he believed President Truman had placed on his command, MacArthur made known his intentions to attack Red China directly, if it was necessary for a clear victory in the war.[98] Truman responded by relieving MacArthur of his command.[99]

It was at this point that John Flynn, former head of the New York chapter of the America First Committee and longtime critic of President Roosevelt as an American crypto-fascist, joined the ranks of the anti-Communists. Even in his 1948 book wherein he described the Yalta "sellout," Flynn had not been concerned with the influence of Hiss or other alleged Communists at Roosevelt's side, pinning blame on the President's own megalomania, lack of preparation, and poor health.[100] In the midst of the Korean War, he blended anti-statist ideas about the poison of European socialist political philosophy with ideas about Communist subversion in the State Department.

Flynn's 1951 book *While You Slept* sought to answer the question of how the United States had found itself drawn into an undeclared war in Korea. The Korean War, he asserted, would not have been necessary without the Chinese Communist revolution, and this would not have occurred without the influence over the Institute of Pacific Relations of a "collection of journalists and writers and propagandists interested in

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[97] Dennis D. Wainstock, *Truman, MacArthur, and the Korean War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 12.
[98] Ibid., 121.
[99] Ibid., 127.
[100] John T. Flynn, *The Roosevelt Myth* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1948), 387-395.

liquidating Nationalist China."[101] This group included Owen Lattimore, who between 1928 and 1945 had written eight books that praised Chinese Communism, and critics in the press who had vaunted such books and "killed" books on the Nationalist side.[102] Flynn was cautious in the face of the criticism Senator McCarthy had received for his accusations. It mattered little whether or not Owen Lattimore was a Communist, he declared. Nor did it matter that four different people, including both Elizabeth Bentley and Whittaker Chambers, had testified that he was a Communist. "The only point to be settled," he wrote, "is whether or not he supported the aims of the Chinese Communists."[103]

The Spirit of 1952

Robert Welch, co-owner of the James O. Welch Candy Company, was a latecomer to the anti-Communist activism among his peers, but he was intrigued by the China Lobby's politics. Fired by the political fallout surrounding President Truman's dismissal of General MacArthur, Welch began work on *May God Forgive Us*, in which he purported to describe "the historical background" to the dismissal.[104] He portrayed it as part of the same process of pro-Communist maneuvering that Alfred Kohlberg had spent years alleging, and as a conscious attempt by subversives to carry out Lenin's plan for global conquest. Dean Acheson, who had replaced George Marshall as Truman's Secretary of State, seemed determined to pursue the same policies in East Asia that Marshall had pursued, Welch alleged. Like Marshall, Acheson believed "that Mao and

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[101] Flynn, *While You Slept*, 117.
[102] Ibid., 61, 71-72.
[103] Ibid., 132.
[104] Robert Welch, *May God Forgive Us: A Famous Letter Giving the Historical Background of the Dismissal of General MacArthur* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952).

the Chinese Communists were mere agrarian reformers." MacArthur's only fault was that he "knew better" and had "made no secret of his friendship for Chiang."[105]

For his part, Kohlberg believed that Welch was too reluctant to accuse President Truman of Communist sympathies. After all, Truman supported the presidential ambitions of Adlai Stevenson, a man who had testified in favor of the now convicted Alger Hiss. "I do not contend that Mr. Truman is knowingly a servant of Communist causes," Kohlberg wrote to Welch. "I merely feel that nothing is to be gained by clearing him in the absence of complete and accurate knowledge."[106] In a letter to Westbrook Pegler, Kohlberg was even more emphatic. Those who accused the U.S. of lacking a clear military strategy in Korea were mistaken, he wrote. "We have a policy, which they dare not tell us…It is simply to get orders from Moscow, and then to follow them out, as far as public opinion, the stupidity of the American public, and the American Government will permit them to go."[107]

Such was the political tenor of the time. After two years of Joseph McCarthy's redbaiting in the Senate and with President Truman's job approval rating hovering just above twenty percent, Republicans foresaw an easy victory in the Presidential election of 1952. The American people were clearly fed up with twenty years of "New Dealism," they thought. Texas oil tycoon H. L. Hunt encouraged Republican politicians to bring McCarthy's tactics into their campaigns and to attack Truman directly. Not only was his administration harboring Communists, Hunt alleged, but he was also the first sitting

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[105] Robert Welch, "May God Forgive Us" (Draft Letter), July 4, 1951, 2, 21, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 9, Folder 24, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[106] Alfred Kohlberg to Robert Welch, April 8, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder "Welch, Robert H. W., 1952-56," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[107] Alfred Kohlberg to Westbrook Pegler, March 19, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 141, Folder: "Westbrook Pegler, 1952-1953-1954," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

president to actively campaign for a successor, Adlai Stevenson, in the hopes that Stevenson would "keep the crime, corruption, and incompetence of his administration from ever being exposed." Hunt suggested that Republican speakers quote the Gospel According to Matthew, specifically the passages in which Jesus condemns the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites.[108]

Many conservative Republicans, especially those who had moved among the China Lobby, disliked Ike even before the 1952 Republican National Convention, and they were disappointed at his nomination for President. Edward Rumely, a newspaper editor and one-time confidant of Theodore Roosevelt, wrote newspaper mogul Frank Gannett of widespread disappointment "over the way in which the Republican party was denied an opportunity to express itself – to go to the country on its principles with sound leadership."[109] *The Freeman'*s editors had devoted considerable space plugging for the conservative Robert Taft, and after the convention there lingered a sense that the party had been taken over by a high-profile outsider. The editors were cautiously optimistic that Senator Taft and others in the GOP's conservative contingent were having an effect on Eisenhower's presidential campaign. Eisenhower had nominated Walter Judd as his "Far Eastern brain-truster," and surely he was troubled by the "alarming withdrawal of eminent and leading Republicans from politics," including Generals MacArthur and Wedemeyer.[110]

Wedemeyer and MacArthur had not, in fact, withdrawn from politics. The two East Asian generals had instead withdrawn to their respective farms to plan for the future

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[108] H. L. Hunt, "To Finish Strong," undated, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 133, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[109] Edward A. Rumely to Frank E. Gannett, August 19, 1952, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 133, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[110] "Fair Wind from the West," *The Freeman*, Monday, August 25, 1952.

of the conservative movement. Wedemeyer wrote to MacArthur that many associates were encouraging him to spearhead the formation of a third party, though he allowed that he would support Eisenhower on the basis of "the individuals surrounding him" and the principles he decided to espouse.[111] Even as Wedemeyer considered supporting Eisenhower, a grassroots movement arose to draft MacArthur, whose name was slated to appear on several state ballots. Wedemeyer believed it important to stem this phenomenon, not only because it might split the Republican vote and yield four more years of "New Dealism," but also because those active in the movement were by-and-large farther to the right than he found acceptable. Wedemeyer set about arranging a meeting between Eisenhower and MacArthur to demonstrate "complete harmony within the Republican leader ranks."[112] Thus, with tepid right-wing support, Eisenhower sailed into the Presidency.

Robert Welch and John Birch

As Joseph McCarthy continued to raise the specter of Communist subversion in the State Department, his fellow Senator, William Knowland of California, resurrected the story of John Birch's death in the context of allegedly suppressed information about China. In Knowland's account, Birch's voice was silenced before he was able to warn Americans about the dangers Chinese Communism posed to the postwar world order. His alleged last words to his Chinese comrade Lieutenant Tung—who had nearly died beside him on the grass heap—were, "It doesn't make very much difference what happens to me. It is important that my country find out now whether or not these

[111] Albert C. Wedemeyer to Douglas MacArthur, August 11, 1952, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 133, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[112] Albert C. Wedemeyer to Douglas MacArthur, September 18, 1952, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 133, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

people—the Communists—are going to be friends or enemies. If they are determined to be our enemies, my country needs to find it out now."[113] Knowland's implication was that influential conspirators within the government were determined that the American people should not know.

Though Knowland introduced this story to the general public, it was Robert Welch who would forever make John Birch a symbol of anti-Communist conspiracy theory. After interviewing Birch's parents in Macon, Georgia, and collecting copies of his letters home, Welch published *The Life of John Birch* in 1954. Birch's mission, Welch wrote, had been to spread "Christianity, Christian ideals and Christian brotherhood to the people of China."[114] Clarence Manion wrote to Welch enthusiastically about the book, recognizing it as a martyrology that might prove politically effective. He wrote to Welch, "In reality your book describes not the life but the death of John Birch and the menacing threat of death to all of the Godly goodness for which [he] lived and died."[115]

Welch told the tale in two parts, one part hagiography and one part conspiracy theory. In roughly the first half of the book, he described Birch's nearly superhuman faith, virtue, and virility. Though a total abstainer, Birch was unwilling to judge others' vices. With indomitable energy and courage, he rescued U.S. and Chinese soldiers from Japanese bombardment. His facility in Mandarin convinced some of his Chinese comrades that he was native to their land. He used his technical skills to repair radios and

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[113] William Knowland, "United States Policy in the Far East—Admission of Communist China to United Nations," *Congressional Record*, September 5, 1950, 14204.
[114] Robert Welch, *The Life of John Birch: In the Story of One American Boy, The Ordeal of His Age* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), 36.
[115] Clarence Manion to Robert Welch, 1954, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 2, Folder 8, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

military equipment, even constructing a bathtub from the fuselage of a downed airplane.[116]

Welch attributed Birch's considerable talents to his fundamentalist Christian faith and the way he had lived that faith, growing up during the lean years of the Great Depression.[117] Birch served as both martyr and prophet in Welch's story, writing to his great-aunt, "[This] war and the ensuing federations will set the world stage…for the rise of anti-Christ!"[118] Birch's comrades recounted his death in cosmic and Christ-like terms. As Welch quoted from a Korean friend's letter to Birch's mother, "You gave us your beloved son for the restoration of the democracy of the world."[119] Welch ended his book in language that seemed modeled on the concluding doxology of the Catholic Eucharistic Prayer: "With his death and in his death the battle lines were drawn, in a struggle from which either Communism or Christian-style civilization must emerge with one completely triumphant and the other completely destroyed."[120]

Welch was a storyteller of considerable skill, and there was little in his narrative that did not operate on multiple rhetorical levels. Birch represented the dying American masculine ideal: all that was left for the United States to effectively combat Communism. He was molded by the values he and his family held dear, by his deprivation during the Great Depression, by his call to spread his religious faith among those in foreign lands, and by his willingness to fight when his country called him to the duty. "The output of these molds," Welch wrote, "can still save our civilization."[121] This portrayal of Birch set

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[116] Welch, *The Life of John Birch*, 17, 25, 27.
[117] Ibid., 10.
[118] Ibid., 33.
[119] Ibid., 45.
[120] Ibid., 110.
[121] Ibid., Foreword, second page.

up the central question of the book's second half: How could a man who was so virtuous, heroic, and famous in China be so utterly unknown in his own country without a deliberate government cover-up? Though he cited no sources, Welch assured his readers that the detailed description of Birch's attributes and activities were reliable, culled from "previously unpublished sources."[122]

In fact, Welch had culled most of his sources from John Birch's parents, whose experience gathering information about their son's death had made them suspect foul play by government operatives. In August 1945 Ethel Birch was informed that while traveling to Suchow, along the Lunghai Railway, John had been struck and killed by stray bullets.[123] She learned the true story from non-governmental sources, and it was not until 1949 that she succeeded in getting the official record corrected.[124] By the time Welch interviewed her for his book, she had come to believe that her son was a willing martyr, determined to alert his fellow Americans to the dangers of international Communism. "I am convinced," Mrs. Birch wrote to a relative, "that had the conclusion of World War II been handled differently, and America had been alerted to what Russia via Chinese communists was attempting, our leaders would not have driven democracy out of China." Had information about it not been suppressed, "John's death could have been the means of changing the whole picture in the Orient," preventing the fall of China to Communism and the Korean War that followed it. The Cold War itself might never have materialized, for Russia would not have been able to stand up to American influence.[125]

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[122] Ibid., 115.
[123] Edward F. Eitsell to Ethel Birch, September 12, 1945, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[124] Ethel Birch to "Grace," February 15, 1955, Ruth Sykes, Personal Papers.
[125] Ibid.

It would not have been unreasonable to consider the repressed report of Birch's death a diplomatic necessity. In August 1945, relations between the United States and China were tense. Because both the Communists and Nationalists were technically U.S. allies, State Department officials were eager to keep new hostilities from arising. In correspondence with John Birch's father, George, General Albert C. Wedemeyer recounted his efforts at diplomatic negotiation in the wake of the tragedy. He had "talked personally to Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai…and received assurances that there would never be a recurrence of such actions" as had been taken against Birch.[126]

Robert Welch was certain that Communist sympathies among American diplomats had resulted in a deliberate cover-up. Because he believed so strongly in a conspiracy, he had no place for speculation about diplomatic realism, and like Alfred Kohlberg, John Flynn, and others, it made no sense to him that any American diplomat or military commander who knew anything about Communism would have considered the Chinese Communists reliable allies. As he wrote to Wedemeyer, "The Pentagon knew what had happened to John Birch and how he had been killed…but somebody there with sufficient influence was determined that the American people should not know."[127]

Welch dedicated the second half of his biography to demonstrating the government cover-up. Much of his argument lay on the premise that Birch's murder was typical of Communist tactics, that U.S. government officials must have recognized this fact, and that any number of them decided to hide it from the American people. He cited as evidence "the continuous pattern of murder, capture, and torture of uniformed

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[126] Albert C. Wedemeyer to George S. Birch, December 24, 1962, 2, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 115, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[127] Albert C. Wedemeyer to Robert Welch, October 10, 1961, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 115, Folder 9, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

Americans in China which began immediately" after Japan's defeat. "It is clear that the Communists, high and low," Welch continued, "recognized John Birch as standing for America, for Christianity, and as the very embodiment of those qualities and forces which were in their way."[128]

The Isolationist Legacy on the Far Right

As more and more critics of "New Dealism" promoted Alfred Kohlberg's accusations of treason in high places, Clarence Manion remained committed to his pre-war intellectual isolationism. In his 1950 book *The Key to Peace*, Manion lauded a vague "mysterious magnetic unity" that had delayed a seemingly inevitable civil war after the U.S. gained independence from Great Britain. It was an "electricity that sparked the human spirit," and it—even more than the growth of industry—had drawn thousands of European immigrants to American shores. Whether Cold War American intellectuals were Communist subversives or not mattered little. Before Communism existed, European intellectuals had brought to America the "social cancer of class-consciousness and group antagonism." Now, with U.S. membership in the United Nations, "the 'one world' forced upon us by the Atom bomb" threatened to be "the *Old* World rather than the *New*."[129]

Clarence Manion remained essentially an isolationist even as he began to establish a relationship with Robert Welch in 1954. During this time he was involved with Virginia segregationist T. Coleman Andrews in founding "For America," a successor organization to the defunct America First Committee and a prototype for what would later become the John Birch Society. Those involved in For America believed

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[128] Welch, *The Life of John Birch*, 61.
[129] Clarence Manion, *The Key to Peace: A Formula for the Perpetuation of Real Americanism* (Chicago: The Heritage Foundation, Inc., 1950), 16, 19, 21.

themselves to be continuing the best traditions of isolationism in their new campaign against postwar "internationalism." Spurred by the novelty of the foreign policy undergirding the Korean War, For America declared opposition to "so-called preventative wars or 'police actions' [and sending] our American boys to fight all over the world, without the consent of Congress." Though the organization stopped short of explicitly conflating Soviet Communism with the welfare state, its literature opposed internationalism by federal officials, Communism abroad, and 'socialism' at home, arguing that each of these nefarious philosophies was related to the others.[130]

It was also in 1954 that Manion launched the inaugural radio broadcast of his long-running *Manion Forum,* entitled "Revive American Independence." Manion placed this broadcast in the context of his favorite document, the Declaration of Independence, to argue that part of the United States' purpose in severing ties with Britain and throwing off King George's despotism had been to insulate itself from all future despotisms. But in the postwar diplomatic world, Manion argued, "we must now go to war in defense of more than twenty separate nations the moment any one of them is attacked."[131] Manion had in mind the recent United Nations action in Korea, the first war that had not been declared—as was constitutionally required—by Congress.

Soon after launching his radio program, Manion joined Alfred Kohlberg and other members of the China Lobby, including Robert Welch and Generals Wedemeyer and Chennault, to form the Committee of Endorsers, a group dedicated to promoting limited foreign policy. "In a republic," the group declared in a full-page advertisement in the

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[130] For America, "News Release," June 5, 1954, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 2, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[131] Clarence E. Manion, "Revive American Independence," *The Manion Forum*, Weekly Broadcast No. 1, October 3, 1954, 1, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 81, Folder 11, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

New York Times and other newspapers, "all policy must be a function of public consent." United States "independent sovereignty" could only thrive "in a peaceful community of free and sovereign nations, guided in their relationship by minimum standards of law and equity." However, it was no longer an option simply to stay out of the wider world's conflicts, as Clarence Manion and other members of the America First Committee had wished to do in 1941, because the Communist bloc now stood as the "greatest present obstacle" to world peace. "This policy of firmness does not mean we favor preventative war," the Endorsers insisted. "Nevertheless, our enemies should be set on notice that—however grim the prospect—we will not shrink from war if the Kremlin forces us to choose between conflict and surrender to Communist slavery."[132]

It was fitting that Joseph McCarthy sought—in his last significant act on the national stage—to investigate Communist penetration of the military. To those who had imbibed the teachings of Alfred Kohlberg and his associates, Cold War diplomacy had come to seem like treason, and the United States government had come to seem thoroughly infested with disloyal operatives. Shortly before the televised "Army-McCarthy hearings" in 1954—an event generally recognized as McCarthy's downfall—the Senator declared that the New Deal political order had been responsible for "twenty years of treason," a remark condemned by the 1952 Democratic presidential candidate, Adlai Stevenson, and by many in McCarthy's own Republican Party. Stevenson accused

[132] Committee of Endorsers, "A Program to Govern Our Foreign Relations," *The New York Times*, Monday, February 28, 1955.

McCarthy of promoting "slander and disunion" and remarked that because of him, the Republican Party was "divided against itself, half McCarthy and half Eisenhower."[133]

In a March 1954 address to the Milwaukee County Young Republican Club, organized to mark the Republican Party's centennial, McCarthy responded directly to Stevenson, referring to his adversary as a defense attorney for the New Deal state.[134] Often, however, McCarthy cast Stevenson more as defendant than defense attorney. As the man charged with overseeing postwar policy in Italy, Stevenson had seen to it that Communists were included in the new government. As special assistant to the Navy he had made sure that Communists were allowed to act as radio operators on U.S. ships.[135] McCarthy suggested that Stevenson's decisions were not evidence of savvy statecraft or respect for American Communists' constitutional rights, as many of Stevenson's admirers believed. Instead, they constituted treason, for McCarthy believed that Communists everywhere were bent on destruction of the given order. They could no more be a responsible segment of Italian political life than they had been of Chinese political life, and they certainly could not be trusted to represent U.S. interests in radio broadcasts. Their loyalties were neither to Italy nor to the United States, but in all cases to the Soviet Union.

To keep McCarthyism alive among a now-united group of isolationists and anti-Communist interventionists required Clarence Manion's anti-statist philosophy, for it was through this philosophy that anti-Communist conspiracy theory came to make sense. In a

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[133] Joseph McCarthy, "20 Years of Treason," March 1954, 1, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 8, Folder: "Christian Nationalist Crusade," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[134] John Chadwick, "Sen. McCarthy Accuses Democrats of 20 Years of 'Treason' on 20 Counts," *Gettysburg Times,* March 20, 1954, 4.
[135] McCarthy, "22, 3.

November 1954 speech before the Chamber of Commerce in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Manion compared government to fire, as he had often done before. Fire was a good, useful, and necessary thing, but when uncontained it became destructive. "The Communists know that a concentration of governmental power is what must precede the death of human freedom," Manion told his audience. "And the Communists seek by every means in their power to bring the powers of government together in one place." If such concentration of power were achieved in the United States, he warned, "your money is going to buy your children just one thing—a ticket to the concentration camp."[136]

[136] Clarence E. Manion, "How Not to Lose Your Liberty," address before the 79th Annual Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Fort Wayne, Indiana, November 18, 1954, 3, 4, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 2, Folder 9, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

CHAPTER 2

Capturing the American Mind: "Brainwashing" and Anti-Communism in the 1950s

In February 1953, as the Korean War appeared to drag on in stalemate, John T. Flynn accused members of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association of unwittingly aiding the enemy in a wider war they failed to recognize. Businessmen did not understand "the great and terrifying art of the 20th Century revolution," Flynn declared, nor did they perceive the nature of its ideological campaign against private enterprise and Constitutional government. By using "the great magazines of America" as a forum for their advertising, businessmen had unwittingly "provided the weapon with which Communist and socialist revolutionists" hoped to destroy them. He urged the assembled businessmen to work to recapture "the American mind."[137]

Flynn had long been a critic of the New Deal political establishment, which he believed had hijacked the liberal identity to which he subscribed. He had been head of the New York branch of the America First Committee, the most important anti-interventionist organization before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor spurred U.S. involvement in World War II.[138] Flynn's 1951 book *While You Slept* criticized American foreign policy leading to the Korean War, but it focused not only on the alleged American Communist subversives who had promoted Mao Tse-tung's victory in China.

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[137] John T. Flynn, "America's Unknown War: The War We Have Not Begun to Fight," an address before the Pennsylvania Manufacturers Association, distributed by America's Future, Inc., February 24, 1953, 1, 3, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 2, Folder: "America's Future," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[138] John E. Moser, *Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-2.

Flynn believed that propaganda had made Americans acquiescent to the Cold War's new diplomatic status quo. "The President of the United States, in complete defiance of the Constitution, plunged us without consultation with Congress into a distant Oriental war in pursuit of ends no one understands," Flynn wrote. "Before this was possible, something, over a course of years, had to be done to the minds of the American people…In these last twenty years this country has become a laboratory for the dark and insidious science of modern revolutionary propaganda."[139]

During the 1950s, Flynn was one of many conservative commentators who argued that the New Deal political establishment was brainwashing the American people. "Brainwashing," a term coined in 1950, was allegedly the direct translation of a Chinese phrase describing how Mao Tse-tung's Communists had established their regime not only territorially, but also in the hearts and minds of their subjects. Conservative commentators in the United States began to use this word to describe how Americans had been lulled into accepting the foreign policy that had influenced Chinese politics since the end of World War II. They and other conservatives then began to use the concept of brainwashing to reframe pre-existing suspicions of Communist subversion in American churches and schools, and this reframing would exercise a lasting influence over radical right politics. By pointing to Communist subversion through brainwashing as evidence that ideas they opposed were "un-American," conservatives who warned of brainwashing during the 1950s helped to build the right-wing perspective in what later became known as the "culture wars."[140]

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[139] John T. Flynn, *While You Slept: Our Tragedy in Asia and Who Made It* (Boston: Western Islands, 1961; New York: Devin-Adair, 1951), 2.

[140] This term first appeared in James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991). In the book's Preface (p. xi), he named issues in the dispute, most of which are

"Brainwashing" entered the lexicon just as Joseph McCarthy burst onto the U.S. political scene, and it was a product of the same political world as the controversial senator. However, Senator McCarthy soon faced heavy criticism for suggesting that the State Department was full of Communist traitors, and conservatives—even as they often defended McCarthy—found in the concept of brainwashing a way to criticize the ideas and goals of non-Communist liberals in government, those who had been part of the domestic, foreign policy, and intellectual establishment since Franklin Roosevelt's first term of office. The concept of brainwashing gave them a way to echo Joseph McCarthy's concerns without indulging directly in his tendency to allege treason in high places without sufficient evidence.

As historian Matthew Dunne has illustrated, by the end of the 1950s brainwashing was a pop culture sensation that transcended political allegiances. It had become a metaphor for a perceived loss of individuality in postwar American society. To those on the left, "big business" seemed just as guilty of making true individuality unattainable as "big brother" seemed to those on the right.[141] Yet among right-wing anti-Communists, brainwashing seemed especially dangerous to freedom, linked as it was with totalitarianism. This characterization of brainwashing concretized the danger that the federal government posed to American freedom. While the furor around brainwashing did not create conservative concerns about mind control during the 1950s, the word served to explain the widespread acceptance of changes in culture and political structures that had long worried American conservatives. It functioned as a conceptual glue that

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still quite familiar today. These included "abortion, gay rights, funding for the arts, women's rights, child-care policy, church and state litigation, multiculturalism…"

[141] Matthew W. Dunne, *A Cold War State of Mind: Brainwashing and Postwar American Society* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 7.

bound many seemingly unrelated concerns together; in particular, it made changes in foreign policy seem intimately related to changes in American culture.[142]

Progenitors to Brainwashing

The journalist Edward Hunter invented the English word "brainwashing" from a Chinese expression in 1950, and it was through his influence that the word took on its anti-Communist meaning during the Cold War. However, many ideas undergirding the concept of brainwashing were already pervasive in American culture. They had entered first through gothic fiction, especially in depictions of hypnosis like that practiced by Count Dracula on his victims in Bram Stoker's 1897 novel. Moreover, as anti-Communist spokespeople often reminded their audiences during the 1950s, Communist brainwashing could exist only within the school of behaviorism, which argued that the human personality might be shaped by psychological intervention. John B. Watson and B. F. Skinner in the United States and Anton Pavlov in Russia were the most famous practitioners of behaviorism, though for understandable reasons anti-Communists tended to connect the practice to Pavlov's experiments, rather than to Watson's or Skinner's.[143]

The Soviet show trials of the late 1930s had also seemed to demonstrate the political power of mind control. One by one, the architects of the Soviet Union who opposed Stalin's regime were accused of crimes against the people, and one by one, they confessed. In 1949 there followed the lurid confessions of the outspoken Hungarian anti-

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[142] Ibid., 54. My argument here resembles Dunne's assertion that brainwashing was "a unifying concept that allowed [the mainstream media, politicians, and Cold War experts] to connect all of the various narrative strands related to Communism together." Much as brainwashing helped to unify disparate strands of thought about Communism among the general public, it helped to unify disparate types of political causes among conservatives.

[143] David Seed, *Brainwashing: The Fictions of Mind Control: A Study of Novels and Films Since World War II* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2004), xix, xii. Edward Hunter often argued that brainwashing was Pavolv's invention, as in Edward Hunter, "Are Americans Being Brainwashed?" *American Legion Magazine*, November 1956, 18.

Communist cleric, Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty. Mindszenty publicly confessed to plotting the overthrow the Hungarian Communist government, fomenting a third world war, and planning to assume supreme political power in the case of an American victory.[144] "Communist governments can get confessions from anybody," John Flynn remarked, in reference to Mindszenty's trial.[145]

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, though it was published a year before the word "brainwashing" was invented, already linked totalitarianism to mind control. Right-wing anti-Communists were quick to promote the alleged link. As literary critic Philip Rahv put it, "[T]he modern totalitarians have devised a methodology of terror that enables them to break human beings by getting inside them. They explode the human character from within, exhibiting the pieces as irrefutable proof of their own might and virtue."[146]

Edward Hunter and Chinese Brainwashing

Though the general American fascination with brainwashing would eventually transcend ideological lines, it is significant that Edward Hunter—the man who coined the term—was an important participant in right-wing anti-Communist activism throughout the 1950s and 1960s. As a young man, Hunter served as editor of the *Newark Ledger* in New Jersey, but wanderlust soon drove him abroad. He became a foreign correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* and followed that position with the editorships of several English-language newspapers in East Asia, including the *Japan Advertiser* and the *Hankow Herald*. He proudly recounted having wrested the *Herald* from Communist

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[144] Flynn, *While You Slept*, 103.
[145] Dominic Streatfield, *Brainwash: The Secret History of Mind Control* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2007): xx.
[146] Seed, *Brainwashing*, 19.

control shortly before Chiang Kai-shek began his campaign of repression against the Chinese Communists in 1926.[147] Hunter moved to the *Peking Leader* in time to write about the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. With Hearst International, he covered both the Italian conquest of Ethiopia and the Spanish Civil War, the latter of which he called a Communist "rehearsal" for World War II. During that war, he worked for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) as a "propaganda specialist."[148]

By 1950, Hunter believed himself an expert on Communist mind control tactics, having seen them in practice in China and elsewhere. He first used the word "brain-washing" in a 1950 article for *The Miami News* and the following year in his book *Brain-Washing in Red China*.[149] The word, he wrote, was "coined by the Chinese people, out of their sad experience" and with "their natural facility for succinct, graphic expressions."[150] In *Brain-Washing in Red China* Hunter described the twin techniques of "brain-washing" and "brain-changing" and alleged that Communists had used both to conquer China and win the masses' loyalty. He presented these techniques as part of a two-step process of mental political control, with the former designed for the erasure of "imperialist positions" and the latter for the construction of a new Communist outlook on the world.[151] Communists were better skilled at psychological manipulation than they were at military

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[147] Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the Struggle for Modern China* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), 56-57.
[148] "Communist Psychological Warfare (Brainwashing): Consultation with Edward Hunter, Author and Foreign Correspondent," Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-Fifth Congress, Second Session, March 12, 1958 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1958): 5-6.
[149] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, April 20, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder: "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[150] Edward Hunter, *Brain-Washing in Red China: The Calculated Destruction of Men's Minds* (New York: Edward Hunter, 1951), 4.
[151] Ibid., 10; Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, August 20, 1951, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

tactics, Hunter argued, and it was with this skill that they had conquered one of the world's most populous nations.

Hunter based his book on interviews with several people in China who were sympathetic to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist cause, by then a banished government-in-exile on the island of Taiwan.[152] He began by describing one student's experience at the North China People's Revolutionary University near Beijing, allegedly "the biggest and most important of China's political indoctrination schools."[153] New students were treated well at first; they ate three good meals a day and believed themselves to be the vanguard of a glorious new political project. But the dream descended step-by-step into nightmare. Breakfast stopped, meat became a fortnightly delicacy, and many students became cold and sick without reliable medical care. The entire student body was forced to perform manual labor as part of the school's education program, using "primitive methods" to repair an eight-mile stretch of highway in a single week. A class field trip involved witnessing a rural public trial where a Party leader stirred up local farmers' grievances against a landowner's wife, who was eventually forced to strip naked and then stoned and beaten to death.[154]

Hunter depicted brainwashing as a subtle, gradual process. Its purpose was to draw the unsuspecting Chinese into the chaotic new world of Communism by making them believe that its attendant violence and social dislocation served a noble purpose. Slowly the converts were convinced to turn against their families, their old friends, and anyone else who clung to "imperialist positions."[155] But there were always a few who did

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[152] Taylor, 408.
[153] Hunter, *Brain-Washing in Red China*, 4.
[154] Ibid., 22-25, 29, 30-31.
[155] Ibid., 10, 48, 50.

not give into brainwashing so easily, and they were usually the main characters in Hunter's stories. John D. Hayes, one of the last Protestant missionaries to leave the Chinese southwest interior after a brief stint as an English professor, recalled similar "mental torture" that his students faced under the new regime. After "the people's court" condemned their relatives and friends as class enemies, they were forced to watch the executions and "plead with the court for the release of the body." On returning to their studies, they found their fellow students thoroughly converted, and they faced ostracism unless they were willing to "denounce their loved ones."[156] The most lurid feature of these and similar stories was that most of the Chinese were depicted as willing participants in their national nightmare.

The Korean POW Scandal

Despite his book's focus on Chinese Communist practices of mind control, Edward Hunter believed even in 1951 that the Chinese brainwashing scheme bore similarities to the politics and culture of the liberal consensus in the United States. As he negotiated his book's publication, he began corresponding with Alfred Kohlberg, the founder of the American China Policy Association and an important financial contributor to the conservative magazines *Plain Talk* and *The Freeman*. Hunter believed he needed all the support he could get from Kohlberg and his associates because "[the] usual pro-Commie group of critics, and the fellow travelers who condemn with slight praise, will be hatcheting the book if they can."[157] In 1952, after *Time* magazine used the word "brainwashing" in an article without referencing or having reviewed *Brain-Washing in Red China*, Hunter was convinced that *Time*'s editors wished to aid "the Communist

[156] Hon. Alfred D. Sieminski, "Out of Red China," *Congressional Record*, Tuesday, May 4, 1954, A3236.
[157] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, September 28, 1951, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

effort to smother [the book] with silence."[158] Hunter's book had already been renewed for a second printing, and he was on the lookout for potential enemies.[159]

Hunter was confident that with Kohlberg's support, he could outwit the hatchet men. "The book, if it is not smothered, will contribute tremendously, I am sure, to letting our people know what we are up against mentally," he wrote to Kohlberg in 1951. "The next dictionaries will surely, I expect, include the terms 'Brain-washing' and 'Brain-changing'."[160] In fact, Merriam-Webster had adopted neither of Hunter's new words by 1953.[161] But later that year a national scandal would transform brainwashing from a concern among a few conservative anti-Communists to a nationally recognized concept.

After hostilities ceased in Korea, returning soldiers and prisoners of war received an enthusiastic welcome home, yet one that was tinged with anxiety. As early as 1951, newspapers reported that after successfully brainwashing their own people, Chinese Communists had tested the practice on American prisoners of war.[162] The situation was suddenly cast in dramatic relief in September 1953 when twenty-three POWs were filmed arriving at the makeshift Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Panmunjom, the new border between the Communist and capitalist ends of the Korean peninsula. The POWs wore Chinese Communist uniforms and sang the *Internationale*. One referred to a bystander from the press as an "imperialist Yankee."[163] Of the twenty-three prisoners

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[158] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, April 20, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[159] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, April 28, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[160] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, August 20, 1951, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[161] *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, 1953), 102.
[162] "'Brain Washing Chinese Tactic," *The Lincoln Star* [Lincoln, Nebraska], Sunday, February 25, 1951, 7.
[163] Dunne, 14.

who returned with this group, twenty-one would refuse repatriation altogether.[164] A November Associated Press article considered how such a thing could have happened. The problem, according to an alleged eyewitness of the POW camps, was that American soldiers were "babes in the woods" when captured, unable to withstand the "intense indoctrination" to which their Chinese Communist captors had subjected them.[165]

Matthew Dunne has noted that by the late 1950s, commentators had harnessed concerns over POWs' susceptibility to brainwashing and used it to air concerns about "shortcomings in the American character," turning brainwashing "from an indictment of Communist cruelty into a commentary on American life."[166] However, some conservative anti-Communists came to believe that such shortcomings in the American character had been fostered deliberately. The implication of the Korean POWs' behavior was a sinister one. If American soldiers had been susceptible to brainwashing, they must have been primed for it in the United States, perhaps by the same Communist subversives about whom Senator McCarthy had been warning. "Brainwashing" began to seem less like a metaphor and more like a political reality.

Brainwashing in Foreign Policy

Conservatives who had criticized U.S. foreign policy in China during the late 1940s began to use the concept of brainwashing to describe how Americans had come to accept the legitimacy of such diplomacy. As Joseph McCarthy became a political pariah for insisting that the State Department was full of Communist traitors, some of his supporters began to argue that the problem was not so much a matter of Communist treason, but of the unwitting acceptance of Communist ideas through brainwashing.

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[164] Ibid., 16.
[165] Ibid., 81-82.
[166] Ibid., 82.

McCarthy had made political hay of alleged Communist infiltration of government that Edward Hunter and his allies believed was real, but his style attracted enemies. As one sympathetic biographer put it, even in 1950 conservative Republicans supported McCarthy "less out of a sense of collegiality or personal loyalty than from a conviction that he was fundamentally right."[167] The concept of brainwashing allowed conservative anti-Communists to air many of McCarthy's concerns without alleging treason, while simultaneously making the danger seem even more serious and pervasive than it might otherwise have seemed.

While working on *Brain-Washing in Red China*, Edward Hunter became a regular contributor to the anti-Communist journals popular with Alfred Kohlberg and other representatives of the China Lobby. He martialed on-the-ground evidence that for Western countries to recognize Mao Tse-tung's regime would doom anti-Communist movements in East Asia, threatening the federal government's own containment policy. Though diplomatic recognition of the status quo might seem a matter of practicality to Western policymakers, it did not seem so to Asians in China's orbit, Hunter insisted. There, people knew Communism for what it was: a force that "will conquer all of Asia, or be destroyed. Recognition by so august a body as the [United Nations] would be admission that the first alternative was Asia's future."[168]

Moreover, Hunter believed that foreign policy experts and those influential in the U.S. press were deliberately withholding the fact that a committed, organized, and popular anti-Communist underground existed in China, or at least in the British territory

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[167] Arthur Herman, *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamining the Life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator* (New York: The Free Press, 2000), 56.
[168] Edward Hunter, "The Suicide of Recognizing Red China," *The American Mercury*, May 1952, 51.

of Hong Kong, where Hunter had lived while conducting interviews for his book.[169] As evidence, he noted that Chiang Kai-shek's admittedly boring, propagandistic documentary *Formosa Today* had played night after night to packed Hong Kong movie houses, and that audiences had cheered Chiang when he attended in person. Surely this was evidence of the existence of "a base…somewhere which might some day help to liberate [inland China]."[170]

As Hunter and Kohlberg established a professional relationship through the China Lobby's magazines, Kolhberg took it upon himself to popularize the word "brainwashing" among his associates, using it to criticize the foreign policy that had spurred his activism for several years. It made sense for Kohlberg to link brainwashing to critical American perceptions of Chiang Kai-shek's anti-Communist forces, because he had long argued that such ideas began as Communist propaganda, emphasizing the Nationalists' incompetence and corruption. Influential Americans had accepted such propaganda during and after World War II because they knew very little about Chinese politics to begin with, Kohlberg believed.[171]

In June 1952, Kohlberg wrote Hunter that he had used *Brain-Washing in Red China* as the basis for a speech to the American Legion of Mamaroneck, New York. "My method of approach is that I show them the book, and tell them briefly about it, and recommend it, as the best and easiest way to wash out of their own brains the nonsense about China that's been put in there by the Communist propaganda in this country. Then I go on and say that bad as it is in China, our brains have also been washed, but more

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[169] Hunter, *Brain-Washing in Red China*, 150-151.
[170] Edward Hunter, "Defeat by Default," *The American Mercury*, September 1952, 43-44.
[171] Joseph Keeley, *The China Lobby Man: The Story of Alfred Kohlberg* (New Rochelle: Arlington House, 1969), 37.

subtly..." As an example, Kohlberg cited a recent statement by Secretary of State Dean Acheson that the U.S. might work with the United Nations to help achieve global disarmament, despite the fact that he simultaneously refused to cut funding for the Department of Defense. To simultaneously advocate disarmament and funding for armaments, Kohlberg argued, involved "schizophrenic" thinking. Yet the American people seemed willing to accept Acheson's wisdom without question.[172]

By 1953, both Hunter and Kohlberg had concluded that Communist brainwashing was being practiced in the United States. As Hunter put it, "The red China Lobby has created a psychological climate in this country…very similar to what was in China some years before the collapse there...This is the most important problem, the greatest danger, facing the U.S. today, because if the public can continue to be misinformed and uninformed, we will go the way of China."[173]

In a January 1954 article in *American Legion* magazine, Alfred Kohlberg attributed to brainwashing the eagerness with which even his fellow conservatives were trying to distance themselves from Joseph McCarthy, a man Kohlberg believed was risking his political career to expose the truth. Even the President had shown himself susceptible. At a recent address at Dartmouth College, Eisenhower had encouraged the assembled students to avoid joining "the book burners." Of course, Kohlberg countered, "no books have been burned in the United States. Anything can be published here,

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[172] Alfred Kohlberg to Edward Hunter, June 2, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 89, Folder "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1950-1952," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[173] Edward Hunter to Alfred Kohlberg, August 16, 1953, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Folder: "Mr. Edward Hunter, 1953/1954/55," Box 89, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

including scores of pro-communist books. As a matter of fact, the Communist Party operates two publishing houses in New York, and no one interferes."[174]

The word "McCarthyism" was itself an example of brainwashing, Kohlberg insisted. Former State Department consultant Owen Lattimore had coined it in 1950 to deflect McCarthy's own charges against him. Despite the fact that in 1952 the McCarran Committee had concluded that Lattimore was "a conscious, articulate instrument of the Soviet conspiracy,"[175] McCarthy continued to be accused of "book-burning, witch-hunting, anti-Semitism, anti-Protestantism and, according to Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, of imposing 'a black silence of fear' on the whole country."[176] Such "propaganda" had only managed to catch on because so many Americans had "had their brains washed clean of…[the fact that] that McCarthy was after the communists in government. Nothing more."[177]

All the criticism of McCarthy, Kohlberg continued, was designed to distract Americans from sudden and dramatic changes in U.S. foreign policy. For nearly one hundred fifty years, policymakers had heeded George Washington's advice about avoiding "entangling alliances," but "[since] 1945, in addition to our United Nations compact, we have made alliances with more than 20 nations, and on the most ambiguous terms." The recent fate of mainland China revealed that President Truman and his policymakers had "completely washed [the Open Door Policy] out of our minds," for no one seemed to question the Truman Administration's refusal to arm the Chinese

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[174] Alfred Kohlberg, "Brainwashing, American Style," *The American Legion Magazine*, January 1954, 14. In fact, Eisenhower may have been referring to a 1952 incident in Sapulpa, Oklahoma, during which several books deemed "too approving of socialism" were burned at the behest of a local women's club. In this sense, Eisenhower was alluding to an apt example of McCarthyism's extreme effects. See Dunne, 77.
[175] "Report on the I.P.R," *Time* Vol. 60, No. 2, July 14, 1952, 27.
[176] Kohlberg, "Brainwashing, American Style," 15.
[177] Ibid., 15.

Nationalists against their Communist enemies. The Monroe Doctrine, as well, had been "washed out at [the] Chapultepec [Conference] by Stettinius, whose top advisors were Alger Hiss and Laurence Duggan," and now Bolivia and Guatemala seemed on their way to establishing Soviet satellites in the Western Hemisphere.[178]

The idea of brainwashing in foreign policy spread among conservative activists and lawmakers who were disturbed by the extent to which Dwight Eisenhower's foreign policy resembled Harry Truman's. Particularly troubling was Eisenhower's hostile posture toward the proposed Bricker Amendment, which was designed to make international treaties subject to Congressional approval. Republican Senator John Bricker of Ohio had declared as early as 1944 that, with Franklin Roosevelt at its helm, the Democratic Party had become a "Communistic party."[179] However, when Bricker's proposed Constitutional amendment went down in defeat by a single vote in early 1954, it did so partly because of pressure from the Eisenhower Administration, in which conservative anti-Communists had initially placed considerable hope for a change in foreign policy.[180]

The problem was that the change in administration had not been accompanied by a change in the kinds of people making important decisions about the United States' role in the Cold War world. In February 1955, Senator William E. Jenner of Indiana addressed two civic groups in Dallas, Texas. His topic was "the Acheson foreign policy" that had seen China's fall to Communism and "the power of the Soviet Union spread east

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[178] Ibid., 42.
[179] Duane Tananbaum, The Bricker Amendment Controversy: A Test of Eisenhower's Political Leadership (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 21.
[180] Ibid., 179.

and west, until it covered the world and put millions of people in bondage."[181] To Jenner, the biggest problem with American foreign policy during and after World War II was that it continued to be left to the "experts" and kept out of the hands of elected officials. Despite President Eisenhower's recent Formosa Resolution, pledging U.S. defense of Taiwan from Red Chinese invasion, and despite this resolution's nearly unanimous and bipartisan support in Congress, the influence of foreign policy experts could mean that the U.S. would continue to follow "the opposite policy of appeasement of the Communists, surrender of our advantage, and a sellout of our loyalties in Asia."[182]

But Jenner stopped short of claiming that Communists moved among the foreign policy experts. "I do not know what proportion of these people are Communists," he said, "but I know for certain that everything they do is of benefit to Moscow, because it is directed by Moscow…[through] the new political arts of propaganda, brainwashing, [and] camouflage." As the seat of "the Communist world revolution," Moscow was sure to use "all the bits and pieces of collectivism, one-worldism, centralism, internationalism and all their variations" to exercise its will over U.S. foreign policy.[183] Jenner's way of framing the problem would become common among conservative anti-Communists who argued that whether or not actual Communists were at work in the federal government, its foreign policy was being "directed by Moscow." The concept of brainwashing resolved this apparent contradiction.

The 1955 "Committee of Endorsers" brought together a diverse group of conservative activists and lawmakers to oppose the foreign policy Dwight Eisenhower

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[181] William E. Jenner, "Let's Put America First," speech before the Dallas Public Affairs Club and the Committee of One Hundred," Dallas, Texas, February 14, 1955, reprinted in Congressional Record, Friday, February 25, 1955, 2188.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid., 2189.

seemed committed to continuing. The group included a handful of Congressmen, as well as Alfred Kohlberg, Clarence Manion, John Birch Society founder Robert Welch, repentant former leftists George Schuyler, John Dos Passos, and Freda Utley, and the Rev. James Fifield, long a critic of the New Deal's assaults on economic "freedom under God."[184] The Committee's February 28, 1955, full-page ad in the *New York Times* was shot through with the vestiges of pre-World War II isolationism, opening with the declaration, "The independent sovereignty of the United States must forever remain the ultimate objective of American foreign policy." However, "the existence of the Communist Dictatorship" now complicated American sovereignty. "Our aim must be to neutralize, isolate, reduce and eventually eliminate Communist Power," the Committee declared, and "we will not shrink from war if the Kremlin forces us to choose between conflict and surrender to Communist slavery."[185]

The ad was decorated with quotations from the various landmark declarations of foreign policy that Kohlberg believed had been "washed" from the typical American brain. The Committee listed specific features of the foreign policy it wished statesmen to pursue, one that would revoke diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union and its allies, "wage unremitting psychological warfare against Communist regimes," work for "expulsion of Communist member-states from the U.N.," and "exterminate the Communist conspiracy in the United States."[186]

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[184] On Fifield's importance to religious conservatism, see especially Kevin M. Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015).
[185] Committee of Endorsers, "A Program to Govern Our Foreign Relations," *The New York Times*, Monday, February 28, 1955, reprint, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Folder: "Edward Hunter, 1956," Box 89, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[186] Ibid.

The most dangerous psychological manifestation of this conspiracy, many anti-Communists came to believe in the mid-1950s, was the cause of peace. Indeed, in their belief that the Soviet Union was bent on peddling peace in its quest for world domination, many erstwhile isolationists became critics of isolationism, at least as it was expressed through campaigns for peace and nuclear disarmament. Through the end of the Vietnam War, anti-Communists often understood those who protested against American militarism not to be protesting against war so much as protesting in favor of Communism.[187] To some conservatives, the risk of nuclear war was nothing compared to the risk of peace under Communist terms.

Thus President Eisenhower offended many of his erstwhile conservative supporters by participating in the July 1955 Geneva Summit, in part to discuss options for gradual nuclear disarmament. Congressman Dick Richards of South Carolina, then Chair of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, believed the politics surrounding the Geneva Summit portended "the most deceptively perilous times we have ever faced since Communism confronted us on the world front with the avowed purpose of destroying us." Everyone knew about the brainwashing that American prisoners of war in Korea had suffered. At the Geneva Summit the Communists, using "exactly the lines that Lenin and Stalin laid down" were determined to "put the free world to sleep with the peace anesthetic."[188]

Subversive Ideas in the Churches

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[187] See especially Sandra Scanlon, *The Pro-War Movement: Domestic Support for the Vietnam War and the Making of American Conservatism* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013), 13-14. Scanlon argues that though conservatives were divided about the wisdom of pursuing the Vietnam War, "the anti-war movement's moral challenge to American anticommunism…served to preserve conservative unity" in favor of the war.

[188] "Strengthening the Organization of the Department of State," *Congressional Record*, August 1, 1955, 12689.

During the 1950s, conservatives often criticized the cause of peace from a religious anti-Communist perspective. This stood to reason, because fundamentalist Christianity had originated in part from the premise that radical churchmen sought to change the faithful's understanding of Christianity's purpose by appropriating Christian utopian ideals—like those of peace or social and economic equality—and urging political action to achieve them. Churchmen who promoted the "social gospel," which taught that activism for social justice might be a way to establish God's kingdom on earth, had long seemed to fundamentalists like wolves in sheep's clothing.[189]

Mid-century anti-Communists who warned of Communist infiltration of the Federal Council of Churches (FCC), its 1950 successor the National Council of Churches (NCC), and affiliated ecumenical Protestant organizations, promoted an earthly political activism that blended easily with a fundamentalist Christian outlook, one infused with a similar sense of righteousness and determination. During the second half of the twentieth century, fundamentalists often opposed leftist religious causes concerned with social justice, religious involvement in the civil rights movement, and religious political movements among the poor. From a theological perspective, fundamentalists might oppose these movements because they ignored the necessity of personal repentance and salvation in their emphasis on earthly "good works."[190] Yet in the context of the Cold War, such movements seemed not merely theologically wrong, but dangerous. To the

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[189] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 91.

[190] See especially Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3. As Williams put it, during the 1940s conservative Protestants' interest in "economic and foreign policy…[created] the partisan alliance that would give their movement national influence."

extent that they encouraged religious people to work toward utopianism on earth, they were imagined to play into the Communists' utopian experiment.

As conservatives concerned about foreign policy applied ideas about brainwashing to the alleged Communist infiltration of government, conservative religious leaders began to do the same when it came to the manipulation of Christian doctrine. James Bales, a Bible professor at the Churches of Christ's Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, put the matter succinctly in 1953: "We know…that the Communists would try to infiltrate the clergy, as they have tried to infiltrate other groups of thought leaders."[191] The suggestion that the FCC and NCC were filled with Communist subversives added ammunition to an old fundamentalist hostility, quickened the fragmentation of mainline Protestantism, and contributed to the religious nationalism of the Cold War era.[192]

During the second half of the 1930s and during World War II, John Birch's mentor J. Frank Norris had attacked the Southern Baptist Convention as a body infested with Communists.[193] Similar to Norris was the itinerant Pentecostal preacher Kenneth Goff, a disciple of Gerald L. K. Smith, who had led the populist 1930s "Share Our Wealth" movement.[194] Goff cast fundamentalism's longstanding feud with theological modernism as a battle between "Bible believers" and Communist subversives, and unlike Norris, he lived long enough to take advantage of the popular anti-Communism of the early Cold War. He helped to construct a long-lasting religious anti-Communist argument: Communists were active infiltrators of churches, and theological modernism

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[191] James D. Bales, "The J. B. Matthews Story -- ?" 1953, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers.
[192] Williams, 21.
[193] After his expulsion from the Southern Baptist Convention, and up to the time of his death in 1952, Norris routinely alleged Communist subversion in both the SBC and in the Federal Council of Churches. See for example "Communism of 'Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America' will be exposed in Joint Debate in New York City," *The Fundamentalist*, Vol. XIII, March 20, 1936.
[194] Martin Durham, *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007), 9.

was one of the tools they used to weaken the faith of their flocks in the hopes of ultimately destroying Christianity.

Goff's 1946 book *Traitors in the Pulpit and Treason Toward God* was informed by his experience as an anti-Communist fundamentalist Christian during World War II. U.S. participation in the war had seen the publication of several books by liberal churchmen accusing fundamentalist Christians of sympathy toward the Nazis. Goff turned such accusations around, alleging that the liberal "smear brigade" was motivated not so much by its opposition to fascism as by its sympathy for Soviet Communism. "Thousands of our pulpits today," Goff charged, "are filled with blind leaders of the blind—men who are servants to Communism, modern thought, and man-made philosophies, rather than of God."[195]

Goff indicted the "applied religion" of liberal clergymen who promoted the social gospel and taught that the biblical Kingdom of God might be built on earth with attention to social inequality. Harry Emerson Fosdick, whom Goff called "one of the grandpappys of Modernism," was not easily linked to the Communist Party, but Goff emphasized Fosdick's metaphorical interpretations of important Christian doctrines. Fosdick denied literal faith in the Virgin Birth and in Jesus' divinity. If Christ ceased to be a sacrificial God whose blood redeemed sinners, Goff argued, he became "another Christ, a revolutionary Christ" who preached not against personal sin but against social inequality. Whether Fosdick was a Communist or not, Goff argued, Communists had made great use of his theology.[196] By 1950, Goff routinely mixed his criticisms of theological modernism with Joseph McCarthy's allegations of Communist treason among members

[195] Kenneth Goff, *Traitors in the Pulpit and Treason Towards God* (Englewood: Kenneth Goff, 1946), 3.
[196] Ibid., 53.

of the New Deal political establishment. Though he was a prolific publisher of anti-Communist religious pamphlets, Kenneth Goff was not taken seriously in government circles. The Denver office of the FBI considered him a "borderline psychopath."[197]

Other anti-Communist critics of liberal Protestantism had greater political clout. Not long after J. Frank Norris's death in 1952, J. B. Matthews, a former Methodist minister and scholar of ancient languages, took up the mantle of religious anti-Communism. Matthews was a self-described "fellow traveler" and peace activist during the 1930s. After a period of disillusionment, he spent the last part of the Depression decade as chief investigator for Texas Congressman Martin Dies and his anti-subversive committee, the pre-war predecessor to the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC).[198] Writing in the *American Mercury* in July 1953, Matthews declared, "The largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen."[199] Matthews had recently been appointed executive director of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee. Joseph McCarthy defended him—rather oddly—by claiming that his article "hardly [constituted] an attack upon Protestant clergymen," but McCarthy's colleagues decided that Matthews's prominent position was a political liability, and the subcommittee revoked his appointment.[200]

Like other anti-Communists who had once been active in Communist circles, Matthews's charges seemed to stem more from his personal experience of the 1930s Popular Front than from the hard evidence of the 1950s. In his *American Mercury*

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[197] Letter from J. Edgar Hoover to Mrs. L. E. Tillotson, July 2, 1956, Ernie Lazar Papers, "Goff_Kenneth-HQ-1," 434.
[198] Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1998), 44.
[199] J. B. Matthews, "Reds and Our Churches," *The American Mercury,* July 1953, 1, reprint in Radical Right Collection, Box 34, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[200] "Investigations: Uncheckable Charge," *Time*, Vol. LXII, No. 2, July 13, 1953, 22.

article, he cited HUAC's 1951 report describing the leftist peace and nuclear disarmament movements as "the most dangerous hoax ever devised by the international Communist conspiracy." What this report ignored, Matthews alleged, was that the bulk of the leadership in this "phony Communist 'peace' maneuver" was composed of Protestant men of the cloth. HUAC's report had listed four hundred seventy-one of them by name, and Matthews believed there were in fact over one thousand Protestant clergymen who had participated in organizations that HUAC cited as subversive.[201]

For special criticism, Matthews cited the Methodist Federation for Social Action, calling it "[o]ne of the most effective propaganda media in the United States during the past generation." For many years, the head of the MFSA had been Harry F. Ward, a professor at Union Theological Seminary who had been one of the founding members of the Federal Council of Churches when that organization was established in 1908. While the social gospel was not itself an arm of the Communist conspiracy, Matthews alleged, it had "infected Protestant theological seminaries more than a generation ago," and surely this explained why so many liberal clergymen were sympathetic to Communist ideas.[202]

Like Matthews, Joseph Kornfeder had once been a Communist. He had been so important in party circles, he alleged, that he was allowed to study at the Lenin School of Political Warfare in Moscow.[203] In October 1952, Kornfeder addressed the Cincinnati-based Circuit Riders, a new group of Methodist laymen organized to combat alleged Communist subversion in their church. The Circuit Riders' stated mission was to combat

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[201] Matthews, "Reds and Our Churches," 3.
[202] Ibid., 10-11.
[203] Joseph Zack Kornfeder, "Communist Deception in the Churches," address before the Circuit Riders, Inc., National Committee Conference, Cincinnati, Ohio, October 26, 1952, 2, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 9, Folder: "Circuit Riders," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

"socialistic, communist, and anti-American teachings" in the Methodist Church, especially those promoted by the Methodist Federation for Social Action. The organization characterized this mission as part of its evangelical call to "spread the gospel of Christ."[204]

In his speech to the Circuit Riders, Kornfeder echoed Edward Hunter in casting the Cold War as a "psychological" war. Moreover, he alleged that Communist psychological warfare was no recent phenomenon; Communists in the United States and around the world had been fighting it since the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. One of the Communists' battle tactics was to advance to leadership positions in Christian churches, identify familiar Christian principles, and subtly reinterpret and revise them. Joseph Stalin himself had been a divinity student, Kornfeder pointed out. He "came upon the idea that the Bible could be 'reinterpreted,' in the materialistic sense." Thus Christ's concern for the poor was reinterpreted as a condemnation of "capitalist exploiters" and a beatification of the working class. The Bolsheviks in Russia had encouraged the schismatic "Living Church movement" of the 1920s, Kornfeder argued, for the purposes of making the Russian Orthodox Church subservient to the state, and proponents of the social gospel in the United States hoped to do the same with American Protestantism.[205]

Like John Birch, Edgar Bundy had been a member of General Claire Chennault's American Volunteer Group in the Chinese Air Force during World War II, a group of mercenaries popularly known as the "Flying Tigers." Though he made his career as a fundamentalist Baptist minister and professional anti-Communist speaker, he preferred the title "Captain." His organization, the Church League of America, claimed to hold

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[204] "Fifty Years of Un-Methodist Propaganda" (Cincinnati: Circuit Riders, Inc., July 1957), 17, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 138, Folder 4, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[205] Kornfeder, 9.

over one-and-a-half million three-by-five cards on subversive people and organizations, dating back to the establishment of the CPUSA in 1919.[206] Bundy's interpretation of the Communist revolution in China and the Korean War—and his belief that American treason and folly had allowed both events to happen—inspired both his political activism and his call to ministry.[207] Initially he made a name for himself as a touring speaker, addressing civic groups in conservative pockets of the country that had been excited by his occasional newspaper columns. He cultivated a friendship with Joseph McCarthy and several other anti-Communist politicians, joined the American Legion's Anti-Subversive Commission, and became president of the Abraham Lincoln National Republican Club, based in Chicago.[208]

During a 1952 speaking blitz, Bundy began a long association with his fellow Baptist Herbert Philbrick, who after accidentally joining a Communist front in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had spent the 1940s as a counterspy for the FBI. By 1952, Philbrick had inspired a short-lived TV drama, *I Led Three Lives*, and was a recognized authority on the inner workings of what he invariably called the "Communist criminal conspiracy."[209] While J. Frank Norris had been troubled by the FCC's tendency to encourage cooperation with the Soviet Union during the 1930s, Bundy, Philbrick, Matthews, and others took note of the NCC's posture toward Communist China. Religious influence at a 1950 meeting of Americans for Democratic Action had

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[206] Edgar C. Bundy, speaking in Macon, Georgia, October 15, 1963, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[207] Joan Giangrasse Kates, "Edgar C. Bundy: 1915-2008," *The Chicago Tribune*, February 17, 2008, accessed May 3, 2015, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2008-02-17/news/0802160331_1_mr-bundy-communists-alaskan-air-command.
[208] Edgar C. Bundy to Herbert A. Philbrick, March 26, 1954, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 60, Folder 10, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[209] Herbert Philbrick, "I Led Three Lives," Education for American Security, Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois, August-September 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

reportedly been instrumental in the promulgation of a resolution calling not only for the diplomatic recognition of Mao Tse-tung's regime, but also for the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek in Taiwan. Even the generally staunch anti-Communist Reinhold Neibuhr of Union Theological Seminary had allegedly gone on record in support of the status quo in Eastern Europe, in the name of diplomatic "realism."[210]

Educators "Reaching for Power"

Edgar Bundy would carry his religious anti-Communist activism into the 1960s, by which time he routinely alleged that the NCC sought to do more than promote heretical doctrines and aid the global Communist conspiracy. At an October 1960 speech in Atlanta, Bundy alleged that the NCC had gotten into the business of titillating the young. "The Negro American," a 1957 NCC reading list for schoolchildren, included two hundred seventy books, several of them by civil rights activists who had moved in Communist circles during the 1930s. But authorship was not the only problem. Several of the books allegedly promoted homosexuality, interracial sex, and sexual scenes between adults and children in books recommended for children to read. Bundy linked the NCC's promotion of this "pornography" to its promotion of the social gospel. Like the "Living Church" movement in the Soviet Union, the NCC sought to "move from the spiritual interpretation of the church to the materialistic interpretation, and to use the church as an instrument of social strife."[211]

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[210] "Americans for Democratic Action Espouse Red China," September 12, 1952, 6, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 174, Folder 1, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. This document's authorship is unclear. The penultimate page is marked "Fulbright, Sept. 12, 1952," perhaps indicating that Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas made this speech on the Senate floor. In a search of the *Congressional Record*, however, I have not been able to find evidence of it. It might also have been a memorandum from Fulbright to Philbrick.

[211] Edgar C. Bundy, "Pornography in the Church's Literature," Allstate Building, Atlanta, Georgia, October 26, 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

By 1960, Bundy was not only accusing liberal churchmen of trying to brainwash children; he was also implicating the "progressive" education movement. Conservative criticism of this movement extended to the early 1930s, when a small group of radical educators, including some Communists involved in the Popular Front, published *The Social Frontier*. This small magazine promoted public education as a tool for social and economic reconstruction and included work by John Dewey and George Counts.[212] During the 1930s, these two premier scholars of progressive education dabbled in radicalism themselves, traveling to Russia and praising the Soviet education system, but Stalin's purges and the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 turned them into outspoken critics of Communist influence among teachers in the United States. In fact, Dewey and Counts were two of the first scholars to denounce Communist influence in public education.[213] But because their work had been popular among the leftist publishers of *The Social Frontier*, many would come to consider them the foremost architects of un-American ideas in public education.

In 1952, Michigan Republican Congressman Paul W. Shafer made an influential speech on the House floor, claiming to document a plot by radical educators to influence the teaching profession and destroy capitalism. Such plotters envisioned a social and economic revolution that could be accomplished if teachers were to "reach for power," a phrase that conservative critics of education would repeat for decades to come. In Shafer's telling, the trouble began with George Counts during his time as Professor of Education at Columbia University. After waxing "rhapsodical" about the Soviet experiment in his 1931 book *The Soviet Challenge to America*, Counts issued a "Call to

[212] Andrew Hartman, *Education and the Cold War: The Battle for the American School* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 30.
[213] Ibid., 37-39.

the Teachers of the Nation" to "work boldly and without ceasing for a better social order," namely a socialist one. To promote socialism in the public schools, Counts recommended changes to teacher training programs and school curricula, and his influence had continued into the 1950s. It mattered little that by then, Counts spoke in an anti-Communist language like Edward Hunter, denouncing the "Soviet system of mind control" as "the product of perverted genius" and remarking that the Communist Party "poisons everything it touches." His remorse was too little, too late. His early ideas were by then entrenched in teacher training programs, in textbooks, and in the impressionable minds of America's children.[214]

In the depths of the Great Depression, Counts and other advocates of progressive education were understandably concerned about the state of the economy and with what educators might do to train a generation of students for an industrial society that they expected would be increasingly regulated by government. Surely it was for this reason, said Shafer, that the radicals of the 1930s argued "that capitalism is doomed—that it is dead, or dying—and that its replacement by some form of collectivism, by some form or degree of planned economy, governmental control or socialization…is both desirable and inevitable."[215] It was for this reason that Counts's "Call to the Teachers" read like "a blueprint for converting the schools—from nursery through high school, and upward to college and university—into agencies for promoting the collectivist social order and developing a generation acquiescent to that social order."[216] Indeed, it was as part of this

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[214] Paul W. Shafer, "Is There a 'Subversive' Movement in the Public Schools? The Documentation of a Call for the Teachers of the Nation to Reach for Power," *Congressional Record* (reprint), Friday, March 21, 1952 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), 11, 12, 22, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 174, Folder 7, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[215] Ibid., 13.
[216] Ibid., 23.

plot that education experts sought to consolidate traditional subjects dealing with human organization—including history, geography, and economics—into a new discipline known as the "social sciences."[217]

Shafer argued that the greatest danger to American education in the 1950s was the fact that these basically anti-capitalist ideas had, for the first time, become the official policy of the progressive education movement. At their November 1947 convention in Chicago, the American Education Fellowship—the successor organization to the Progressive Education Association—officially adopted a revised version of George Counts's original "Call to the Teachers of the Nation." However, Shafer noted that this new declaration used "a strategy of euphemism, double-talk, more guarded phraseology, and more cautious commitments."[218] Progressive educators, it seemed, were bent on brainwashing American students into frowning on the capitalist system. "By whatever name it is called," he remarked, "the basic premise remains the same—the schools are actively to participate in building 'the new social order' or in preparing and conditioning the child for participation in that order."[219]

The AEF's 1947 statement added one item that had not been of interest to progressive educators in the 1930s, and one that would fire the activism of conservative critics of education perhaps more than any other. It called for "the establishment of a genuine world order…in which national sovereignty is subordinate to world authority in all crucial interests affecting peace and security." Dr. Theodore Brameld, author of the AEF's statement, seemed especially interested in working with UNESCO, an organization that had recently committed itself to using "education in world-mindedness"

[217] Ibid.
[218] Ibid., 44.
[219] Ibid., 21.

to filter out "the poisoned air of nationalism."[220] Now, with the official approval of the foremost organization supporting progressive education, the conspirators seemed bent not only on promoting collectivism among students, but also on destroying their patriotism and loyalty to the United States.

Thus Shafer portrayed the progressive education movement of the 1950s as a movement that combined an anti-capitalist ideology with a foreign policy increasingly focused on international cooperation, and he cast the public school system as a human laboratory in which America's children were being brainwashed. However, he never used the word "brainwashing" in his speech. The word itself might never have become tied to public education in the conservative mind had Chinese Communists not been accused of using the technique on American prisoners of war.

Amid the publicity surrounding the American POWs' alarming behavior at Panmunjom in 1953, Army psychiatrist William Mayer conducted an intensive study of seven thousand prisoners who were released from camps in Korea and then waylaid in Japan. In 1956 the Taft Broadcasting Company, a pioneer in right-wing radio, broadcast Mayer's speech about his study on WKRC radio in Cincinnati. After three broadcasts, WKRC found itself deluged with letters, phone calls, and requests for reprints, and other Taft-owned stations in the Midwest and South picked up the broadcast.[221] By the time Fred Schwarz's Christian Anti-Communism Crusade hosted Mayer as its keynote speaker for the 1960 Education for American Security seminar in Glenview, Illinois, Schwarz

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[220] Quoted in Ibid., 51.
[221] William E. Mayer, "Brainwashing," a Public Service of Taft Broadcasting Company, undated, facing page 1, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 59, Folder 7, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

told his audience that Mayer's speech had been "reproduced more frequently and used more often" than any other recording he knew of.[222]

Mayer explicitly blamed public education for having made the POWs susceptible to un-American ideas. Though reprints of his speech were almost always entitled "Brainwashing," he was eager to distinguish what had happened to the POWs from Edward Hunter's description of what the Chinese Communists had done to their own people. Hunter's narrative had been terrifying, ending with famine, political executions, and divided families. Mayer argued that American POWs had experienced something far gentler, a form of brainwashing tailored to a generation of Americans who had been taught to think so critically about their values that they could easily be turned against them. The Chinese had brainwashed their American prisoners by presenting Communist ideas in a quintessentially American fashion.[223]

During the first nine months of their capture, a "dog-eat-dog period," the prisoners were left to fend for themselves. Many of them died during this time, though they were not tortured or physically abused. They fell prey, as Mayer put it, to "give-up-itis."[224] After this period, the remaining prisoners were dubbed "students." Their teachers were English-speaking Chinese Communists who emphasized "the very real, perfectly true, social injustices which have been committed in the name of free enterprise." The prisoner-students learned the teachings of Marx and Lenin, but they also read books by John Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, Charles Dickens, and other English and

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[222] William E. Mayer, "Brainwashing," Education for American Security, Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois, August-September 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia.
[223] Mayer, "Brainwashing," Philbrick Papers, 7-8.
[224] Ibid., 16.

American writers who had criticized capitalism's injustices.[225] They were encouraged to tell their captor-teachers about any fellow student who had committed "crimes against the people," but those implicated were not physically punished. Instead, they were required to make handwritten confessions in their own words.[226] The prisoners' mail was not withheld altogether, but carefully screened, so that the letters they received produced in them the desired amount of despair and disdain for their loved ones back home, and for their country.[227]

Previous American prisoners of war had not given up as readily as those in Korea did, Mayer argued. American soldiers in Korea had been primed for "give-up-itis" by their education in the United States. The problem was that the public school system had ceased to develop qualities of leadership in children, and American culture in general had become too concerned with open-mindedness and inclusiveness. By 1960, Mayer subtly referred to the current tendency of civil rights activists to use direct action tactics, complaining of a political climate in which "we can be dictated to by any vociferous small group who wants to get together and say that they are being discriminated against…We try to teach [open-mindedness] to our children, but too often we teach them nothing whatsoever."[228]

E. Merrill Root, a longtime critic of progressive education and President of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana, combined Hunter's story of the American POWs with Congressman Shafer's speech about subversion in education to frame his 1958 book *Brainwashing in the High Schools*. Root echoed Mayer's belief that the brainwashed

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[225] Ibid., 9-10.
[226] Ibid., 12.
[227] Ibid., 14. This made for a dramatic story, but Mayer did not explain how POWs' families knew the mailing addresses of the prison-schools at which their loved ones were being held.
[228] Mayer, "Brainwashing," John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection.

prisoners—one-third of the total number captured, he repeatedly emphasized—had lacked proper education in American nationalism. It had not been difficult to turn the POWs against their country, because they knew very little about their country to begin with. The Communists had simply filled an "intellectual vacuum" left by American public education. "What sense does it make for our country to *force* [children] to take an education that makes them susceptible to collectivism in milder forms—and then to *force* them to go out and fight the armies of collectivism in its most drastic form?" Root asked rhetorically.[229]

As in similar anti-Communist writing, Root's use of "brainwashing" straddled the line between the literal and the metaphorical. Even so, it did not take long for him to suggest that what American educators were doing was very much like what Edward Hunter had described in *Brain-Washing in Red China*. In 1952, he pointed out, Congressman Shafer had resurrected the curricular battles that were subsumed in the wake of World War II, charging that a radical segment of the educational establishment had, for two decades, "[undertaken] to remake American society and government through the agency and medium of public schools." To do this, they promoted textbooks that emphasized negative aspects of capitalism and forecast its inevitable demise. They were committed to "building a new [collectivist] social order" either through "outright indoctrination" or through "processes of guided group study and discussion."[230]

Root indulged in a still familiar tendency to compare—and even tally—the portrayal of different historical figures in different textbooks. For example, he criticized a forty percent difference between "space devoted…to the 'conservative' George

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[229] E. Merrill Root, *Brainwashing in the High Schools: An Examination of Eleven American History Textbooks* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 9.
[230] Quoted in Ibid., 26, 27.

Washington and to the 'liberal' Thomas Jefferson." "Jefferson," Root opined, "for all his intellect, integrity, wide interests, and picturesque attributes, is not a figure that intrinsically is *more* interesting, *more* dramatic, *more* central, or *more* significant than Washington. Some reason other than the natures of the two men, therefore, must explain the exorbitant proportion in favor of Thomas Jefferson."[231]

Root's writing also epitomized an easy confluence of conservative economic views and conservative foreign policy views. On the one hand, he attacked his eleven sample textbooks for taking "not an individualistic but a 'social' view of American history," many of them interpreting it, "from the colonial days to the present, *as a class struggle*." He also criticized the books for not giving due credit to "the historians who have given 'unpopular' evidence on the true genesis of Pearl Harbor…the whole story behind Yalta, Teheran, Potsdam…[or] the Chinese Nationalist side of the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek by sabotage."[232]

Of course, the most dramatic event to affect American public education at midcentury was the 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. The justices argued that the segregated public education system stamped African American children with a destructive "badge of inferiority," and the following year the Court ordered all legally segregated schools to desegregate with "all deliberate speed." The decision spurred organized white resistance in many parts of the South.[233] Coming so soon after William Mayer's study of the prisoners of the Korean War, the concept of brainwashing gave recalcitrant Southerners a way to reassure themselves about the

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[231] Ibid., 91, 92.
[232] Ibid., 17, 18.
[233] Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction, 1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 28.

righteousness of their cause and the folly of those who criticized them. Congressman John Bell Williams of Mississippi apparently did not consider the hyperbole too outlandish when he declared that *Brown v. Board of Education* represented "the most vicious brainwashing campaign in the history of the world."[234]

On December 1, 1955, the same day that Rosa Parks launched the following year's bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, Senator James O. Eastland launched a campaign of white resistance to "judicial tyranny." In his speech to the first statewide convention of the Mississippi Association of Citizens' Councils, Eastland indicted the whole notion of racial equality as a form of brainwashing, countering it with a quotation he attributed to Benjamin Disraeli: "No man will treat with indifference the principle of race, for it is the key to history." Promoters of the false doctrine of racial equality, Eastland said, "back, support, cooperate with, and direct the NAACP. In general they are church groups, racial organizations, labor unions, and liberal groups of all shades of Red…from the blood red of the Communist Party to the almost equally red of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A." Eastland insisted that such groups promoted this false doctrine intentionally. "Foundations, and other groups, with tremendous sums of tax-exempt money" formed a "radical pro-Communist political movement" in the United States. Their goal was "to mold the climate of public opinion, to brainwash and indoctrinate the American people to accept racial integration and mongrelization."[235]

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[234] John Bell Williams, "Where is the 'Reign of Terror'?" *Congressional Record*, Tuesday, March 27, 1956.

[235] James O. Eastland, "We've Reached Era of Judicial Tyranny," address before the Statewide Convention of the Association of Citizens' Councils of Mississippi, Jackson, Mississippi, December 1, 1955 (Winona: Association of Citizens' Councils, 1956), 7, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 5, Folder: "Association of Citizens' Councils," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

Serious fear of "mongrelization," of course, could only exist among those who accepted intellectually discredited principles of scientific racism, including that the mixing of different racial types would result in inferior offspring. Apologists for racial segregation tended to suggest—often indirectly—that the fact that scientific racism had been discredited was a result of brainwashing. The Charleston, South Carolina, journalist Herbert Ravenel Sass's *Atlantic Monthly* article "Mixed Schools and Mixed Blood" described the Southern attitude toward racial integration. "It is the deep conviction of nearly all white Southerners…that the mingling or integration of white and Negro children in the South's primary schools would open the gates to miscegenation and widespread racial amalgamation. This belief is at the heart of our race problem, and until it is realized that this is the South's basic and compelling motive, there can be no understanding of the South's attitude."[236]

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court had expressed a great deal of concern about the psychological effects of segregation on black children.[237] Sass believed integration would have an equally disastrous effect on white children's minds. In language dripping with both literal and metaphorical concerns about interracial sex, he declared that Southerners would never allow their children's "wholesale impregnation by propaganda" that sought to destroy "the salutary instinct of race preference."[238] The concept of brainwashing gave Sass a way to explain why miscegenation was such a real possibility if it was indeed so inimical to human nature, as he simultaneously claimed. Federal government operatives would never try to force interracial sex upon the South,

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[236] Herbert Ravenel Sass, "Mixed Schools and Mixed Blood," reprinted in *Congressional Record*, Tuesday, January 22, 1957, A376.
[237] Lani Guinier, "From Racial Liberalism to Racial Literacy: *Brown v. Board of Education* and the Interest-Divergence Dilemma," *The Journal of American History* 91: 1 (June 2004): 113.
[238] Sass, A378.

for they knew the resistance they would receive. Therefore they sought to promote interracial sex through brainwashing, and school desegregation was their tool for accomplishing it.[239]

Capturing America Intact

Speaking before HUAC in March 1958, Edward Hunter described brainwashing as the hallmark of a new kind of warfare: "The Communists have discovered that a man killed by a bullet is useless," he said. "The objective of Communist warfare is to capture intact the minds of the people and their possessions, so they can be put to use. This is the modern conception of slavery that puts all others in the kindergarten age."[240] American leaders had been "softened up," Hunter continued, for the purpose of creating "a defeatist state of mind" among the public. American "educational circles" had been "penetrated" by a similar frame of mind. Perhaps most importantly, Communists sought to bring about "the liquidation of our attitudes on what we used to recognize as right and wrong, what we used to accept as absolute moral standards." This was their subtle way of introducing "dialectical materialism" into American culture.[241]

By the end of the 1950s, Hunter and HUAC had become partners in warning the American people of the reality of brainwashing in the United States. Based on Hunter's testimony, HUAC argued what had by then become a credo among the radical right: "Communist psychological warfare is now winning such extensive victories in the United States that the Red bloc will not need to employ direct military force against us."[242] Such assurance of "extensive victories" being won by "Communists" in the United States went

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[239] Ibid., A377.
[240] "Communist Psychological Warfare (Brainwashing): Consultation with Edward Hunter, Author and Foreign Correspondent," 7.
[241] Ibid., 10.
[242] Ibid., 1.

far beyond Hunter's carefully measured statements from earlier in the decade, and it sounded much more like the major argument of Robert Welch's *Blue Book*, published the following year as a rallying cry for those who would join his new John Birch Society. In the *Blue Book*—allegedly the transcript of a speech Welch had made to eleven men at the JBS's first meeting in December 1958, the internal Communist plot was "to so change the economic and political structure of the United States that it can be comfortably merged with Soviet Russia in a one-world socialist government." The Communists' goal was to take the United States "without firing a shot."[243]

[243] Robert Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont: Western Islands, 1959, 1961), 85.

CHAPTER 3

The Business of Birchism: The John Birch Society Shapes Its Message, 1960-1963

The energy and urgency that accompanied right-wing activism during the early 1960s owed much to a false quotation. Shortly before his death, Lenin allegedly had proposed a strategic plan for world conquest: "First, we will take Eastern Europe, then the masses of Asia, then we will encircle the United States, which will be the last bastion of capitalism. We will not have to attack. It will fall like an overripe fruit into our hands." The quotation has been traced to 1954, when Nicholas Goncharoff, a Soviet refugee of World War II, attributed it to Lenin while testifying before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee.[244] It soon exploded in popularity, especially among those who wished to demonstrate that Americans' lack of moral character and national pride made them susceptible to Communist brainwashing.

The "overripe fruit" metaphor was also popular among those who believed that Communism's greatest threat to the United States was economic, particularly those who had long opposed the economic reforms of the New Deal. A 1958 American Bar

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[244] Paul F. Boller, Jr., and John George, *They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), ix; "Strategy and Tactics of World Communism," Hearings Before the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-Third Congress, Second Session, July 15 and 22, 1954, Part 4 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1954), 202, 214. Goncharoff paired the "ripe fruit" quotation with another false quotation: "The way to Paris is not the way through Berlin but through Peiping." Robert Welch would also pair these two quotations, allegedly uttered on different occasions, in the December 1958 speech that became *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. Ronald Reagan was using the "overripe fruit" quotation as late as 1990 to back up his support for the Contras in Nicaragua. However, Reagan added to the quotation that the Communists would move in on Latin America before catching the overripe United States. Janet Cawley and Linda P. Campbell, "Reagan Hazy On Iran-Contra: Knowledge of Diversion is Denied," *Chicago Tribune*, February 23, 1990, accessed August 17, 2015, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1990-02-23/news/9001160156_1_iran-contra-testimony-recall.

Association report on "Communist Tactics, Strategy, and Objectives" used the quotation without citing a source, even as the author encouraged readers to spend time "in a library studying the Communist conspiracy."[245] J. Howard Pew, president of the Sun Oil Company, sent the ABA's report to his friend and correspondent Robert Welch, encouraging him to reprint it in the December 1958 edition of his new magazine, *American Opinion*.[246] It likely influenced Welch's speech that same month to charter members of the John Birch Society in Indianapolis, wherein he used the "overripe fruit" quotation to explain the Communists' "grand strategy" for merging the economic and political systems of the United States and the Soviet Union.[247]

Those who initially supported the John Birch Society were often conservative businessmen who had fought "socialistic" trends in the U.S. economy for years. They held a distinctive set of ideas about economics, federal power, and "civilization." Soviet Communism, they believed, remained a movement dedicated to world conquest through cultural, institutional, and economic subversion, and increased federal power was a tool by which such subversion was taking place in the United States. Thus, economic and cultural matters were intimately tied to matters of national security. Welch's initial supporters hoped that his movement would spur popular support for conservative economic policies by associating those of the liberal consensus with the violence, disorder, and despotism of Communist regimes around the world. However, the revelation in July 1960 that Welch had called the sitting President, Dwight Eisenhower,

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[245] "Report of American Bar Association, Special Committee on Communist Tactics, Strategy, and Objectives," reprint in *American Opinion* (December 1958): 36.
[246] J. Howard Pew to Robert Welch, October 17, 1958, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 112, Folder: "Welch, Robert, H. W., Jr., 1958," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[247] Robert Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont: Western Islands, 1959, 1961), 2-3.

"a conscious, dedicated agent of the Communist conspiracy" presented a problem. Between 1960 and 1963 the John Birch Society was beset by charges of extremism, charges that convinced many Americans that the politics the organization represented might lead to the kind of violence and social disorder that it was theoretically working to prevent.

In his foundational history of modern American conservatism, Jonathan Schoenwald gave the John Birch Society a prominent place, calling it "the premier example of right-wing activism in the early 1960s."[248] But the JBS was a foil in Schoenwald's narrative. After 1960, when newspapers began to publicize what Robert Welch had written about President Eisenhower, the organization's reputation was forever tarnished. To influential conservatives like William F. Buckley, Jr., it became an example of what to avoid.[249] Schoenwald also noted the "remarkable…level of agreement among Welch and his recruits" in 1958.[250]

Equally remarkable was the JBS leadership's continuing loyalty to Welch and belief in the existence of an intricate conspiracy, despite disagreements over specific aspects of that conspiracy and concern about the bad press the JBS was receiving in response to Welch's statements about Eisenhower. Among those who composed the JBS's national council, there existed nearly constant and sometimes vitriolic disagreements. Leaders disagreed about which issues should be emphasized most prominently in the organization's monthly bulletins, they debated the wisdom of promoting an "educational" organization without specific plans for political action, they

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[248] Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 62.
[249] Ibid., 70, 74.
[250] Ibid., 63.

argued about the degree to which God and religion should be emphasized in the JBS's publications, and they even disagreed about the identity of the enemy they were combatting.

Yet despite all the difficulties of the JBS's early years, most of Welch's initial recruits remained loyal to his "educational" endeavor. They agreed that there was a conspiracy against the United States, and that the nation's enemies had influenced and were continuing to influence domestic and foreign policy. They agreed that there existed a fundamentally American philosophy of economics and government that these enemies sought to destroy. Even Buckley, as he distanced himself from the JBS and criticized Robert Welch in the press, remained close to some of those on the organization's national council, especially Clarence Manion. Manion had been one of the most important initial supporters of Buckley's *National Review*, and Buckley continued throughout the course of the 1960s to seek Manion's financial help when the need arose.[251]

Between 1960 and 1963, the John Birch Society combatted two major criticisms: first, that it was a monolithic organization that sought to impose fascism on the United States, and second, that it was an anti-Semitic or racist organization. All the while, Robert Welch and his associates worked to "market" information about the international conspiracy that they were certain existed.

The Spirit of Indianapolis

In December 1958 Robert Welch gave a two-day speech to eleven men at the Indianapolis home of Marguerite Dice, National Vice-Chair of the Minute Women of the

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[251] William F. Buckley, Jr., "Conservative Movement Gathers Steam on All Fronts," *The Manion Forum*, Weekly Broadcast No. 371, November 5, 1961, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 83, Folder 3; William F. Buckley, Jr., to Clarence Manion, January 17, 1964, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 54, Folder 5, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

U.S.A.[252] Later published as *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, Welch's speech laid out the new organization's program and philosophy. It was not to be a secret society, but as the Communists of the 1930s had done, JBS members would organize "fronts" and involve themselves in specific political causes, spearheading letter-writing campaigns and petition drives in the name of "americanism."[253] "The word *americanism* with small *a*," Welch told Miss Dice's guests, "should be…understood as the very antithesis of socialism and communism with a little *c*…The true *americanist* believes that the individual should retain the freedom to make his own bargain with life, and the responsibility for the results of that bargain."[254]

Welch grounded this and subsequent speeches in the "ripe fruit" quotation and in the assumption of a tactical equivalence between the international Communist movement and the trend away from unregulated capitalism in Europe and the United States. "Right under our noses," he declared, "the Communists are gradually carrying out their plan of grand strategy…to so change the economic and political structure of the United States that it can be comfortably merged with Soviet Russia in a one-world socialist government."[255] He predicted that the "fruit" would continue to be ripened by a series of federal government actions, including higher taxation, increased spending for causes at home and abroad, resultant inflation, price controls to stem the inflation, the elimination of state borders, and the federalization of public education.[256]

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[252] Ernie Lazar, "Documentary History of the John Birch Society," 126, accessed January 27, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/ernie1241/Home.
[253] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 73-74.
[254] Ibid., 127.
[255] Ibid., 85.
[256] Ibid., 25.

Conservative businessmen fought a decades-long battle against Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, and the National Association of Manufacturers, of which Robert Welch was a regional leader during the 1950s, had led the "open shop" campaign against labor union influence in industry as early as the 1920s. Kim Phillips-Fein has argued that the economic reforms such businessmen sought were the true material successes of conservative efforts during the second half of the twentieth century, such efforts in the cultural realm having exercised little lasting influence on national policy.[257] Kruse, on the other hand, has credited anti-New Deal businessmen with making a non-material dent in the national culture, namely for popularizing the portrayal of the United States as a "Judeo-Christian nation" and promoting (economic) "freedom under God."[258]

J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil was an avid proponent of both efforts. A devout Presbyterian and longtime President of the Foundation for the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., by the time of the JBS's founding he had worked for years to turn American Protestantism away from the social gospel. As far as Pew was concerned, this movement's chief danger to American freedom was its tendency to support the federal government's efforts to alleviate poverty. Pew referred to such government spending programs as a form of "police power" that "produces resentment and ill will, stifles energy and destroys production."[259] For years, he also argued that a small group of Protestant leaders was deliberately subverting the faith of its flocks. By the middle of 1958 he had come up with numbers, estimating that in Protestant churches, "75% of the

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[257] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009): 13, xii.
[258] Kevin M. Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), xiv.
[259] J. Howard Pew, Remarks at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the National Council of United Presbyterian Men," Saturday, March 15, 1958, Grand Ballroom, Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 66, Folder: "Poling-Judd-Church Matters, 1959," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

ministers today are reasonably sound in their economic and social philosophy, 2% are ideological Communists, 10% are ideological Socialists, and 13% are confused in their thinking – but it is this 25% that have control of the machinery of most all of our Protestant denominations."[260]

Pew, though not present at the JBS's founding meeting in Indianapolis, may have inspired Robert Welch—who was a lapsed Southern Baptist of unidentified faith—to adopt a religious tone in his speech. Welch urged those at the Indianapolis meeting to be "true fundamentalists" in whatever faiths they practiced. "We desperately need [fundamentalists'] unshakable confidence in absolutes, in eternal principles and truths, in a world of increasing relativity and transitoriness in all things," he declared.[261] In "fully one-third" of Protestant churches, Welch alleged, "the ministers themselves are *not* true believers in the Divine Names or the Divine History and Divine Teachings to which they give lip service." They had instead "converted Christianity into a so-called social gospel…in fact indistinguishable from advocacy of the welfare state socialist politicians."[262]

Robert Welch's commitment to exposing "the truth" excited Pew and others because it seemed—at least for a time—to represent the best hope for rolling back the New Deal economic reforms that conservative businessmen had opposed for years. Welch seemed to have the business acumen and political savvy to use popular anti-Communism to turn public opinion against the liberal consensus and its stranglehold on mainstream American politics. He practiced a grassroots McCarthyism, and Pew had

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[260] J. Howard Pew to General Robert E. Wood, August 22, 1958, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 226, Folder: "W-Z, 1958," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[261] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 47-48.
[262] Ibid., 48-49.

been a champion of the late controversial Senator. "Personally, I think the Country needs a hundred McCarthys," Pew wrote just after the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954.[263] But the senator's singular focus on exposing Communists in high places had not been enough. He had harnessed popular anti-Communism without simultaneously educating Americans about "the process by which Communism is effected," namely by the gradual implementation of socialistic controls by a powerful government.[264]

Though Welch did not impugn President Eisenhower's loyalty at Indianapolis, the *Blue Book* was full of statements that would later be considered fringe, particularly Welch's casual lumping of socialist and Communist governments around the world and his overarching argument that the Communist plot against the United States was to influence federal government policy to such an extent that the United States might be politically and economically "merged" with the Soviet Union. Even so, Welch's two-day speeches excited many of those who attended them. Welch followed the Indianapolis meeting with a January 1959 meeting in Milwaukee, a February meeting in Boca Raton, Florida, and two meetings in New York during April and May. Harry L. Bradley of the Allen-Bradley Company lauded the Milwaukee meeting as "the most rewarding experience of my life." Slobodan Draskovich, an economist who prided himself on having fought against both Nazism and Communism in his native Yugoslavia, wrote that, of the twelve years he had spent in the United States, "the most important two days…were those on which I heard Mr. Welch's presentation." Spruille Braden, an

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[263] J. Howard Pew to Dr. Robert L. Johnson, March 29, 1954, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 38, Folder: "J, 1954," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

[264] J. Howard Pew to Robert Welch, October 27, 1954, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 112, Folder: "Welch, Robert, H. W., Jr., 1954," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.

ambassador to Colombia, Cuba, and Argentina under the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations, believed that Welch's program promised to "save our nation and our civilization."[265]

This was perhaps the key. To Welch and his recruits, the task was never simply to expose and rid the federal government of Reds, to reduce its size, or to return to an economy of unregulated capitalism. The biggest problem with any leftward trend in economics or culture was that it portended the destruction of "civilization" by Communists schooled in the use of terrorism to achieve their ends. To illustrate this danger, Welch told stories of wartime atrocities. He depicted the Republican effort in the Spanish Civil War as a sadistic orgy, during which Communists had murdered "over four thousand priests" and raped "more than that many nuns." So hot was their anti-religious zeal, Welch alleged, that some Communists had "herded priests and their congregations into churches, set the churches on fire, and burned the Christians and their buildings together." A similar pattern had appeared during the Korean War, Welch continued, during which Communists killed over eleven thousand prisoners of war, some five thousand of them "boys from your home towns and mine."[266]

The specter of violence and despotism drove the John Birch Society's first national project: the Committee Against Summit Entanglements (CASE), a petition drive to discourage President Eisenhower's September 1959 summit meeting with Nikita Khrushchev. The idea was that by holding a meeting with Khrushchev, Eisenhower would embolden Communists around the world and discourage insurgent anti-

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[265] Memorandum attached to letter from Robert Welch to J. Howard Pew, June 9, 1959, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 112, Folder: "Welch, Robert, H. W., Jr., 1959," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware; "Slobodan Draskovich Speaks on U.S.S.R.'s Brain Washing," *Vassar Chronicle*, Saturday, April 19, 1958, 1.
[266] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 25-26.

Communists. CASE's open letter to Eisenhower focused graphically on "killer Khrushchev's" alleged brutality, how he had—in Eugene Lyons's words—risen to his premiership "over piles of corpses," over the mass graves of Ukrainian peasants, over Hungarian girls who burned themselves alive in the uprising of 1956.[267] From wealthy members of CASE, Welch requested donations in the thousands of dollars. His stated purpose was to force a "showdown" with the Communists, "before [they] are ready or expect it." The "enemies within," after all, were determined "to dare the anti-Communists to civil war in this country when the *Communists* are ready."[268]

As it turned out, the showdown would have happened with or without the Birch Society's petition drive. On May 1, 1960, Soviet military forces shot down a U-2 spy plane and captured the pilot, Francis Gary Powers. With a U.S. undercover military operation exposed, any diplomatic gains from Eisenhower's summit meeting lay in shambles.[269] However, Welch believed that the CASE effort had been an overall success. He congratulated JBS members for sending six hundred thousand postcards through the mail and deluging the White House with letters and telegrams.[270]

By April 1961, JBS members had purportedly organized "literally thousands of showings" of *Communism on the Map,* an hour-long film distributed by the Church of Christ-affiliated Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas, and produced with help from JBS

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[267] Committee Against Summit Entanglements to Dwight D. Eisenhower, undated draft, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder: "Welch, Robert H. W., 1959-1960," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California. The moniker "killer Khrushchev" came from Eugene Lyons's September 1957 *Reader's Digest* article "The Killer in the Kremlin."
[268] Robert Welch "To Present Members And Prospective Members [of CASE]," August 7, 1959, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder: "Welch, Robert H. W., 1959-1960," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[269] D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 15.
[270] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June 1960," 4, *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1960* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1961).

members.[271] Like Robert Welch's speech that became the *Blue Book*, in order to demonstrate that the Communists' three-phase strategy was being carried out, *Communism on the Map* lumped socialist and Communist governments together as common threats to American security. The film had a twofold explanation for this conflation. First, there was a historical "kinship" between socialism and Communism. Second, socialist regimes tended to be easy targets of Communist subversion. When Robert Welch alleged that Communist subversives hoped to "merge" the United States with the Soviet Union, he presaged a similar assertion in *Communism on the Map*: "Wherever Communism can't take over by fomenting internal revolt, the Reds seek to establish so-called democratic socialist governments which they can infiltrate and gradually turn into totalitarian nations ruled by Moscow."[272] Such was a basic tactic of "takeover from within," the film continued, and as the takeover proceeded, the Communists would set to work sowing hatred between various groups, just as "in nation after nation," they had "set Chinese against Chinese, Koreans against Koreans, Indonesians against their own people, Cubans against Cubans, and so on."[273]

The Politician

As Robert Welch worked to expand the ranks of ordinary men and women involved in the JBS, he also gathered several of his initial recruits and other prominent conservatives into the organization's "National Council." Welch formed the Council to place recognized conservatives at the JBS's helm, to advise him, and—when the time

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[271] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for April, 1961," 2, *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1961* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1962).
[272] "The Committee of 150 presents *Communism on the Map*," Macon, Georgia, undated, The John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[273] Ibid.

came—to select his successor. Welch's first two recruits were William J. Grede, an iron and steel magnate, and Spruille Braden, whose service as a diplomat under Presidents Roosevelt and Truman had soured his opinion on the foreign policy of the liberal consensus. Conservative financier and radio commentator Clarence Manion and "China Lobby man" Alfred Kohlberg followed close behind.[274] By early 1960 a list of twenty-four Council members routinely appeared on JBS letterhead.

A climate of crisis soon arose among Birch Society Council members, spurred by the public airing of Robert Welch's "private letter" about President Eisenhower, by then entitled *The Politician*. Welch's belief that the President was "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy" represented the most extreme version of an opinion that many of his associates shared.[275] Eisenhower had taken advantage of popular anti-Communism during the early 1950s, but he simultaneously embraced the New Deal domestic status quo, including the federal regulation of business, and his foreign policy was marked by measured diplomacy, rather than aggression, toward the Soviet Union.[276] For members of the JBS Council, *The Politician* did not represent the ridiculous ravings of a madman so much as a public relations disaster for the JBS. If Welch's associates disagreed with his conclusions, it was generally a disagreement about whether Eisenhower was a conscious or unconscious agent of the conspiracy.

During Welch's first few years as an anti-Communist activist, his associates had sometimes encouraged the kind of thinking for which he would later become infamous. Alfred Kohlberg, who died just a few months before *The Politician* was leaked to the

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[274] Robert Welch to Clarence Manion, November 25, 1959, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 62, Folder 1, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[275] Robert Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 267, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 210, Folder 4, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[276] Phillips-Fein, 56-57.

press in 1960, had indulged in similar thinking during the Korean War. Those who accused the U.S. of lacking a clear military strategy in Korea were mistaken, Kolberg believed. "We have a policy, which they dare not tell us," he wrote to journalist Westbrook Pegler in March 1952. "It is simply to get orders from Moscow, and then to follow them out, as far as public opinion, the stupidity of the American public, and the American Government will permit [us] to go."[277] A few weeks later, after reading a draft of Welch's book *May God Forgive Us*, Kohlberg told Welch that he was too reluctant to accuse President Truman of Communist sympathies. "I do not contend that Mr. Truman is knowingly a servant of Communist causes," Kohlberg wrote. "I merely feel that nothing is to be gained by clearing him in the absence of complete and accurate knowledge."[278]

It was for J. Howard Pew that Welch wrote the original draft of *The Politician*. The whole thing began, as Welch later recalled, during a road trip "back to New York from a visit up the Hudson, with three friends."[279] Welch and his friends were in fact returning from Irvington-on-Hudson, headquarters of Leonard E. Read's Foundation for Economic Education, and heading to the 1954 National Manufacturers' Association convention.[280] During the drive, Welch speculated that President Eisenhower had "deliberately sabotag[ed] Republican candidates" in the previous month's election.[281] Pew wanted to know more, and Welch promised to send him further details in writing.

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[277] Alfred Kohlberg to Westbrook Pegler, March 19, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 141, Folder: "Westbrook Pegler, 1952-1953-1954," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[278] Alfred Kohlberg to Robert Welch, April 8, 1952, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder "Welch, Robert H. W., 1952-56," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[279] Robert Welch, *The Politician* (Belmont: Robert Welch, 1963), 15.
[280] Robert Welch to J. Howard Pew, December 20, 1958, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 112, Folder: "Welch, Robert, H. W., Jr., 1958," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[281] Welch, *The Politician* (1963), 15.

He produced a ten thousand-word letter just in time for Christmas, but he was reluctant to make a gift of it. "[F]rankly I am quite hesitant about putting it in the mails," Welch wrote to Pew, and he suggested that the two of them discuss the letter at the following month's NAM meeting.[282]

Welch overcame his hesitation. An expanded version of the original "private letter" reached scores of Welch's fellow conservatives during the next several years. Revilo Oliver, a Professor of Classics at the University of Illinois who in 1966 broke with both the JBS and the conservative movement to pursue a career of outspoken racism and anti-Semitism, recalled the furor over *The Politician* with amusement. The book had received the tacit approval of "every man present at the [December 1958] meeting in Indianapolis," Oliver wrote in his memoir, and he himself had gone so far as to suggest that reading and understanding the book be made a requirement for membership in the John Birch Society. By the time of the Indianapolis meeting, Welch had already distributed "something like a thousand copies" of the manuscript, in which he "proposed the formation of 'a nucleus of influential and patriotic citizens'." But because of the controversy that arose around it in 1960, Welch felt obliged to insist that *The Politician* "had nothing, no, nothing, to do with the formation of the John Birch Society."[283]

Not all of Welch's fellow conservatives reacted to *The Politician* with the unreserved favor that Oliver recalled. Alfred Kohlberg, so eager a few years earlier to encourage Welch's redbaiting when his topic was foreign policy in the Far East, was more hesitant after reading *The Politician*. Kohlberg concluded that Welch did not prove

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[282] Robert Welch to J. Howard Pew, December 20, 1958.

[283] Revilo P. Oliver, *America's Decline: The Education of a Conservative* (Sussex: Historical Review Press, 1981, 2006), 195. By the time he published these thoughts in the early 1980s, Oliver was an unabashed racist and anti-Semite who had no qualms about admitting that he had found the unpublished version of Welch's "private letter" quite convincing.

his case, "except by implication, which is not good enough in so serious a matter." Though Welch's clear purpose was to gather enough evidence to accuse Eisenhower of loyalty to the Communist Party, he might just as easily have proved Kohlberg's own belief "that Ike is a smart cookie when it comes to ingratiating himself with people, but that he is essentially ignorant, uninformed, and lazy as to homework, and therefore easily taken in by people who get on the right side of him." Kohlberg suggested that Welch avoid airing his own conclusions about Eisenhower's political loyalties and leave the task to readers.[284]

Welch took almost none of Kohlberg's advice—at least not immediately. He insisted that he had meant only to express his private beliefs about Eisenhower to a few close friends. "I did not really intend to *prove* anything," he wrote. Kohlberg's concerns might have been valid "[i]f this had been a 'book,' intended for publication, or even for wide distribution…And I thoroughly agree," he added, "that my approach to the public, which is through my speeches and the magazine, has to be entirely different." But Welch took umbrage at Kohlberg's final piece of advice. For twenty years he and others had been "'laying out the facts' to speak for themselves" and allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. "And during that time we have been going straight down the road to Communism, at an ever-faster pace."[285] Welch continued to send his manuscript to one prominent conservative after another, adding only an introductory letter beginning with the declaration, "This is not a book," and requesting strict confidentiality.[286]

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[284] Alfred Kohlberg to Robert Welch, September 2, 1958, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder: "Welch, Robert H. W., 1957-58," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[285] Robert Welch to Alfred Kohlberg, September 4, 1958, Alfred Kohlberg Collection, Box 200, Folder: "Welch, Robert H. W., 1957-58," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[286] Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 1.

Herbert Philbrick was another recipient. During the 1940s, he had simultaneously been a member of the Communist Party USA, an undercover spy for the FBI, and an advertising executive in Boston. His intriguing career inspired an early 1950s radio drama entitled "I Was a Communist for the FBI" and the subsequent TV series "I Led Three Lives." With his life story something of a cultural sensation, he became a popular anti-Communist speaker during the late 1950s, especially at Fred Schwarz's Schools of Anti-Communism.[287] As Welch made plans to organize the JBS, Philbrick's reputation caught his attention, and the two men began regular correspondence. Philbrick at first declined membership, insisting he would be of more help as an outside advisor, but Welch persuaded him to become a member of the Home Chapter, which carried little responsibility, and Philbrick began regular donations to the JBS.[288]

Accustomed as he was to being a double agent, Philbrick exaggerated his loyalty. He did not return his copy of *The Politician*, as Welch requested, and he may have been the anonymous Bostonian who forwarded information about the manuscript to J. Edgar Hoover in early 1959.[289] Even as he donated money to the JBS, he passed information to friends about its potential dangers as a political force. At a May 1959 organizational meeting Philbrick attended, Welch gave a condensed version of his Indianapolis speech before twenty "carefully screened" guests. Philbrick took detailed notes of the speech, which continued from 9:15 in the morning until 6:30 in the evening, with one forty-five minute break for lunch. "Adding to the cloak and dagger atmosphere was the fact that

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[287] Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 45, Folder 11, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[288] Herbert Philbrick to Robert Welch, August 4, 1959, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 6, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[289] Memorandum from Robert Welch to Herbert Philbrick, circa 1958, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 210, Folder 4, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Memorandum from SAC, Boston, to J. Edgar Hoover, regarding "Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., Information Concerning (Internal Security)," February 4, 1959, Ernie Lazar Papers, "Welch_Robert_H.W.," 10.

the front door…was locked so that we could not leave," Philbrick noted. Welch's insistence that circumstances required him to be the unquestioned head of the JBS sounded to Philbrick "a great deal similar to the appeal made by Adolph Hitler to the German people." The JBS threatened to attract "extreme radicals" to its ranks, Philbrick feared, should *The Politician* become known among the wider public.[290]

The Exposé

Robert Welch's reckless mailing finally backfired on July 11, 1960, when one of his confidants betrayed him. In the Chicago suburb of Glenview, Illinois, Council member Stillwell Conner addressed an audience of over two hundred spectators. One of them, Frank Vignola, was organizing an "Education for American Security Seminar"—with the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade's Fred Schwarz as master of ceremonies—to be held at Glenview's Naval Air Station at the end of August. During the question-and-answer period, he rose to ask Conner if it was true that Robert Welch had called the sitting President a Communist. Conner denied it, and Vignola responded by reading aloud from a copy of *The Politician* that he had brought with him.[291]

Journalist and Glenview resident Jack Mabley was also in the audience, and he broke the story in the *Chicago Daily News* of July 25. Though Mabley portrayed most JBS members as "well-meaning, conscientious men and women," he excoriated Robert Welch both for his assertions in *The Politician* and for his "dictatorial" control over the JBS. In a follow-up article the next day, Mabley highlighted Welch's negative

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[290] Memorandum from Herbert Philbrick to Frank Willette, regarding "Notes taken at John Birch Meeting, home of Harry O. King, 132 East 92nd Street, New York, N.Y.," May 28, 1959, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 6, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[291] Ernie Lazar, "*The Politician* Becomes Public," *FBI on the John Birch Society*, updated July 16, 2015, accessed November 30, 2015, https://sites.google.com/site/ernie124102/jbs-1; Fred Schwarz to Robert Welch, September 19, 1960, Herbert Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 8, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

assessment of democracy in the *Blue Book*.[292] These themes would characterize press portrayals of the John Birch Society during the next several years: not only had its founder accused President Eisenhower of being a Communist; he was also a would-be dictator and outspoken opponent of democracy.

Though he would later attribute the "smear campaign" against the John Birch Society to the Communist press—citing a "mother article" in the San Francisco-based *People's World* of February 25, 1961—Welch believed that the raw material for the smear had come from a trusted fellow conservative, Fred Schwarz.[293] On September 6, 1960, he fired off a nine-page letter to Schwarz, intimating that Frank Vignola had made his public scene with Schwarz's knowledge and blessing. Welch adopted a tone that would characterize many of his official pronouncements about *The Politician* during the next several years. Though angry about Schwarz's apparent intention to harm the John Birch Society, he wrote that the Glenview meeting had resulted in the creation of "four strong new chapters, [and] a total of about sixty new members, all of whom thus knew about *The Politician* and basically what it said before they joined." The greatest immediate harm had been to the reputations of the JBS's financial contributors and members, causing "damages to their business plans and dangers to their jobs and heartaches of many kinds."[294]

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[292] Jack Mabley, "Bares Secrets of 'Red-Haters'," *Chicago Daily News*, Monday, July 25, 1960; Jack Mabley, "Strange Threat to Democracy," *Chicago Daily News*, Tuesday, July 26, 1960.
[293] Robert Welch on *Meet the Press*, Washington, D.C., May 21, 1961, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia; Mulloy, 37.
[294] Robert Welch to Fred Schwarz, September 9, 1960, Herbert Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 8, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Schwarz, in his reply, assured Welch of his continuing support for the JBS's program and insisted that Frank Vignola had acted of his own free will and was "in no sense under my direction." However, he did admit that he had "relayed the information" about *The Politician* "to a few military personnel believing that I would be failing in my duty if I did

Welch's immediate response to the exposé was to assure JBS members that they need not be associated with *The Politician* merely because of their membership. "The introductory page to [the] manuscript states clearly that it is *not a book*," Welch wrote in his August 1960 bulletin. He insisted that *The Politician* was "still of the nature of a long letter to a friend," that had never been published, and that he had no plans to publish it in the future.[295] Even so, Welch was unable to resist defending what he had written. "Members say they do not like the word 'treason' in these pages," he continued. "[But we] must constantly remember that the most effective weapon the Communists have had for forty years has always been treason in other governments. And by far the most important model of that weapon for twenty-five years has been the treason in our government."[296]

Within the wider conservative movement, the press exposé represented a severe public relations problem. But the problem was clearly more a matter of *The Politician*'s exposure than of its existence. Welch, after all, had not kept the "private letter" private for long; by his own admission he had sent it to over one hundred of his fellow conservatives during the preceding years, including William F. Buckley, Jr., founder and editor of *National Review*. Immediately after the exposé, Buckley seemed to believe that jettisoning the JBS from the ranks of acceptable conservatism would do more harm than good. In October 1960, he assured Welch that, publicly, he would continue to tell those interested of his personal fondness for him and "the need for a conservative pressure organization like the John Birch Society," while admitting that those associated with the

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otherwise." Fred Schwarz to Robert Welch, September 19, 1960, Herbert Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 8, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[295] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for August 1960," 6-7, *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1960* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1961).

[296] Ibid., 9.

JBS and those at *National Review* offered "a critical difference in the analysis…of contemporary affairs."[297]

Privately, Buckley admitted to more severe misgivings. He had read *The Politician* "several years ago" and "immediately" written to Welch that he disagreed with his conclusions about President Eisenhower. It was a disagreement that could remain private as long as *The Politician* remained so, but with details now leaked to the press, there was little hope of turning back. Moreover, Welch frequently made unsupportable charges in public, most recently in a speech in Buckley's hometown of Stamford, Connecticut, when he "publicly suggested…that the government of the United States is under operative control of the Communist Party of the United States."[298]

Among the JBS Council members Welch had recently selected there was considerable consternation over the exposé, but most continued to support the JBS's political program. Only one Council member—John T. Beatty—resigned in the summer of 1960, and he had allegedly been planning to do so beforehand.[299] Still loyal to Welch's overarching project, JBS Council members set about thinking of ways that their leader might somehow deflect the bad press he had brought on himself. In March 1961, for example, Clarence Manion's former business manager Leo Reardon composed an unequivocal statement for Welch to use while facing the press: "I am quite sure the former President is not, nor ever was, a member of the Communist Party." Manion hoped that Welch would follow this statement by suggesting that Eisenhower was simply

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[297] William F. Buckely, Jr., to Robert Welch, October 21, 1960, 1, Revilo P. Oliver Papers, accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.
[298] Ibid., 2.
[299] Robert Welch to John T. Beatty, August 5, 1960, 3, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 62, Folder 1, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

a dupe who had stumbled into aiding the Communists "[t]hrough [his] lack of knowledge of Marxism."[300]

The problem was that *The Politician*'s clear purpose had been to refute the idea that Eisenhower was promoting Communism through his own ignorance. During a May 1961 interview with Lawrence Spivak on NBC's *Meet the Press*, Welch avoided saying anything as plain as Manion had recommended, falling back on the technicality that he had not published any of his assertions. Refusing to admit directly that he had referred to Eisenhower as "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy," Welch insisted that no author should be held publicly accountable for statements made in an unpublished draft. "I never had that opinion and do not have it now with any such assurance or firmness that I would ever state it in public, and I never have," he told Spivak.[301]

In September 1961, Clarence Manion wrote to Welch that he was with the JBS for the long haul. "I believe in its objectives," he wrote, "and I am convinced that [its] continuous growth, strength, and prestige…are necessary prerequisites for the salvation of American freedom." Even so, Manion was clearly worried that the exposure of *The Politician* had done irreparable harm to the JBS's effectiveness. In his hometown of South Bend, Indiana, an acquaintance had confided to him that "[n]obody who is anybody will now join the John Birch Society."[302] Despite such dismal reports, Manion—and allegedly everyone else on the Council—had no interest in quitting. All

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[300] Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, *Danger on the Right* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964), 115-116; Leo Reardon, "Welch Statement," undated and appended to Clarence Manion to Robert Welch, March 28, 1961, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 62, Folder 1, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[301] Robert Welch on *Meet the Press*, Washington, D.C., May 21, 1961, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[302] Clarence Manion to Robert Welch, September 27, 1961, 1, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

agreed that the Birch Society was the only anti-Communist organization that could save the country, but that it would need "a new face" to succeed in doing so. Manion asked Welch to "gracefully retire into the editorial room" and allow some charismatic outsider to replace him.[303]

Dan Smoot and the "Invisible Government"

The John Birch Society also enjoyed continued public support from prominent non-members, among them the Dallas-based radio commentator Dan Smoot. Smoot claimed to have gained unique insight into the Communist conspiracy through his work as a special agent for the FBI between 1942 and 1951.[304] In a May 1961 broadcast, he referred to the same "mother article" from the Communist-affiliated *People's World* that Robert Welch had identified in his bulletin of the previous month. Smoot intimated that the controversy had arisen in response to the Birch Society's campaign to impeach Earl Warren, a cause Smoot himself had long supported. *The Politician* went unmentioned in Smoot's broadcast, despite the fact that the Communist "mother article" in question focused not on the campaign to impeach Earl Warren, but instead on the same points that articles about the Birch Society had emphasized since the previous summer: that its leader had called the sitting president a Communist, and that he opposed democracy.[305]

Though Smoot avoided addressing the proverbial elephant in the room as he defended the John Birch Society, he was simultaneously refining a set of ideas that would

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[303] Ibid., 2.

[304] Brenner, "Shouting at the Rain," 77-78. While Smoot undoubtedly worked for the FBI, that organization's internal documents reveal that he resigned after being censured by J. Edgar Hoover, and the FBI consistently alleged that the position of "Administrative Assistant to the Director"—which Smoot claimed to have held—did not exist.

[305] Dan Smoot, "The John Birch Society," *The Dan Smoot Report*, Vol. 7, No. 19 (Broadcast 301), May 8, 1961, Box 112, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Folder: "Welch, Robert H.W., Jr., 1961," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware; "Enter (from stage right) the John Birch Society," *People's World*, February 25, 1961, "Documentary History of the John Birch Society," 144, Ernie Lazar Papers, accessed May 8, 2016, https://sites.google.com/site/ernie1241a/.

alter the nature of anti-Communist conspiracy theory among the radical right. He alleged the existence of an international conspiracy contemporaneous with but distinct from the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. It was a conspiracy that had been led, from its inception, by those highly placed in the United States federal government.

Smoot presented his ideas to the 1961 Symposium on Freedom in Los Angeles. He alleged that Cold War diplomacy, with its policy of containing rather than defeating Communism, was directed by the Council on Foreign Relations, an organization founded by Edward Mandell "Colonel" House, one of Woodrow Wilson's top advisors. In 1927, the CFR had begun receiving heavy funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, Smoot alleged, and its members had pressed for U.S. involvement in World War II. Whether or not they were Communists, he continued, CFR members pursued "the same aim as that of international Communism…a one-world socialist system." The CFR had long comprised the "invisible government" in Washington, and its purpose was "to condition the American people to accept what Colonel House called 'a positive foreign policy'."[306]

The immediate cause of Smoot's interest was a May 12, 1961 meeting, arranged by the Council on Foreign Relations and approved by the State Department, at which several "prominent Soviet and American citizens" had gathered in the Crimean Peninsula to discuss nuclear disarmament.[307] Smoot believed that this little-known meeting was even more significant than Eisenhower's 1959 summit meeting with Nikita Khrushchev, at which Robert Welch and other conservative activists had directed such ire. Among those who believed that Soviet officials were tricksters who kept no diplomatic promises,

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[306] Dan Smoot, "Invisible Government," Ninth Symposium on Freedom, Los Angeles, California, 1961, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[307] Dan Smoot, *The Invisible Government* (Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1962, 1965, 1977), 3.

it seemed clear that agreements about nuclear disarmament could lead only to surrender and destruction.

In his 1962 book *The Invisible Government*, Smoot expanded on ideas he had taken on his speaking circuit the year before, alleging CFR influence in the Institute on Pacific Relations and other organizations that had been associated with Communist subversion after World War II.[308] In Smoot's telling, Colonel House had, even four years before the Bolshevik Revolution, dreamed of "a socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, identical with that which now exists in the Soviet Union."[309] After Congress's refusal to involve the United States in the postwar League of Nations, House founded the CFR to pursue international cooperation by stealth. Moreover, he had not stopped at foreign policy, for he knew that the United States "could not become a province in a one-world socialist system unless [its] economy was first socialized." Therefore, he "laid the groundwork for 'positive' domestic policies of government, too."[310]

Thus, even as Smoot echoed Robert Welch's belief that powerful forces in the federal government wished to "merge" the economic system of the United States with that of the Soviet Union, he avoided direct allegations of Communist subversion. Instead, he wrote of a Washington that had long been controlled by a cabal of "internationalists" who wished to eliminate American "independence." Robert Welch quickly adopted *The Invisible Government* as the newest addition to "One Dozen Candles," a set of twelve reprints of books that had shaped his political education and that

[308] Ibid., 34.
[309] Ibid., 51.
[310] Ibid., 49.

he sought to use as "textbooks" for recruitment.[311] He praised Smoot's book for describing in detail the "interlocking…groups which dominate the movement and forces that are communizing America."[312]

Smoot's ideas would be highly influential among anti-Communist conspiracy theorists during the following several decades, perhaps foremost because they allowed anti-Communists to accuse politically powerful people of being part of an "un-American" conspiracy without accusing them of being Communists. This had been Robert Welch's public relations mistake in *The Politician*. Smoot's ideas helped to turn an anti-Communist movement that accused government officials of treason into an "anti-establishment" movement, simultaneously broadening the conspiracy's reach and making it seem less offensive to those who doubted its existence.

The John Birch Society and Anti-Semitism

Of course, to criticize "internationalist" foreign policy was implicitly to criticize American involvement in the Second World War. By 1960, few radical rightists went so far as to say that the United States had been on the wrong side of that war, but many continued to lament the U.S.'s involvement and alliance with the Soviet Union. Soon after the exposure of *The Politician*, JBS Council member Slobodan Draskovich attempted to defend the John Birch Society by criticizing U.S. foreign policy. The American people, he wrote, were "sick and tired to being told from high places that the policy of weakness, appeasement, and surrender is the only possible U.S. policy." He counted World War II as the first in a string of "defeats" that included the fall of China,

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[311] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January, 1962," *The White Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1963), 10.
[312] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for August, 1962," *The White Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1963), 17.

the Korean War, and the recent Communist takeover of Cuba. By emphasizing the United States' odd wartime alliance with the Soviet Union and the growth of that country's global influence, Draskovich argued that World War II had ended in defeat, if not for the United States, then for the world. Though Draskovich himself had fought against the Nazis, he believed that the U.S. war effort had been "for the spread of Communism."[313]

On the topic of World War II, much of the material in *The Politician* resembled Draskovich's opinions. Never mentioning the Holocaust, Welch focused instead on atrocities visited on the defeated Germans, often under General Eisenhower's direction. It was Eisenhower, Welch argued, who deserved the credit for devising the "Morgenthau Plan," with its goal of "[converting] Germany into a goat pasture—so that it could never stand as a bulwark against the eventual Russian march across Europe."[314] Though he was not present at the Nuremberg Trials, Eisenhower had assisted "in the planning that brought them about, and in the gathering of the completely one-sided evidence on which they were based."[315] Most egregiously, Eisenhower had overseen "Operation Keelhaul," a forced repatriation of Soviet prisoners of war.[316] Because Welch believed that the Soviet Union was a nation-sized prison rather than a nation, Operation Keelhaul seemed more a re-imprisonment than a liberation. Moreover, those who had deliberately fled from the Soviet Union were not likely to find Stalin merciful.

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[313] Dr. Slobodan M. Draskovich, "The John Birch Society is a Threat to Whom?" *American Opinion* (reprint), undated, 4, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 11, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[314] Robert Welch, *The Politician* (Belmont: Robert Welch, 1963), 26.
[315] Ibid., 29.
[316] Ibid., 34.

Such a harsh assessment of the Allied war effort presented a problem during the early 1960s, for as Robert Welch and his colleagues contended with negative press surrounding *The Politician*, they also faced charges of anti-Semitism. In April 1961, Welch identified such charges as "a dangerous weapon" that his enemies were deliberately using against him. "Of course I am just about as 'anti-Semitic' as Willi Schlamm," Welch remarked sarcastically, referring to a Jewish journalist who frequently contributed to *American Opinion*. He named several other Jewish friends and associates—among them Alfred Kohlberg, his primary mentor in the anti-Communist cause—remarking that throughout his career he had "probably had more good friends of the Jewish faith than any other Gentile in America." It was no more anti-Jewish to criticize the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Welch insisted, than it was anti-Christian to criticize the Methodist Federation for Social Action. Both were leftist organizations that deserved criticism apart from their religious affiliations.[317]

Robert Welch was no anti-Semite, but it was difficult for the JBS to escape accusations of anti-Semitism and the close company of anti-Semites. Many of the basic doctrines of conservative anti-Communism were extremely similar to those of anti-Semitic conspiracy theory, with anti-Communists accusing Communist subversives of plans that anti-Semites had long attributed to "the international Jew." Such similarities stand to reason, especially in light of historian David Nirenberg's observation that during the long sweep of Western history, Judaism became, in the minds of non-Jews, "not only the religion of a specific people with specific beliefs, but also a category, a set of ideas and attributes with which non-Jews can make sense of and criticize their world." Merely

[317] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for April 1961," 16-17, 20, *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1961* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1962).

by arguing that a secret cabal of conspirators was plotting world conquest by infiltrating governments and cultural institutions, Welch was indebted to an intellectual tradition of anti-Judaism, and so were many of his less controversial contemporaries.[318]

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, surely the most influential anti-Semitic hoax ever written, is remarkable in the similarity of its conspiracy theory to what would later be attributed to the Communist conspiracy, particularly in the alleged plans of the Jewish elders to seize control of global financial markets and to weaken the morals of the world's non-Jews by manipulating print media. *The Protocols* first appeared in late-nineteenth century Paris. In 1905 a Russian version surfaced, probably promoted by monarchists who wished to use Jews as scapegoats for the reformist agitation with which the Romanovs were then contending.[319] Thus, if *The Protocols* reveals anything, it is the consistency of right-wing ideas about revolutionary agitation from the nineteenth century forward, including the alleged desire on the part of revolutionaries to gain control of media, subvert traditional morals, break down national allegiances, and destroy religious faith.

Promoted in the United States by refugees of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, *The Protocols* found its most prominent supporter in Henry Ford, who drew on it for a series of anti-Semitic screeds published in his weekly *Dearborn Independent* between 1920 and 1922. Ford pushed subscriptions to the *Independent* along with sales of his Model T's,

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[318] David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 3. Nirenberg uses the term "anti-Judaism" rather than the more common "anti-Semitism" to describe an intellectual tradition that has been used to implicate both Jews and non-Jews in plots against the given order, but he argues that this intellectual tradition rests historically on ideas about Jews. In a manner of speaking, then, Nirenberg seeks to demonstrate that the "paranoid style"—far more than a phenomenon merely of American politics—is an integral part of the Western intellectual tradition.

[319] Richard S. Levy, "The Political Career of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*," Introduction to Binjamin W. Segal, *A Lie and a Libel: The History of the* Protocols of the Elders of Zion (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 14.

and he did the same with *The Protocols*, despite the fact that the document was reliably identified as a hoax by the London *Times* in 1921.[320] Ford's brand of anti-Semitism, largely adapted from *The Protocols*, was tailor-made for the political climate of the 1950s brainwashing scare, raising as it did in the specter of conspirators who sought "the degeneration of the people in order that they may be reduced to confusion of mind and thus manipulated."[321] By the 1950s, *The Protocols* had become an albatross around the necks of many anti-Communist activists, because certain of their followers were bound to cite it as evidence that the "international Communist conspiracy" was in fact a Jewish one.

In a letter to Welch following *The Politician*'s exposure, William F. Buckley cited Welch's "popular front attitude towards conservatism" as a problem as serious as his statements about Eisenhower. The *American Mercury*, founded by H. L. Mencken, had by 1960 fallen under the editorship of Russell McGuire, who adopted tenets of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* for use in his editorials. Welch's willingness to "cooperate" with McGuire disturbed Buckley, because, as he put it, such people were "a considerable liability to the conservative cause."[322]

Anti-Communist leaders who wished to distance themselves from anti-Semites had the delicate task of dismissing *The Protocols* as an unreliable forgery while insisting

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[320] Vincent Curcio, *Henry Ford* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 132-133, 144. As Curcio notes, Ford did not actually write anything that appeared in the *Dearborn Independent*. Though he promoted the anti-Semitic material within it, when that material was published as a four-volume book entitled *The International Jew*, it was simply described as a "reprint" from the *Independent*, and not attributed to any author. Richard S. Levy notes that the force of the *Times* exposé lay in journalist Philip Graves's discovery that *The Protocols* was largely plagiarized from Maurice Joly's 1864 political satire *A Dialogue Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu in Hell*, which had nothing to do with Jews. Levy, xii-xiii.

[321] *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem, Vol. 1* (Indianapolis: The Dearborn Independent, 1920), 110.

[322] William F. Buckley, Jr., to Robert Welch, October 21, 1960, 2, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010): accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.

that much of what it alleged about Jews was in fact true of Communists. Robert Welch speculated that *The Protocols* had been written either by or for Lenin "to lay out the program which the Communists were to follow for the next two generations, but in such a manner that a large part of the blame would be misdirected onto others."[323] Thus he portrayed the gadfly of anti-Semitism among his allies as he portrayed most other challenges: as a coordinated plot to weaken his organization. In an October 1962 message to Council members, Welch noted the "extensive, emphatic, and almost violent spread of anti-Semitic theories," comparing this problem to episodes in which he believed Communists had acted as *agents provacateurs*.[324]

Promoting *The Politician*

By the start of 1963, Welch and his associates had concluded that to disassociate the John Birch Society from *The Politician* was impossible. Instead, they decided to publish and promote the book, changing some of the language about Eisenhower's alleged Communism to language about his membership in a vague "leftwing establishment" that resembled Dan Smoot's "invisible government." Though changes to the published version of *The Politician* were minimal—save for the inclusion of a substantial number of endnotes—they were enough to satisfy most of the JBS's leadership. Clarence Manion, so pessimistic about the exposé's effect on recruitment in 1961, now hoped that *The Politician* would influence the following year's Presidential election. In spite of his earlier misgivings, Manion wrote to Welch that after re-reading the book and observing "Eisenhower's antics in anticipation of the 1964 Republican

[323] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for November, 1965" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1965), 106-107, Political Literature Collection, Special Collections and Archives, University of California, Irvine, California.
[324] Robert Welch, "To All Members Of Our COUNCIL," Clarence E. Manion Papers, October 8, 1962, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Convention," he was convinced that publication had been the right decision. Manion hoped *The Politician* would become "the book event of our generation, because it will take just that to turn the Red tide."[325]

John Rousselot, a suave, well-spoken former Congressman from California, became the unofficial defender and promoter of the book before being appointed as the JBS's public relations director in 1964.[326] His delicate task was to recruit new members by simultaneously promoting *The Politician* and distinguishing his own opinions from those Welch had expressed in it. At an Atlanta recruitment meeting in March 1963, Rousselot spent some twenty minutes summarizing *The Politician*, pausing now and then to remind members of the press that the opinions were those of Robert Welch and not necessarily his own.[327]

The first "thesis" Welch was attempting to prove, Rousselot told his audience, was that Dwight Eisenhower had never been a conservative Republican, but had instead always been "a New Deal, left-wing Democrat." The second thesis was that Eisenhower had never been "a strong anti-Communist." The evidence was episodic. Eisenhower was happy to be courted by the Democratic Party before eventually running for President as a Republican. He supported the New Deal and the Roosevelt Administration. He had overseen "Operation Keelhaul" and the return of refugees to the Soviet Union at the end

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[325] Clarence Manion to Robert Welch, March 15, 1963, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

[326] In an unsigned, undated, and unaddressed letter, labeled "Mr. Manion, Confidential," a spokesman for the JBS Council listed several recommendations from the December 8, 1963, Council meeting in New York. The Council recommended Rousselot as an "outside man" to be "primarily in charge of our relations with the press and radio." Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 1, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois. By August 1964, Rousselot was officially referred to as the JBS's Public Relations Director. Clarence Manion to Robert Welch, August 25, 1964, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

[327] John H. Roussleot, "Disarmament: Blueprint for Surrender," Biltmore Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, March 18, 1963, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia.

of World War II. As President, he had worked against conservative Republican efforts to investigate Communist subversion in the State Department, he had helped to stymie the Bricker Amendment, and he had agreed to meet with Nikita Khrushchev, treating the Soviet premier "as if he were a hero."[328] Rousselot invited his audience to arrive at one of three conclusions: Eisenhower was either a Communist, a dupe, or a skilled politician "who is smart enough to see that the tide of the Left is very strong."[329]

This third possible conclusion was significant, because it epitomized what had changed in *The Politician*. The published book was marketed as an honest copy of the original with "typographical errors corrected and a few other minor changes as noted."[330] But these few changes were clearly designed to alter the most damning passages about Eisenhower. Both the published and unpublished versions of *The Politician* contained the passage, "I personally think that [Eisenhower] has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all of his adult life."[331] Gone, however, was what Welch had previously written on the following page, the passage most arresting to journalists in 1960: "[M]y firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy is based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt."[332]

More minor changes, often appearing rushed and clumsy, tended to implicate Eisenhower not in "the Communist conspiracy," but in a broader "Leftwing

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[328] Ibid.
[329] Ibid.
[330] Welch, *The Politician* (1963), vi.
[331] Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 266.
[332] Ibid., 267.

Establishment." In his 1958 draft, Welch had speculated that Milton Eisenhower, the President of Johns Hopkins University, was his brother's "superior and boss within the Communist Party."[333] In the published version, Milton became Ike's "superior and boss within the whole Leftwing Establishment."[334] In his draft, Welch had often casually referred to Eisenhower's "Communist bosses." For publication, he changed this phrase in a few places to "pro-Communist bosses," though he failed to catch all instances of the phrase.[335]

The published version of *The Politician* had also been scrubbed of passages that might have been construed as anti-Semitic. These changes were minor, but they infuriated Revilo Oliver, the Birch Society's most anti-Semitic leader. Oliver characterized the published version of *The Politician* as a "shabby hoax" compared to the original, mostly because it had been "thoroughly censored to eliminate almost all of the many references to Jews."[336] In fact, there had been nothing in the unpublished version resembling the blatant anti-Semitism to which Revilo Oliver subscribed. His contention that Welch had deleted "many references to Jews" referred to the fact that, in a list of forty Eisenhower Administration appointees, Welch deleted the short biographies of Edward Greenbaum, John Floberg, and Maxwell Gluck, stating that these men were "no longer of any importance in the context."[337] He also deleted a reference to the fact that

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[333] Ibid., 210.
[334] Welch, *The Politician* (1963), 130.
[335] In Chapter 11, "The Modern Republican," for example, one line was changed from "Eisenhower and *his* Communist bosses" to Eisenhower and *the* Communist bosses." Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 115, and Welch, *The Politician* (1963), 77.
[336] Oliver, *America's Decline*, 199.
[337] Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 223, 228-229, 236, and Welch, *The Politician* (1963), 137, 140, 145. Incidentally, John Floberg was Catholic.

that Leonard Finder, an early supporter of Eisenhower's run for the Presidency, had once been Vice President of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.[338]

Though changes to the published version of *The Politician* were—on the surface of things—largely cosmetic, the substitution of "Leftwing Establishment" for "Communist conspiracy" reflected a view that mirrored that of many of Welch's longtime supporters. In March 1963, for example, J. Howard Pew was still convinced that the federal government was under the control of "a large group of Liberals, Socialists, and Communists, who for 20 or 30 years have dominated the Administration," and that President Kennedy, consciously or not, was "implementing their program."[339] Future Presidents, Pew continued, should support anti-Communist movements abroad and "oppose the socialization of medicine, education, industry and labor, and everything else."[340]

By May 1963, Welch had decided to encourage JBS members to use the newly published book as a recruiting tool. "The book was not written to vilify an individual," he insisted. "What is important here is the history of the past ten years…as a means of understanding what is taking place right now. For under the influences that controlled the Eisenhower Administration—which was supposed to be Conservative—*our Government became (far more clearly and definitely and visibly than before) the greatest single force in bringing about the world-wide advance of the Communist tyranny*." When

[338] Welch, *The Politician* (unpublished version, 1958), 67, and Welch, *The Politician* (1963), 52-53.
[339] J. Howard Pew to General Robert E. Wood, March 19, 1963, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 228, Folder: "R-Y, 1963," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[340] Ibid.

using *The Politician* for recruitment, JBS members were to use the slogan, "Read it—and judge for yourself."[341]

The aftermath of President Kennedy's assassination the following November was a great blow to the vision Robert Welch and his supporters had of combining anti-socialism with anti-Communism and relating both to disorder and violence. The fact that a liberal President had been killed by a Communist sympathizer should have given their message more widespread purchase. The JBS bought newspaper space for a full-page ad declaring, "The President of the United States has been murdered by a Marxist-Communist within the United States."[342] Communists all over the world used assassination "as a weapon of political action," Welch reminded readers, citing Rafael Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, Abd al-Karim Qasim of Iraq, and Ngo Dinh Diem of South Vietnam as victims of Communist assassination who had preceded Kennedy.[343]

Yet most media commentators did not fix on the Communist "murder incorporated" to explain President Kennedy's demise. Instead, they were quick to blame right-wing activism for creating the political climate that led to the assassination. The culture of hysteria that inspired Richard Hofstadter's 1964 essay "The Paranoid Style in American Politics" seemed especially virulent in Dallas. Less than a month before the assassination, members of a "National Indignation Convention" had assaulted and spat on Adlai Stevenson during his visit to the city.[344] As the *Louisville Courier-Journal*

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[341] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for May 1963," 5-6, *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1964).
[342] "The Time Has Come" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1964), 16, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 112, Folder: "Welch, Robert H. W., Jr., John Birch Society, 1964," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[343] Robert Welch, "Interim Bulletin, November 30, 1963," 1-2, *The White Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1964).
[344] Scott K. Parks, "Extremists in Dallas Created Volatile Atmosphere Before JFK's 1963 Visit," *The Dallas Morning News*, October 12, 2013, accessed May 12, 2016,

editorialized, "We have become unhappily accustomed to photographs of screaming crowds in foreign cities…To see this ugliness in our own country, expressed by Americans against another American speaking by invitation in their midst, is to feel a chill at the heart."[345] The day that Stevenson arrived in Dallas, the *Courier-Journal* pointed out, Robert Welch had spoken in New York and alleged that the United Nations was an instrument of the Communist conspiracy. "People who can take such charges seriously," the editors concluded, "have become mindless forces who can spit upon a fellow-citizen, scream in the streets, and go to bed at night haunted by visions of other Americans who are devils and traitors."[346]

Launching the Anti-Civil Rights Campaign

At the John Birch Society Council meeting in December 1963, Clarence Manion commissioned a committee to draw up a plan that would guide the JBS in new directions. The committee's report revealed dissatisfaction with Robert Welch's leadership style and with the projects he promoted, but a continuing commitment to the JBS itself.[347]

The Neutralizers, a 1963 pamphlet, had provoked criticism from several of the JBS's original members and those on its Council. Though authorship was credited to Welch, detractors alleged that the true author was G. Edward Griffin, a young

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http://www.dallasnews.com/news/jfk50/reflect/20131012-extremists-in-dallas-created-volatile-atmosphere-before-jfks-1963-visit.ece.

[345] Staff Editorial, "Display in Dallas is Sign of Cancer," *Louisville Courier-Journal*, October 31, 1963.

[346] Ibid.

[347] Unsigned, undated, and unaddressed letter, labeled "Mr. Manion, Confidential," 1964, 1, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 74, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois. Clues about this anonymous author's identity are littered throughout the text. Because of the report's clear anti-Semitism, the author may well have been Revilo Oliver. It includes his characteristic use of "the Chosen People" in place of "Jews" and "Defamation League" in sarcastic place of "Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith." The writer might also have been Slobodan Drasokovich, because the report includes Draskovich's characteristic complaint that the JBS lacked strategy and failed to keep its members informed about important issues.

documentary filmmaker and West Coast coordinator for the JBS.[348] *The Neutralizers* began with a familiar allusion to the relentless attacks from liberal, Communist, and fellow-traveling enemies in the press. After several unsuccessful attempts to destroy the Birch Society with such attacks, they "reluctantly decided that they would have to go to work against us…through attempted infiltration or disruptive appeals at the chapter [or] regional levels." *The Neutralizers* urged JBS members to guard against those who introduced "ideological wedges" or tempted activists to focus their energies on goals other than combatting Communism.[349] The foremost "neutralizing" force was anti-Semitism, and the pamphlet strongly suggested that those who promoted the idea of an international Jewish conspiracy were themselves Communist *agents provocateurs*.[350]

The author of Manion's committee report was concerned that important people might find *The Neutralizers* personally offensive. It "[exposes] us to the allegation that we are acting as a cat's paw for the [anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith]," the author opined, and "it sets us on a collision course that must bring us into conflict with some of the oldest, most powerful, and most influential patriotic organizations in the nation, including several retired Admirals and Generals."[351]

The report also revealed a rift in the JBS Council between those who wished to focus on the domestic Communist conspiracy and those who wished to commit the JBS to an international defense of "Western civilization" against attacks by anti-colonialists. This rift mapped loosely onto the division between Council members who were uncomfortable with outspoken racism and those who were not, and it contributed to a

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[348] Ibid.
[349] Robert Welch, *The Neutralizers* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1963): 5, 6.
[350] Ibid., 11.
[351] Unsigned, undated, and unaddressed letter, labeled "Mr. Manion, Confidential," 1.

compromise by which the John Birch Society would campaign against the southern civil rights movement and civil rights legislation while pursuing a theoretically anti-racist defense of European imperialism. The report concluded that it would no longer be enough for the John Birch Society to remain an "educational organization," because though "[t]ruth can be successfully used to defeat a false ideology…[it] does not suffice to defeat a conspiracy."[352]

Thus in 1964, as many of its members became active in Barry Goldwater's campaign for the Presidency, the John Birch Society focused squarely on the civil rights movement. It would launch an all-out campaign against federal civil rights legislation, eventually portraying civil rights activism as a movement analogous to anti-colonial movements against "civilization" elsewhere in the world. However, the campaign would be theoretically untainted by racism. Instead, it would characterize civil rights activism as a Communist-inspired effort to break down "law and order," while simultaneously empowering the federal government.

[352] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

Civil Rights and "Civil Riots": The Radical Right and the Civil Rights Movement

During the early 1960s, as the civil rights struggle became the most controversial issue in the U.S. South, conservatives nationwide criticized the movement's direct action tactics and use of civil disobedience. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told Congress that Communists remained active infiltrators of civil rights organizations and fomenters of civil rights agitation, just as they had been during the 1930s.[353] Robert Welch, however, was at first reluctant to address the civil rights movement or to mobilize members of the John Birch Society against it. Welch's paltry efforts to distance the JBS from what he had written in *The Politician* had been unconvincing, but he seemed to take seriously William F. Buckley's caution that to work openly with racists damaged the conservative cause.[354]

Yet by 1963 the broader conservative movement was increasingly suspicious of civil rights activism, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' vocal support for it, and these administrations' willingness to push anti-discrimination legislation—and the executive authority to enforce it—through Congress. Moreover, according to the South Carolina textile magnate Roger Milliken, who had contributed heavily to Welch's Committee Against Summit Entanglements in 1959, Southerners were joining the John

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[353] Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 140.
[354] William F. Buckely, Jr., to Robert Welch, October 21, 1960, 2, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/. In this letter, Buckley criticized Welch both for what he had written in *The Politician* and for his "popular front attitude" toward conservative activism. Buckley was especially concerned about Welch's earlier willingness to associate with the frankly anti-Semitic editors of the *American Mercury*.

Birch Society "in droves." It had become an outlet for the "temperate conservative Southerner," offering Southern businessmen an alternative to the more overt racism of the Citizens' Councils and the Ku Klux Klan.[355]

In August 1963, JBS Council member Slobodan Draskovich wrote to Welch in frustration. Welch had spent nearly five years focusing far too much on his "educational" mission, Draskovich charged, devoting insufficient attention to the most important issues of the day. As an example, he noted the civil rights movement's planned March on Washington, which he called a "[bold] and [brazen] challenge to the rule of law and order…[and] the natural climax of a series of moves which the communist conspiracy has minutely planned, prepared and executed in the last few years." The March, along with "the test-ban treaty and Messrs. Harriman's [*sic*] and Rusk's fraternization with Khrushchev" made the prospect of U.S. survival seem "gloomier than ever."[356]

Draskovich was not alone in his belief that the civil rights movement was a threat to law and order. Los Angeles-based Christian Youth Against Communism, one of many civic groups that had spent the previous two years organizing public screenings of *Communism on the Map* and *Operation Abolition* to allegedly "sensational" public reception, declared after the March that revolutionary violence in Washington had been curbed only "by a military and police organization which numbered one policeman or one detective or one soldier for every ten people…"[357] Without continuing efforts at anti-

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[355] Quoted in Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 144-145.
[356] Slobodan M. Draskovich to Robert Welch, August 12, 1963, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.
[357] Charles W. Winegarner to "Friend," 1961, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 9, Folder: "Christian Youth Against Communism," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas. *Communism on the Map* and *Operation Abolition* were often paired together at public "anti-Communism schools" organized by both the U.S. military and private citizens' groups. See Lori Lyn Bogle, *The Pentagon's Battle for the American Mind: The Early Cold War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004): 150-151.

Communist education, Christian Youth concluded, "millions of innocent and misguided, ignorant Blacks will be mobilized to slaughter us."[358]

Such dire predictions illustrate an important characteristic of right-wing anti-Communism in the early 1960s. At a time when the civil rights movement is remembered to have captured the popular imagination and popular sympathy, and before the emergence of the urban rioting characteristic of the mid-to-late 1960s, many conservatives believed that the "global Communist conspiracy" was using the ostensibly nonviolent civil rights movement to foment revolutionary violence, and they argued that only by anti-Communist educational efforts and a reliance on "law and order" could such violence be avoided. By the middle of 1963, the John Birch Society also promoted the idea that civil rights activists were fomenting "racial riots in the South," and during much of the following year Robert Welch used the specter of "race war" to encourage JBS members in their letter-writing campaign against the Civil Rights Act then pending in Congress.[359]

This kind of anti-Communism was similar to and drew on ideas that were popular among more unabashed racists. Like those who promoted racist pseudoscience, the John Birch Society opposed the civil rights movement in the name of preserving "civilization" from the onslaught of barbarism. Indeed, the JBS argued that anti-Communists all over the world, and especially in the decolonizing world, were working to save civilization. Even so, Robert Welch consistently denied that his organization's anti-civil rights drive sought to preserve the Southern racial caste system. To support his claims about the Communist conspiracy's use of the civil rights movement, he drew on sources that were

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[358] Winegarner, "The Christian (and) the Black Revolution, 2, 3.
[359] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1964), 14-15.

theoretically untainted by racism. This included the testimony of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, the highest-ranking public official to make allegations similar to his own. Welch's sources also included a handful of African American ex-Communists who had acted as informers before congressional investigative bodies during the 1940s and 1950s.

During the early 1960s, the John Birch Society was the most prominent representative of a political tendency that academic and media commentators had come to call the "radical right."[360] On the whole, radical rightists distanced themselves from concerns about the civil rights movement's threat to "racial integrity," arguing instead that race consciousness was a Communist tool to destroy the given order, and that the ostensibly nonviolent civil rights movement was designed to bring about a surge of interracial violence. The promotion of lawlessness through disrespect for "law and order" was a global Communist revolutionary tactic, they argued, and Communist agents all over the world were deliberately promoting it. Therefore, radical rightists came to conflate civil rights activism with the violent riots that erupted in Newark, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and elsewhere after 1964. To these conservatives, the social disorder of the late 1960s and early 1970s would not come as a surprise. Indeed, it would fulfill many of their fears and expectations.

The Origins of the John Birch Society's Anti-Civil Rights Campaign

[360] During the early 1960s, the term "radical right" described groups that conflated liberalism with Communism and promoted the idea that the federal officials were being influenced by Communist subversives. See Daniel Bell (ed.), *The Radical Right* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1955, 1963, 2008). In *A Time For Choosing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Jonathan Schoenwald used the terms "radical right" and "far right" interchangeably to describe such groups, and to distinguish them from more mainstream conservatives. In *White Rage* (London: Routledge, 2007), Martin Durham used "radical right" to distinguish groups like the JBS from the "extreme right," who tended to talk of a global conspiracy in terms of scientific racism and white racial superiority. I believe this was a highly important distinction, and I am using "radical right" in this sense.

During the early 1960s, Robert Welch was highly sensitive to charges of anti-Semitism and racial prejudice, even as he insisted that Communists and their dupes were leveling these charges falsely to discredit his organization. Perhaps it was for this reason that, despite the distaste he had expressed about the civil rights movement earlier in print, he was reluctant to make anti-civil rights activism a part of the John Birch Society's political program.[361] Welch's refusal to construct a concrete anti-civil rights program frustrated several of his colleagues. While some members of the JBS Council saw marks of genius in Welch's ideas about Communism, they frequently found his leadership uninspiring. Others, like Slobodan Draskovich, believed that the JBS would need a more concrete cause than "education" on which to focus its members' energy.

In April 1962, Draskovich wrote to his fellow JBS Council member Revilo Oliver about "a clamor to remove or replace Bob," fretting that Welch's leadership style and opinions about President Eisenhower were the least of the organization's problems. Welch had for over three years at the Society's helm insisted that the JBS be an "educational" organization. In this endeavor, he had consistently promoted the idea that all that was necessary to defeat the international Communist conspiracy was "sufficient understanding" of the conspiracy. The real problem, wrote Draskovich, "[is] the problem of our strategy and tactics, the gist of which is that they do not exist…We cannot destroy a world-wide conspiracy of traitors without a world-wide conspiracy of patriots." In its quest to alert the people of the United States to the conspiracy, the JBS was failing to

[361] Welch's "A Letter to the South on Segregation" first appeared in the September 1956 edition of *One Man's Opinion*, later entitled *American Opinion*. In it, he alleged that Communists involved in the civil rights movement were interested only in "the bitterness, strife, and terrors of mob action."

reach out sufficiently to the rest of the world, a world beset by radical movements pitted against western civilization.[362]

In 1962, Draskovich believed that the most important issue for the JBS to address was the United States' relationship with the United Nations. By 1963 the civil rights movement had become his primary concern. In his letter to Welch about the March on Washington, he enclosed a paper for discussion at the September 1963 meeting of the National Council, detailing how the JBS might respond to the civil rights movement as the country's newest threat to "law and order."[363] Instrumental in Draskovich's new focus on the civil rights movement was his concern that JBS should make its anti-Communist activism more international. Like most radical rightists, Draskovich believed that Communism was a global conspiracy, and therefore leftist social movements in the United States were always tied to those abroad. "Our work in Latin America, Europe and Asia cannot wait…[I]f the whole world goes, the US cannot stand alone," he cautioned.[364]

Draskovich's will seemed to prevail over Welch. Civil rights, and the Kennedy and Johnson administrations' increasingly vocal support for it, would become the focus of the JBS's campaign against domestic Communist subversion during congressional debates on the civil rights act, during Barry Goldwater's presidential run, and afterwards.

Racism and Anti-Communism

Around the time of World War II, there occurred a remarkable shift in American intellectuals' ideas about race. "Scientific racism," by which inherent genetic traits were

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[362] Slobodan M. Draskovich to Revilo P. Oliver, April 20, 1962, 1-2, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.
[363] Slobodan M. Draskovich to Robert Welch, August 12, 1963, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.
[364] Slobodan M. Draskovich to Robert Welch, April 20, 1962, 2, 4, Revilo P. Oliver Papers (Kevin Alfred Strom, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.

understood to explain aggregate inequalities between black and white Americans, had been intellectually respectable for several decades. In part because of its similarity to Nazi ideology, scientific racism came into disrepute, and in its place there arose a "universalist vision" that saw members of the various races as equal in biological capabilities and therefore also in rights of citizenship.[365] Prominent intellectuals concluded that racial inequality arose not from inborn distinctions, but from social and cultural ones. If racial inequality resulted from political and economic oppression, it might be overcome by changing underlying social structures. This new perspective on race informed the Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma*, which according to intellectual historian Richard King was "the crowning achievement of progressive sociology." More than any other book, it was the intellectual foundation of the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.[366]

This shift in intellectual culture was slower to take hold among the broader American populace, and this was especially true in the legally and socially segregated South. The 1954 *Brown* decision, and the following year's order that schools desegregate with "all deliberate speed," spurred in the South a popular fury that often drew on the anti-Communism of its day. The decision was announced in the midst of the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954, after six years of public fascination with "un-American activities" in the State Department. Though the South, so full of Protestant Democrats, was not known for widespread admiration of the Catholic Republican Joseph McCarthy, there was at least one good reason for Southern conservatives to adopt his political

[365] Richard King, *Race, Culture, and the Intellectuals, 1940-1970* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 6.
[366] Ibid., 22.

style.[367] Even before the *Brown* decision was handed down, the Topeka Board of Education—the defendant in the suit—began to desegregate its schools. As Topeka schools effectively yielded on the question before it was decided, one Board member summarized Gunnar Myrdal's *An American Dilemma* to explain the Board's decision: racial segregation was "not an American practice."[368]

Senator James Eastland of Mississippi took the opposite position. In 1955, in his capacity as Chairman of the Senate's Internal Security Subcommittee, he proposed a panel to investigate subversive influences in the Court's decision. Without explicitly accusing the justices of Communist sympathies, he alleged "unmistakable evidence" of "insidious and false propaganda foisted by alien ideologies." As a "Swedish socialist," Eastland argued, Gunnar Myrdal had been a poor choice to teach Americans about their national identity. But mixed with the Swedish menace was a squarely domestic one, and therein lay the true threat. Both *An American Dilemma* and the Court, Eastland noted, had relied on the work of American leftists like E. Franklin Frazier, W. E. B. Du Bois, and other intellectuals associated with "Communist fronts." He reminded his fellow senators that the Carnegie Corporation had commissioned and funded Myrdal's study, and that Alger Hiss, recently tried for espionage and convicted of perjury, had once been head of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.[369]

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[367] George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 8.
[368] Mary L. Dudziak, "The Limits of Good Faith: Desegregation in Topeka, Kansas," *Law and History Review* 5: 2 (Autumn 1987): 376.
[369] James Eastland, "School Integration Cases in the United States Supreme Court," *Congressional Record*, May 26, 1955, 7119, 7122. Eastland's words illustrate the move from concerns about infiltration by Communist agents to infiltration by Communist ideas. As the historian K. A. Cuordileone frankly notes, "to insist, as did [Eastland], that Communists were behind the [*Brown*] decision…was to move into the realm of the delusional and absurd." Yet Cuordileone also points out that "Communist Party members had in fact championed the causes of African Americans in the 1930s and 1940s." For a segregationist like

White Southerners were aware that the Communist Party had attempted to organize among the South's black population and that Party members encouraged interracial cooperation and friendship in pursuit of the proletarian struggle.[370] To many white Southerners, the true Communist plot was to destroy the white race by encouraging interracial sex.[371] Such people articulated a distinction between different kinds of racial "stock," and they portrayed race mixing as a threat to western—that is, white—civilization. This kind of anti-Communism, infused with such overt racism, was distinct from that expressed by the John Birch Society and related anti-Communist groups during the early 1960s.

The first organization to coordinate massive resistance across several Southern states was the Federation for Constitutional Government.[372] Louisiana lawyer Drew L. Smith, a frequent contributor to the FCG's newsletter, alternated between stating the Southern position in anti-Communist terms and in terms of scientific racism, often mixing the two. In one article, Smith alleged that "equalitarians, integrationists, and amalgamationists" were plotting a race mixing scheme that would cause not only "the destruction of Caucasian civilization in this country," but would also destroy "the very independence of this Republic as a sovereign nation…in the face of other world populations forging ahead through the homogeneity of their white populations."[373] In another article, Smith accused the Soviet Union of "using her Caucasian integrity behind

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Eastland, this was really all that mattered. K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xix.

[370] Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 6.

[371] Lewis, 39.

[372] Neil R. McMillen, *The Citizens' Council: Organized Resistance to the Second Reconstruction*, *1954-64* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971), 116-117.

[373] Drew L. Smith, "Race, Mentality and National Survival" (Federation for Constitutional Government, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1960): 4, 1, L. Mendel Rivers Papers, Box 8, Folder 9, Special Collections, Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library of the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.

a Communist façade to achieve world domination" and encouraging American Communists to promote race mixing.[374] In like manner, the Citizens' Councils of America, the most prominent anti-integrationist organization to arise in the wake of *Brown*, routinely defended segregation according to principles of scientific racism as late as the mid-1960s.[375]

The *Brown* decision seemed tailor-made to inflame such racist fears. In an article for *The Atlantic* magazine that was reprinted in the Congressional Record, South Carolina journalist Herbert Ravenel Sass wrote that there was no understanding the Southern reaction to the *Brown* decision until one understood white Southerners' feelings about the importance of racial "purity."[376] In 1959, when Judge Leon M. Bazile convicted Richard and Mildred Loving of marrying in violation of Virginia's anti-miscegenation law, his opinion endowed racism with divine approval: "Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents…The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix."[377]

To James Eastland and many of his Southern peers, Communists threatened "racial integrity" more than anything else. Moreover, while American popular culture was abuzz with stories of Communist brainwashing, the greatest danger that Communist subversives seemed to pose was in the realm of ideas. Eastland argued that Communists

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[374] Drew L. Smith, "Russia, Communism and Race" (Federation for Constitutional Government, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1960): 3, L. Mendel Rivers Papers, Box 8, Folder 9, Special Collections, Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library of the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.

[375] Perhaps the best example is a Citizens' Council pamphlet arguing that racial segregation should be preserved for up to seventy reasons, among them, "Miscegenation has been a factor in the decline of past civilizations such as Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, and Portugal," and the racist scientist Carlton S. Coon's conclusion that "the Negro is 200,000 years behind the Caucasian in evolutionary development." "Racial Facts" (Greenwood, Mississippi: Association of Citizens' Councils, May 1964), Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 5, Folder: "Association of Citizens' Councils," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[376] Herbert Ravenel Sass, "Mixed Schools and Mixed Blood," reprinted in *Congressional Record*, Tuesday, January 22, 1957, A376.

[377] Quoted in *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967).

had poisoned the Supreme Court justices' minds with "un-American" principles, and Sass condemned the entire notion of racial equality as a form of brainwashing.[378] Others, however, promoted an altogether different reason to fear civil rights activists, one rooted in the longstanding portrayal of African Americans as a race prone to violence.

Before *Brown*, one of the most outspoken anti-Communist critics of the civil rights struggle was a non-Southerner, self-described former Communist, and itinerant preacher named Kenneth Goff. Goff alleged that during his time in the Communist Party, he had spent considerable time and effort "provoking revolt" among urban immigrants and African Americans. One of his tasks, he wrote in 1948, had been to encourage the very kind of violence to which white racists believed black men were prone. "We were told in Party circles that the Negro would be…organized into shock troops to do the dirty work and bear the brunt of the street fighting when the revolution came…and be encouraged toward acts of violence, particularly rape…"[379] In the Communist underground Goff described, the "black beast rapist" was often a willing disciple of even more fearsome Red masters who delighted in bestial cruelty. Such behavior, Goff wrote, was typical of Communists he had known personally—those who swelled the ranks of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. On returning to their comrades in the United States, Goff alleged, some had "told of raids on convents, where every woman would be repeatedly raped by alternating red beasts until dead."[380]

The anticipation of planned urban riots, of goon squads filled with black "shock troops," and of nightly terrorism and bloodshed would be important ingredients in the

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[378] Sass, "Mixed Schools and Mixed Blood," in *Congressional Record*, A378.
[379] Kenneth Goff, *Confessions of Stalin's Agent* (Englewood, Colorado: Kenneth Goff, 1948), accessed January 30, 2014, http://www.christianheritagemins.org/articles/ConfessionStalin.htm.
[380] Ibid.

fear of civil rights activism and revolutionary violence—and the convergence of these fears—that characterized the radical right's understanding of leftist social movements during the 1960s. The idea that black activists were under direct or indirect Communist control was a significant factor in how conservatives thought about the civil rights movement and then sought to explain the "long, hot summers" after 1964. But the most influential promoters of these ideas would not be outspoken racists like Kenneth Goff.

Manning Johnson, Anti-Communism, and "Race Pride"

As a black conservative commentator who had once been a Communist, Manning Johnson was instrumental in helping anti-Communists both oppose the civil rights movement and distance themselves from white supremacists. Johnson criticized the civil rights movement in terms similar to those Kenneth Goff used. He argued that Communists were interested in racial hatred rather than racial harmony, and that the integration of schools and public facilities had been designed to spark the kind of violence that civil rights activists were ostensibly working to overcome.

Johnson's journey was similar to that of other former Communists who became high-profile conservatives. He joined the CPUSA in 1930, and during the following decade he rose to a position of authority on the Party's national committee.[381] In 1940, after a period of disillusionment, he left the Communist Party, and after World War II he appeared as a witness before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Johnson was one of several "professional anti-Communists" whose testimony was important to

[381] "Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of Minority Groups—Part 2 (Testimony of Manning Johnson," Hearing Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-First Congress, First Session, July 14, 1949, 501.

the FBI and Congress in their countersubversive work at this time.[382] His ideas would prove useful to critics of civil rights as well.

During his Congressional testimony, Johnson alleged that he had worked to establish a "Negro republic" in the South. He described this as a concrete and well thought-out project. The black republic was to stretch from Maryland to Texas, "across 9 states in 219 counties." The region's political independence was to be accomplished "by revolution and armed insurrection in that area." The plot, Johnson explained, was based on the anti-imperial principles of Lenin and his Bolsheviks: that "national minorities" had a right to self-government within a Communist system. It was an aspect of the "theory of world revolution," that Johnson had learned during his time at Communist training school in New York.[383] There he had also learned strategies for organizing "the workers, the farmers, the intellectuals, the artists, the professionals, and the middle class elements, into various types of groups" and for "exploiting the grievances among them for the purpose of drawing them into the Communist world general movement."[384] Johnson told HUAC that the black self-determination project was among the reasons he quit the Party in 1940; he realized that Communists were not truly interested in the racial integration they publicly promoted.[385]

In 1958 Johnson published a book, *Color, Communism and Common Sense*, through The Alliance, a short-lived organization headed by Archibald Roosevelt, an anti-Communist spokesman and son of late President Theodore. Some of Johnson's

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[382] Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1998), 43.
[383] "Hearings Regarding Communist Infiltration of Minority Groups—Part 2 (Testimony of Manning Johnson," Hearing Before the Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Eighty-First Congress, First Session, July 14, 1949, 506-507.
[384] Ibid., 502.
[385] Ibid., 506.

arguments were indistinguishable from those already popular among white racists. For example, he charged that the NAACP had deliberately incited the infamous displays of racial hatred at Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, so that this sad image might be broadcast abroad to embarrass the United States and "[aid] Soviet Russia in the penetration and conquest of Asia and Africa."[386] On the other hand, Johnson seemed to consider himself a leader among his race and to fear that integration threatened the space black elites occupied in segregated communities. He argued that Communists were deliberately promoting a "persecution complex" in the South's black population. "Interracialism," he wrote, always had a "deadening effect…on any constructive proposal for Negro projects," and he pointed out that even token school integration had seen the firing of many black teachers.[387]

Johnson's writing revealed a surprising consonance that could exist between the views of white racists and those of black conservatives. As far as he was concerned, the integrationist ideology expressed first by American Communists, then the NAACP, and eventually the justices of the Warren Court, was damaging to "race pride." Such pride was increasingly frowned upon, Johnson opined, because the "persecution complex" invited African Americans to blame any personal plight on economic forces and on racism. Social segregation promoted pride among Polish-Americans, German-Americans, and Chinese-Americans, and so it should do among African-Americans, without being labeled a pressing social problem.[388]

Shortly after appearing on the Catholic "Blue Army" television program in 1959, Johnson died in a car accident. Some of his admirers suspected foul play, imagining that

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[386] Manning Johnson, *Color, Communism, and Common Sense* (New York: Alliance, Inc., 1958), 46.
[387] Ibid., 23, 44, 49.
[388] Ibid., 28.

he was the victim of a Soviet-directed assassination.[389] Far-fetched as this suspicion now seems, many anti-Communists who had spent time in the Communist Party considered themselves fugitives who, like Leon Trotsky, might flee to the far corners of the world without escaping the conspirators who sought their lives. The Communist Party, as far as they were concerned, was a global mafia, and like the more familiar Italian Mafia, Communist agents were thought to have no qualms about "offing" those who became roadblocks to their plans. Herbert Philbrick, who had spent his time in the Party as a spy for the F.B.I. rather than as a committed member, wrote Robert Welch in 1959 that circumstances surrounding Johnson's death were "just too damned quiet." He warned Welch that as a newly prominent anti-Communist activist, he should be prepared to "watch for almost anything."[390]

Though there was rarely any proof that former Communists in the United States were being offed by their former comrades—certainly nothing as gruesome as the assassination of Trotsky in Mexico—certain people were often said to have died under suspicious circumstances. Edgar Bundy wrote Herbert Philbrick in 1959, seeking his opinion on Communist tactics to explain two "ardent anti-Communist" friends in West Virginia who had discovered poisonous snakes in their briefcases not long before their untimely deaths. "Several friends of the widow have told her that this is a warning sign from the Communist Party that the person is about to be eliminated," Bundy wrote. Philbrick replied that though he had not heard about the specific practice of distributing

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[389] "What Happened to Manning Johnson?" *Soul*, September-October 1960, 19 [reprint], Radical Right Collection, Box 58, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[390] Herbert Philbrick to Robert Welch, August 10, 1959, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 121, Folder 6, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

rattlesnakes, "this would not be unusual." He himself had often received threatening messages in the form of dead rats on his front lawn.[391]

In 1963, Robert Welch began to promote Manning Johnson's book "because of its timelines in connection with the rising storm in the South." Johnson's decade in the Communist Party had helped him "to see through the massive and cruel deception being practiced by the Communists." Had he not "met with a fatal accident" before the "current troubles" began, he would surely have been leading the anti-civil rights campaign himself, Welch told his followers.[392]

Nuclear Disarmament and National Sovereignty

In his 1962 book *The Invisible Government*, radio commentator Dan Smoot did more than promote a new set of ideas about the international conspiracy; he also raised general alarm about the topic of nuclear disarmament, arguing that members of the Council on Foreign Relations sought not international peace, but disarmament that would leave the United States with no option but to surrender to the Soviet Union. Activism against nuclear disarmament was later tied to anti-civil rights activism through the example of one of the most controversial radical rightist of his day, General Edwin A. Walker.

At Billy James Hargis's 1962 Christian Crusade Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the John Birch Society's most refined spokesman, California Congressmen John Rousselot, took the stage to tell his audience about the Kennedy Administration's promotion of "total and complete disarmament." Channeling Smoot's *The Invisible*

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[391] Edgar C. Bundy to Herbert Philbrick, October 27, 1958; Reply from Philbrick to Bundy, December 31, 1958, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 60, Folder 10, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[392] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1964), 27, 15.

Government, Rousselot told the Christian Crusade's guests that the "collectivist establishment in this country" had "mentally conditioned" the American people to accept the policies of President Kennedy's most "un-American" cabinet members, specifically mentioning National Security Advisor Walt Rostow and Special Assistant Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Then, to his audience's audible delight, Rousselot addressed members of the press directly: "I am not calling these men Communists. I am merely saying that many of them show bad judgment, to say the least."[393]

Rousselot began his story during President Eisenhower's much-maligned summit meeting with Nikita Khrushchev in September 1959. Afterwards, Khrushchev allegedly presented his "Soviet plan for world disarmament" to the United Nations. It was a plan in three stages that would first eliminate nuclear weapons, followed by national military forces, finally putting these forces under direct UN control, and leaving behind in each nation only a "small police force" to maintain "law and order." It was no accident, Rousselot alleged, that Khrushchev's 1959 announcement was followed by "extensive agitation" in the United States by student activists and citizens' groups in favor of disarmament.[394]

Neither was it an accident that the State Department published the pamphlet "Freedom From War" a mere four months after the 1961 disarmament meeting in Crimea about which Dan Smoot had written, nor that at the UN's Sixteenth General Assembly, the U.S. delegation introduced a program "for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World." A non-binding plan in three stages, it sought to reduce the size of the

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[393] John H. Rousselot, Speech to the Fourth Annual Christian Crusade Convention, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 4, 1962, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[394] Ibid.

U.S. and U.S.S.R.'s armed forces, to develop "a permanent U.N. Peace Force," and eventually to destroy all nuclear weapons "except for those of agreed types and quantities to be used by the U.N. Peace Force." The ultimate goal was to create a "free, secure, and peaceful world of independent states adhering to common standards of justice and international conduct and subjecting the use of force to the rule of law."[395]

Rousselot and other radical rightists were far more concerned about the power of the "permanent U.N. Peace Force" than they were hopeful for the establishment of a "free, secure, and peaceful world." "[I]f you will put [our] program side-by-side with the one that Mr. Khrushchev gave in 1959," Rousselot declared, "you will find that they are almost identical."[396] Thus, without directly accusing any member of the United States federal bureaucracy of being a Communist, Rousselot alleged that the U.S. federal government was committed to carrying out Soviet policy.

The keynote speaker and "man of the year" at the 1962 Christian Crusade Convention was General Edwin A. Walker. His presence was emblematic of the bridge between right-wing concerns about foreign and domestic policy in 1962. After the publication of *The Invisible Government*, radical rightists readily linked ideas about the violation of American national sovereignty to the federal government's alleged violation of state sovereignty, which had interested Southern politicians ever since the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Recent presidents had revealed a penchant for promoting international cooperation, assisting the United Nations in foreign military interventions, and promoting nuclear disarmament in cooperation with the Soviet Union. The Kennedy

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[395] U.S. Department of State, "Freedom From War: The United States Program for General and Complete Disarmament in a Peaceful World" (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961), accessed February 11, 2015, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/arms/freedom_war.html.
[396] Rousselot, Speech to the Fourth Annual Christian Crusade Convention.

Administration, in particular, seemed poised to intervene in the Southern civil rights struggle. In 1962, few people were more influential than General Walker in blending the rhetoric of "national sovereignty" with that of "state sovereignty."

Walker had recently become both a spokesman for and an emblem of sovereignty. As commander of the Arkansas Military District, he had led the federalized National Guard troops that President Eisenhower sent to oversee the 1957 integration of Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas. Walker grimly performed his duty, he later recalled, because "[the] appointment to command was unavoidable in uniform, no matter how objectionable to me."[397]

Only after he stepped out of uniform did Walker achieve right-wing celebrity. In April 1961 *Overseas Weekly*, an English-language newspaper published in Germany, ran a story about Walker's political beliefs. *Overseas Weekly* was rag with a racy reputation; it catered to members of the armed forces serving abroad, offering humor, titillating photos, and news analysis from back home. The paper reported that General Walker, then commanding the 24th Infantry Division in West Germany, was promoting John Birch Society propaganda through his anti-Communist "Pro-Blue" program. Allegedly, Walker had said that Harry Truman, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Dean Acheson were "definitely pink."[398] Less than a year after the press aired Robert Welch's private beliefs about Dwight Eisenhower, the fact that a U.S. Major General seemed to share Welch's views was enough to create a scandal.

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[397] Edwin A. Walker, "Who Muzzled the Military?" address delivered in Dallas, Texas, December 12, 1961 (Dallas: The American Eagle Publishing Company, 1961), 2, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 2, Folder: "American Eagle Publishing Company," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[398] Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 105.

Lost in the controversy over Walker's intemperate comments was the fact that he had instituted the Pro-Blue program with the Defense Department's implicit approval. Shaken by the testimony of those like Edward Hunter and William Mayer, who argued that American POW's in Korea had been alarmingly susceptible to Communist brainwashing, the Defense Department encouraged the adoption of anti-Communist troop education programs. Hunter and Mayer had argued that troops needed to be educated in "Americanism" in order to combat Communist indoctrination, and Walker included Robert Welch's *The Life of John Birch* in a list of recommended books for his troops. The Pro-Blue program, however, was not named after Robert Welch's *Blue Book* but in reference to the fact that on military maps, anti-Communist forces were generally colored blue.[399]

Archibald Roberts, Walker's subordinate officer who had collaborated with him in creating the Pro-Blue program, set about trying to clear the General's name. He wrote to conservative senators alleging a conspiracy bent on "career-assassination of one of the Army's most respected combat leaders," and he tried to demonstrate that the Pro-Blue program had been sanctioned by the U.S. Army as a way of teaching troops about "the aims and purposes of International Communism."[400] Though *Overseas Weekly* had hinted that the Pro-Blue program was named after Robert Welch's *Blue Book*, Roberts insisted that it had absolutely nothing to do with the John Birch Society, whatever Walker's private feelings about that organization. He also tried to uncover evidence of Communist sympathies among the *Overseas Weekly*'s editorial staff, failing to dig up anything except the usual leftist affiliations. Therefore he focused on the newspaper's "salacious"

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[399] Ibid., 103, 105.
[400] Letter from Arch E. Roberts to Senator Gordon Allott, May 5, 1961, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 135, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.

themes, emphasizing the "pictures of semi-nude females" that often adorned its front and back covers, as well as its fascination with "[c]rime, usually violent, and sex, usually in terms of rape or prostitution."[401]

Following the controversy surrounding *Overseas Weekly*'s exposé, General Walker resigned from the military and returned to civilian life in his hometown of Dallas, Texas. There he played a considerable role in building the right-wing political culture for which that city would soon be known. Walker and his friend Robert Surry established the American Eagle Publishing Company to distribute Walker's speeches and other literature about government-sponsored "muzzling" of the military. The company operated out of Walker's home, where Surry kept a room.[402] As he toured the country giving speeches about his political beliefs and recent experiences, Walker linked what he believed was the deliberate attempt to silence his own teachings about Communism with U.S. "betrayals" of anti-Communist allies around the world and the government's increasing support for civil rights activism at home. He told his audience in December 1961 that his collective experiences in Korea, Little Rock, and West Germany illustrated the national and international reach of federal government censorship. In Korea, President Truman had fired General MacArthur and ordered Walker to pursue "coexistence on the battlefield, and censorship of victory." At Little Rock, "[t]he use of Federal troops without a request from a Governor" had forced Walker to censor his belief

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[401] "A Preliminary Report on The Overseas Weekly," undated, Albert C. Wedemeyer Collection, Box 135, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[402] "Testimony of Robert Alan Surrey," The President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy (Warren Commission), Washington, D.C., June 16, 1964, accessed October 1, 2014, http://jfkassassination.net/russ/testimony/surrey.htm.

in states' rights. His experience in Germany with the censorship of the Pro-Blue Program in Germany was the last straw in a string of personal affronts.[403]

At the same time, Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, one of the chief Southern defenders of "states' rights," launched a national campaign against military "muzzling." Soon, Thurmond was also touring the country, alleging that the Kennedy administration's cronies were bent on silencing anti-Communists in the military. On one occasion he claimed that orders for such muzzling "came directly from Moscow."[404] For both Walker and Thurmond, the controversy's smoking gun was a memorandum by Arkansas Senator J. William Fulbright, in which the Senator warned that the U.S. military stood in danger of being "infected with the virus of right-wing radicalism." Walker told his audiences that Fulbright's true fear arose from the prospect of the American military and the American people recognizing their common interest in unilateral action against Communism, and against the civilians who increasingly dictated military policy. As Joseph McCarthy had once warned, internationalists ruled the State Department, and whether or not they were true Communists, their goal was "the surrender of U.S. sovereignty and independence."[405]

In speeches to Southern audiences, Walker often used Dan Smoot's conspiracy theory to link the Southern "Lost Cause" to the cause of American "national sovereignty." "In standing for its own sovereignty, Mississippi has defended the sovereignty of us all," he told residents of Jackson in December 1961. "I am glad to be

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[403] Edwin A. Walker, "Who Muzzled the Military?" 2.
[404] Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 153. Thurmond was not necessarily accusing Kennedy Administration officials of being Communist agents. Like many radical rightists, his purpose was to argue that the drive to "muzzle" anti-Communists was originally a Communist drive, and that "liberals" in the United States were—perhaps unwittingly—carrying it out.
[405] Edwin A. Walker, "Who Muzzled the Military?" 2.

here to *take my stand*, to live and die for Dixie, for America, and for freedom. The Potomac Pretenders do not believe in the sovereignty and independence of the United States. They have undertaken to dissolve and divert it into a world wide super government of United Nations."[406]

The "Invasion" of Mississippi

Walker took an even more combative stand for Dixie in September 1962 by involving himself in a demonstration against James Meredith's enrollment at the University of Mississippi, which he framed as a protest against federal power rather than one against integration. Walker would now become a spokesman against "forced integration," and the federal response to his actions in Oxford would enhance his reputation as a man persecuted by federal power. Quotations attributed to Walker in the press certainly made him seem mentally unhinged. He was reported to have referred to the federal action in Oxford as "the conspiracy of the crucifixion by anti-Christ conspirators of the Supreme Court in their denial of prayer and their betrayal of a nation."[407] He allegedly encouraged the crowd to protest, even as it grew increasingly violent into the night, fatally shooting two bystanders and wounding several federal marshals. Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered Walker to be arrested and flown to a federal psychiatric hospital in Springfield, Missouri.[408]

Walker's supporters might not have rallied to his defense so eagerly had they not already known of his "muzzling" by civilian military authorities. Now they spoke out all

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[406] Edwin A. Walker, "The American Eagle: Weapons for Freedom," address delivered in Jackson, Mississippi, December 29, 1961 (Dallas: Edwin A. Walker, 1961), 1, 2, 8, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 37, Folder: "Walker Campaign Headquarters," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[407] "Walker Demands a 'Vocal Protest,' *New York Times*, September 30, 1962.
[408] "Walker is Facing 4 Federal Counts," *New York Times*, October 2, 1962.

the more against the alleged persecution he faced for his actions at Ole Miss. Drawing on the political culture forged during the previous decade over fears of persecution in the name of "mental health" and "brainwashing" by government and the media, they scoffed at Walker's institutionalization and accused the Kennedy Administration and the news media of misrepresenting the facts of what had happened in Mississippi. Both Robert Welch's close advisors and ordinary members of the JBS encouraged him to make some kind of statement against Walker's treatment and to take a firm position against the civil rights movement.[409]

In October 1963, in its first organizational foray into the controversy over federal support for civil rights, the JBS's *American Opinion* reprint series published and promoted *The Invasion of Mississippi*, a book by the Dallas activist Earl Lively, Jr. *American Opinion* had previously produced only reprints, and the editor's note indicated a tactical shift with this first publication of Lively's book. While the JBS had earlier focused on Communist activity in foreign countries, the editor wrote, in *The Invasion of Mississippi* "we see the Federal Government as it aids the Communist conspiracy here at home by terrorizing a Southern campus and town."[410]

Lively's overarching goal in *The Invasion of Mississippi* was to bring allegations of media brainwashing into the television age. "Shakespeare's famous observation has seldom been so appropriate as in the months of September and October 1962," he wrote. "Oxford, rather than the world, was the stage, but the players in the wings were scattered across the land."[411] His book included allegations nearly impossible to substantiate,

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[409] Schoenwald, 109.
[410] Leslie C. Smith, "Editor's Note," in Earl Lively, Jr., *The Invasion of Mississippi* (Belmont: American Opinion, 1963), i.
[411] Earl Lively, Jr., *The Invasion of Mississippi* (Belmont: American Opinion, 1963), 84.

including that a propaganda-seeking photographer had brought a large cross to campus and tried to persuade—and then pay—Ole Miss students to set it on fire. Allegedly finding the students unwilling, the photographer finally lit the cross himself.[412] While General Walker had advocated a peaceful protest against federal power, Lively alleged, the "liberal press…twisted [his] words…in an effort to picture him as an advocate of rebellion and insurrection." And Attorney General Kennedy was eager to treat him accordingly.[413]

Lively relied heavily on the work of black ex-Communists who opposed the civil rights movement, especially Manning Johnson and Leonard Patterson, both of whom had testified against their alleged former comrades during the 1940s and 1950s. The NAACP, Lively argued, was not a Communist front organization, but its promotion of racial integration revealed that it had been infiltrated by Communists and therefore encouraged the global Communist conspiracy.[414] He promoted the seemingly contradictory idea that the "integration movement" was compatible with the Communist promotion of black national self-determination, writing that "the racial policies of the CPUSA are part of a worldwide Negro nationalist movement, designed to foment revolution in every part of the world where Negroes have large segments of population – in Africa, South America, the United States and elsewhere."[415]

Nonviolence as a Prelude to Violence

Robert Welch was more outspoken than Lively in alleging a connection between U.S. policy in Africa and federal support for civil rights. After the "invasion" of Ole

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[412] Ibid., 84-85.
[413] Ibid., 85.
[414] Ibid., 30.
[415] Ibid., 18, 19.

Miss, he routinely compared the federal operation there to the United Nations operation in the Katanga province of the Congo. After Congolese independence from Belgium, Moise Tshombe had established the resource-rich Katanga as a breakaway province. Tshombe was considered loyal to Belgian commercial interests, and between 1961 and 1963 the United States aided UN forces in putting down the Katangan opposition and reunifying the recently independent Congo, seeming to commit itself to African decolonization.[416]

In his monthly bulletin to JBS members, Robert Welch denied that he favored colonialism in Africa, much as he consistently denied that he favored racial segregation at home. He instead argued that those working to secure civil rights for African Americans in the U.S. South, and those who branded Katanga a Belgian imperialist holdover, were either Communists or dupes. In both Katanga and Mississippi, Welch argued, a super-government had deliberately spread terror and provoked violence among otherwise peaceful people. Tshombe and his Katanga represented Christian capitalist civilization in the midst of a Communist barbarism established by Patrice Lumumba and his allies. Not only did Katanga have a strong economy; it was also "the one part of the former Belgian Congo that, in general, managed to preserve law, order and decency."[417] The UN had subjugated Katanga with cruel force and represented "the hypocrisy of the 'anti-colonialism' propaganda, which the Communists have been using for forty years as a means of replacing civilized rule with their own cruel tyranny."[418] After the involvement of federal troops in Oxford, Welch predicted, "We are now only a very few years…from

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[416] Larry Devlin, *Chief of Station, Congo: Fighting the Cold War in a Hot Zone* (New York: Public Affairs, 2007), 166-167.
[417] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January 1962," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1962* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1963), 14.
[418] Ibid., 4.

having United Nations mercenary troops, of the same criminal and brutal variety used by the UN in Katanga, sent to Mississippi to enforce the Kremlin's wishes..."[419]

Welch issued his first extended statement about the civil rights movement to his followers in August 1963. Echoing Slobodan Draskovich's concerns, he argued that the upcoming March on Washington and President Kennedy's increasing support for the civil rights movement were "intimately related" to the pending nuclear test ban treaty. To illustrate the connection, Welch quoted from the article "Peace and Civil Rights," in the July 1963 edition of the Communist monthly, *Political Affairs*: "The key to the future, in fighting both for peace and civil rights, clearly lies in the strengthening and advancement of the mass movements and struggles…In this connection, the fight for Negro freedom has become the focal point, which at this juncture holds the key to all other struggles, including the fight for peace."[420]

In the long Bulletin for September 1963, which he would from then on use as a primer for new JBS members, Welch expanded considerably on the topic of civil rights. The civil rights movement in the United States, he argued, was an arm of the global Communist-directed movement against European colonialism:

> It was in about 1920 that the Communists…[began] their drive 'against colonialism' and for 'self-determination.' For more than forty years they have been setting up native Communist guerilla bands in one so-called colonial area after another, to begin a demand for 'independence' and 'freedom.' In almost every case some European power was giving the 'colony' both enlightened and beneficent rule, with the standard of living, of education, and of native participation in government, all rising…as rapidly as the gains could be absorbed.[421]

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[419] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for October 1962," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1962* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1963), 20.
[420] Robert Welch, "Interim Bulletin, August 8, 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1964), 1.
[421] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for September, 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1961), 70-71.

As he began the JBS's national campaign against the civil rights act then pending in Congress, Welch emphatically denied accusations of racism, calling them the coinage of "malicious imagination." He described the JBS's attitude toward racial diversity in a caricature of the proposed legislation. In the John Birch Society, he wrote, "[we] have all white chapters, all Negro chapters, and integrated chapters…For us to lay down some rule, and tell our members everywhere that they must be sure to have a cross section of the community in each chapter, would be as stupid on our part as the Federal Government is now pretending to be."[422]

Unwilling to portray the Southern racial system as a positive good, Welch found an alternative reason to oppose the activists and legislators who wished to overturn it, and he did so by referring to the Communists' alleged plans to create a "Negro Soviet Republic" in the Black Belt. "Every major argument, method, and objective being used…to stir up racial riots and advance the Communist cause through racial agitation," Welch alleged, had been described in a 1928 pamphlet by a Hungarian Communist tactician who used the alias "John Pepper."[423]

To understand how easily radical rightists linked protest with pandemonium, and civil rights with "civil riots," it is useful to remember one of their most basic doctrines: that to effectively wage "political warfare," it was necessary to change the way people thought by changing the very language they spoke. Edward Hunter, perhaps the best-known anti-Communist spokesman on "brainwashing," told audiences that Communist language was "a code language [that] uses the same words as they are pronounced, as they are spelt, in every language," while slyly inverting the true meanings of those

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[422] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for August, 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1964), 25.
[423] Ibid., 27.

words.[424] If Communists who claimed to be working for peace were in fact working for revolution, it made sense that those practicing nonviolent resistance were determined to spark violence.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was the most highly respected proponent of the belief that Communists continued to be active infiltrators of civil rights organizations and fomenters of civil rights agitation.[425] Robert Welch frequently cited Hoover as the most authoritative source of his ideas, but he took Hoover's pronouncements a significant step further by arguing that Communist infiltrators' ultimate goal was to create social dislocation and violence that would inspire the federal government to assume various dictatorial powers, empowering the Communist agents within it.

It was a common opinion among radical rightists that Communist conspirators routinely staged acts of anti-black violence and then tried to implicate white racists in their crimes. This was imagined to be part of the Communists' broader goal of creating strife where it had not previously existed, so that they might promote dramatic social changes that would advance the communization of the United States. One representative story was that of the white activists Carl and Anne Braden. In 1954, as part of a common civil rights tactic, the Bradens had bought a house near Louisville, Kentucky, and then transferred ownership to a black family. After local police refused to protect the black couple from their neighbors and a stick of dynamite exploded in the house, Carl Braden was arrested and convicted of involvement in this act of terrorism, serving only eight months of a fifteen-year sentence, because the Supreme Court decision in *Pennsylvania v.*

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[424] Edward Hunter, "Brainwashing," Macon, Georgia, Fall 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[425] Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 140.

Nelson invalidated the anti-sedition law by which he had been convicted.[426] In *The Invasion of Mississippi*, Early Lively referred to "the Carl Braden technique," arguing that Communist activity at Ole Miss preceding the federal action there served "the obvious purpose of distorting the racial question by creating the impression that whites in the South will go around bombing Negroes' buildings at will.[427]

The belief that Communists were adept at spreading disorder and that civil rights legislation would further their conspiracy had an appeal much broader than the membership of the JBS and related groups alone. West Virginia Senator Robert C. Byrd, a Democrat, was a latecomer to the anti-civil rights cause. He had voted in favor of civil rights legislation in 1957 and 1960 before leading a Southern-dominated filibuster against the more comprehensive legislation of 1964. He had even supported federal anti-lynching legislation in 1960, a cause that Southern lawmakers had managed to block since the early twentieth century. Yet the way in which Byrd defended anti-lynching legislation mirrored the growing right-wing suspicion of civil rights activism. "Lynchings and bombings…constitute an indelible breach upon the conscience of humanity," Byrd declared on the Senate floor in February 1960. But the main reason Byrd believed the recent spate of anti-black violence merited federal investigation was because "the pattern is much like the method of operation in certain foreign countries [where] the Communists have used incidents such as…bombings in their portrayal of majority against minority…"[428]

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[426] Letter from J. Fred Schlafly to Clarence Manion, August 9, 1969, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 79, Folder 3, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois; Rosalie M. Gordon, *Nine Men Against America: The Supreme Court and its Attack on American Liberties* (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1958), 120-121.
[427] Lively *The Invasion of Mississippi*, 4, footnote 5.
[428] *Congressional Record*, Senate, February 16, 1960, 2615.

In July 1963, Robert Welch wrote to JBS members that "Communist-inspired racial riots are getting to be a regular part of the American scene."[429] However, chose for his example not the previous month's violence in Cambridge, Maryland, but Martin Luther King's recent action in Birmingham, which he portrayed as a Communist-directed smear campaign against the local police. The police had been maintaining order, Welch wrote, but "[while] cameras were poised and ready to catch the show at the right instant, one or more hotheads or dupes among the Negroes went up to the line and deliberately kicked one or more of the dogs. The result was a picture, plastered in the papers all over the United States…the glorious piece of propaganda that the Communists wanted."[430] As long as violence was occurring, and hidden Communists were imagined to be its perpetrators, it mattered little whether those doing the initial swinging were white racists in the South or black residents of Cambridge.

The John Birch Society and the 1964 Goldwater Campaign

In 1964, John Birch Society Council member Tom Anderson toured the country as a representative of "the Goldwater branch of the Republican Party," despite the fact that he had spent his life as a Tennessee Democrat. "I'd rather have Strom Thurmond any day of the week," he told an audience at the Atlanta Athletic Club in July. "I don't think it's fair to put Goldwater in the 'lesser of evils' category," Anderson went on, "I know he's Vice President of the Municipal League, he's promoted the Alaska Mental

[429] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for July 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1964), 12-13.
[430] Ibid, 13.

Health bill, he's a former member of the NAACP, he doesn't believe in segregation…but at least he believes in local autonomy on it."[431]

Like Senator Byrd of West Virginia, Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater came late to the anti-civil rights cause, having supported federal civil rights legislation in 1957 and 1960. His opposition to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 rewarded him with victory in the presidential election in several states of the Deep South, and he largely based this opposition on the power the act would allow the federal government to assume over the states. Significantly, however, by March 1964 Goldwater had begun to combine opposition to federal power with criticism of civil rights activists' tactics, describing them as an affront to "law and order."[432] Historian Michael Flamm has identified Goldwater's speech at the July 1964 Republican National Convention as the moment when "law and order became an important part of national political discourse."[433]

Though Goldwater took pains to distance himself from the John Birch Society during the campaign, several of the organization's leaders considered themselves responsible for his rise as the political standard bearer for the conservative movement. In his March 1958 edition of *American Opinion*, several months before he founded the JBS in Indianapolis, Robert Welch had published a profile on the "fighter from Phoenix."[434] Clarence Manion was also interested in Goldwater's potential, so much that in 1959 he founded a publishing company to oversee the publication a book—any book—that would lay Goldwater's political philosophy before the American public. It was Manion who

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[431] Thomas J. Anderson, Luncheon Program, Athletic Club, Atlanta, Georgia, July 25, 1963, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia.
[432] Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 33.
[433] Ibid., 31.
[434] Robert Welch, "A Fighter from Phoenix," *American Opinion* (March 1958): 15-25.

tapped William F. Buckley's brother-in-law, L. Brent Bozell, to be a ghostwriter.[435] In 1960, the resulting book was published as *The Conscience of a Conservative*.[436]

During the political fallout surrounding *The Politician*, Goldwater encouraged members of the JBS Council to find some way to unseat their leader. "Remove Bob Welch and the Birch Society cannot be attacked," he told Kansas Council member Robert Love in 1962.[437] Despite his declaration at the 1964 Republican National Convention that "extremism in defense of liberty is no vice," Goldwater was by this time reluctant to accept help from those the press increasingly deemed extremists. JBS Council member T. Coleman Andrews asked Clarence Manion in June 1964 about his involvement in Goldwater's campaign. "I have been told right straight out that they don't want the cooperation of any official of the John Birch Society except on a very quiet basis," Andrews noted.[438]

Some of Goldwater's supporters were unwilling to be quiet. Frank Cullen Brophy, a JBS Council member and Goldwater's fellow Arizonan, published a pamphlet through the same Victor Publishing Company that Clarence Manion had originally founded to publish *The Conscience of a Conservative*. The pamphlet, entitled "Must Goldwater Be Destroyed?" referred to his opponents as "the leaders of 20th century internationalism," members of an "Establishment" suspicious that Goldwater "may know too much, and if he does…will do something about it." A Goldwater victory thus threatened to reveal "a half-century of global intrigue and tragedy." The Republican

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[435] Clarence Manion to Frank Cullen Brophy, September 1, 1959, Manion Papers, Box 68, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[436] Clarence Manion to Frank Cullen Brophy, October 23, 1959, Clarence Manion Papers, Box 68, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[437] Barry Goldwater to Robert D. Love, February 3, 1962, "Documentary History of the John Birch Society," 155, Ernie Lazar Papers, accessed May 8, 2016, https://sites.google.com/site/ernie1241a/.
[438] T. Coleman Andrews to Clarence Manion, June 15, 1964, Clarence Manion Papers, Box 58, Folder 8, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

National Convention promised to be one of the "clashes between the Soviet Republic and the bourgeois states" that Lenin foretold.[439]

Brophy felt jilted by Goldwater and his closest advisors after the election defeat in November. "I was in close contact with about a dozen important men throughout the country," he wrote to Revilo Oliver the following year. "They had put up hundreds of thousands for Goldwater when he was relatively obscure. They were responsible for making him a national figure in the 1960 convention…As the campaign progressed, they were treated like dirt." Brophy had noticed his relationship with Goldwater begin to deteriorate as early as 1962, after he sent the senator a "confidential report" concerning the "Conspiracy." Yet Brophy seemed not to consider that Goldwater might have disbelieved the report or considered it bad politics. Instead, he attributed Goldwater's increasing distance to "battle fatigue" and the fact that "it probably requires a superman to do battle with the Conspiracy itself."[440] Oliver replied that it might never be possible to know Goldwater's motives for distancing himself from the JBS. He speculated that "Goldwater did not really want to be president" and perhaps deliberately sabotaged his own campaign, or—knowing the Communist revolution was close at hand—that he "deliberately contrived his own defeat so that he would not have to be the president who surrenders."[441]

The Anticipation of Violence in 1965

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[439] Frank Cullen Brophy, "Must Barry Goldwater Be Destroyed?" (Shepherdsville, Kentucky: Victor Publishing Company, 1964), 5-6, 17-18.
[440] Frank Cullen Brophy to Revilo P. Oliver, undated, Revilo P. Oliver Papers, accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.
[441] Revilo P. Oliver to Frank Cullen Brophy, August 25, 1965, Revilo P. Oliver Papers, accessed January 23, 2015, http://www.revilo-oliver.com/papers/.

By June of 1965, Robert Welch routinely promoted the idea that a race war would erupt somewhere in the South. He identified 1965 as the appointed year, reproducing in his monthly bulletin an editorial from the *Richmond News Leader* entitled "Department of Accurate Prophecy." The editorial told of the "Lincoln Project" of 1957, by which "the Communist Party's Central Committee will begin to dispatch specially trained agents to eleven Southern States…to work with local party leaders in surveying twenty counties, any one of which might be ideally suited to be selected as a target for provoking the pre-planned initial disorder early in 1965."[442] Just as the Communists had been the inventors of what later became President Kennedy's disarmament plan, the Party had allegedly drawn up as early as 1956 a piece of legislation demanding an end to literacy tests and residence requirements for voting, as well as the enforcement of federal supervision over these matters.[443]

Welch expanded on the *News Leader* article, as he often did, with a series of tantalizing unknowns. "Whether this leadership spot was filled by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, founded in 1957 and headed by Martin Luther King, we have no way of knowing. Nor do we know whether the Selma-to-Montgomery march was the one big disturbance, filling this requirement set forth nine years before…"[444] Before the summer of 1965, the Southern Community Organization and Education Project (SCOPE) was actively recruiting college students to participate in another Freedom Summer for voter registration and education. "Where, or over what excuse, vicious rioting may be fomented…in any of the 110 'blackbelt counties' to be treated to the same enlightenment

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[442] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June 1965" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1965): 11, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[443] Ibid., 10-11.
[444] Ibid., 11-12.

by these poor brainwashed youngsters…we cannot even make a guess," Welch concluded.[445]

During congressional debate over the Voting Rights Act, South Carolina's Strom Thurmond appeared on *The Manion Forum* and alleged that civil rights demonstrators had "perfected the technique of non-violent provocative demonstrations to the point that they can cause even the most benevolent authority to respond with forceful resistance." He called this "an old Communist, pacifist technique" that had been tested in other parts of the world before being put to use in the United States. Thurmond went on to allege Communist provocation of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, of the Selma-to-Montgomery March, and of the 1964 violence in Harlem. "[There] is central control," he declared. "A button is pressed and a demonstration occurs in Chicago. A button is pressed and a demonstration occurs in Selma. A button is pressed—a demonstration appears in Buffalo, in Harlem, or somewhere else."[446]

In August 1965, the anticipated interracial violence came, but it erupted in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles rather than in the Southern Black Belt. Clarence Manion believed the explanation for the violence in Watts was simple. U.S. Communists had revised Marx's three-step program of class-consciousness, class conflict, and class warfare, because in the United States, upward mobility had precluded the formation of a united working class. The conspirators had revised Marx's program of class conflict to pit the black race against the white race. "American Negroes were ruthlessly conscripted as shock troops" for the revolutionary action in Watts, Manion argued, by the aggressive

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[445] Ibid., 12.
[446] Strom Thurmond, "'Non-Violent' Demonstrations and Civil Disobedience: A Communist-Pacifist Technique to Subvert the Rule of Law,' *The Manion Forum,* Weekly Broadcast No. 563, July 19, 1965, 2, 4, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 83, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Communist promotion of "color consciousness." Thus, "with fire and sword…the Socialist revolution" had come to the City of Angels.[447]

[447] Clarence E. Manion, "Race, Color and Creed: Grist for the Marxist Mill," *The Manion Forum*, Weekly Broadcast No. 571, September 12, 1965, 2, 3, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 83, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

CHAPTER 5

Riots and Civilization: The Radical Right's Characterization of the Communist Assault on "Law and Order"

"There's no question about it; this is the best city in the world." Thus did a black resident of Los Angeles portray his city to investigators from the McCone Commission, a group charged by California Governor Pat Brown with explaining why the Watts neighborhood had recently erupted into six days of fire, violence, and destruction in response to what seemed like a routine arrest for drunk driving. From all appearances, Watts was a pleasant neighborhood of detached houses and streets lined with palm trees. The previous year, of sixty-eight U.S. cities examined, the Urban League had deemed Los Angeles the best city for African Americans to live in.[448] Amid the horror and devastation of the Watts riots, a puzzle arose. Why did a neighborhood in a city that had seemed to fulfill the American dream so well give vent to such an unprecedented display of rage?

While acknowledging the comparative superiority of South Central Los Angeles over predominantly black neighborhoods in other cities, the McCone Commission cited as the cause of the violence the same factors that were at play in poorer neighborhoods. Watts and the other "Negro districts of Los Angeles" were neither "urban gems [nor] slums." While structural poverty was not evident, black neighborhoods in Los Angeles and elsewhere suffered from a chronic problem of culture. Schoolchildren faced a "dull, devastating spiral of failure" by being born into homes without "the incentive and the

[448] The Governor's Commission on the Los Angeles Riots (McCone Commission), "Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning?" December 2, 1965, accessed December 27, 2014, http://www.usc.edu/libraries/archives/cityinstress/mccone/part3.html.

elementary experience with words and ideas which prepares most children for school." Such children often emerged from school neither literate nor employable, and so the cycle continued to subsequent generations.[449]

As a remedy, the McCone Commission recommended a series of costly efforts to create jobs, improve education, professionalize the local police, and improve police-civilian relations. The report's writers admitted that such efforts would encompass a more intensive version of President Lyndon Johnson's anti-poverty program, this time "on a scale unknown to any great society." This was in spite of the fact that the commission simultaneously argued that frustrated expectations about anti-poverty initiatives had contributed to the rioting in the first place.[450]

Watts looms large as the symbolic dividing line between the "good" and "bad" 1960s. Rick Perlstein, for example, opens his book *Nixonland* with Watts, arguing that over the course of the next several years "the battle lines that define our culture and politics were forged in blood and fire." The liberal consensus, which stood at the height of its influence in 1964, was associated eight years later with "civilizational chaos."[451]

Historian Michael Flamm has identified the politics of "law and order" as a crucial spark in the collapse of the national liberal consensus. Part of the cause was a very real increase in urban crime. Between 1962 and 1972, for example, the number of robberies per year in New York increased by over one thousand percent. With the appearance of frequent urban rioting in the mid-1960s, public concerns about the rising national crime rate combined with fears of political radicalism, especially radicalism

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[449] Ibid.
[450] Ibid.
[451] Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008), xi, xiii.

among African Americans.[452] It was this turn of events that opened a space for Richard Nixon to nationalize his "Southern strategy" in the election of 1968.[453] While it was no longer acceptable by that time to criticize members of the liberal political establishment for supporting of the Southern civil rights movement and civil rights legislation, as Barry Goldwater had done in 1964, it was palatable and useful by 1968 to criticize them for coddling criminals.

The radical right of the 1960s, steeped in a political culture which taught that Communists continued to infiltrate American social movements in spite of their meager numbers, had long portrayed Communism as an international conspiracy to promote discontent, hatred, and violence, in that order. Communists had duped liberals in the federal government into supporting the civil rights movement, radical rightists argued, and as rioting erupted in city after city, the United States was reaping the bitter harvest of discontent deliberately sown by Communists in the civil rights movement. As many conservatives continued to distance themselves from discredited beliefs in white racial superiority and in African Americans' innate violent tendencies, radical rightists argued that African Americans were being duped by race consciousness, a distinct version of class-consciousness that had shaped twentieth century anti-colonialism. They insisted that the U.S. civil rights movement was one arm of a global anti-colonial struggle, that Communists were promoting both movements, and that it had been predetermined that the ostensibly peaceful civil rights movement would lead to interracial violence.

Therefore, what seemed to many Americans like a stark distinction between the peaceful civil rights demonstrations of the South and the violent riots in cities like Watts

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[452] Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 4-5.
[453] Ibid., 10.

did not seem so stark when viewed from a radical right perspective. Conservative anti-Communists had long argued that the promotion of "civil turmoil" would result in episodes like the Watts riots, as a prelude to national race war. The only great surprise in 1965 was that the episode that caught the nation's attention happened so far away from the Deep South.

Civil Rights and Civilization

The conservative promotion of "law and order" that so impacted American politics during the second half of the 1960s was an outgrowth of an older defense of "civilization" against "barbarism." A commitment to protecting "civilization" from Communists and Communism united both racist and theoretically non-racist anti-Communists who opposed the civil rights movement. During the second half of the 1960s, the anti-Communist analysis of both the civil rights movement and urban rioting drew on a political outlook that had previously been more explicitly racist in nature, often based on the belief that Communists planned to use black rioters to spark the American Communist revolution.

Kenneth Goff, the Pentecostal preacher who had warned during the 1940s that Communist-led "black shock troops" would spark the urban Communist revolution in the United States, became interested during the early 1960s in African decolonization. Goff's unabashed racism and anti-Semitism were embarrassing to Robert Welch, and media commentators were quick to note his appearances at the John Birch Society's events.[454] Even so, his assessment of the global anti-colonial situation was an undeniable

[454] For example, President Eisenhower's confidant, Leonard Finder, made much of Goff's invitation to speak at JBS events in and around Atlanta in 1963 and 1964. Leonard V. Finder, "No Birch Whitewash; Anti-Semitism Exists," October 25, 1964, *The Sacramento Union*, in "Extremism—Historically and the John Birch Society—as set forth factually and analytically in two series of articles in *The Sacramento*

influence in the JBS's political outlook. "The world that you and I live in is virtually on fire," Goff told a Houston audience in 1963, shortly before John F. Kennedy's assassination. "These fires burn in Laos, in Algeria, in Vietnam, in Cuba, in Berlin, in the Congos, and across the length and breadth of the world." With Europe and Asia "virtually gone," Goff alleged, the Communists were now leading the charge against European colonialism in Africa, a continent whose residents, before Europeans took over, "had been eating soup out of each other's heads and playing nothing but Elvis Presley rock and roll for six thousand years."[455]

During the early 1960s, radical rightists were especially preoccupied with the issue of Algerian independence, which had received the support of French President Charles de Gaulle. To most radical right commentators, de Gaulle's posture seemed less like a grant of independence to a colonized people than a betrayal of the loyal French who were living in Algeria. In May 1962, Robert Welch wrote JBS Council member Frank Cullen Brophy, calling France "the first of the three or four great powers like ourselves to fall under the Communist tyranny," basing this assessment entirely on the fact that de Gaulle had come to support Algerian independence. Though he made no direct connections to the U.S. civil rights movement yet, Welch believed it vital that Americans know the truth of what was happening in Algeria, because it was surely a portent for what would soon happen in the United States.[456]

Union, October-November 1964, Post-Presidential Papers, 1961-69, 1965 Principal File, Box 1, Folder: "AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, Kansas.

[455] Kenneth Goff, "The Truth About Cuba," Houston, Texas, 1963, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

[456] Robert Welch to Frank Cullen Brophy, May 29, 1962, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Welch alleged that guerrilla fighters of the Algerian *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) deliberately carried out acts of terrorism not against their French imperial enemies, but against the ordinary Algerians whom they claimed to represent. "With their usual exact reversal of the truth," Welch wrote in 1960, "the Communists have used pictures of the horrible results of *their own* tortures and murders, to 'document' their charges against the French—exactly as the Soviets charged the Germans with the Katyn Forest massacre which they themselves had perpetrated."[457] The bulletin containing this report featured several grisly pictures of the riddled and dismembered bodies of Algerian men, women, and children.

Through his opposition to Algerian independence, Welch began to work closely with Samuel L. Blumenfeld, a Jewish journalist and founding member of the anti-FLN American Committee for France and Algeria. Blumenfeld would later organize the JBS-sponsored Jewish Society of Americanists, an organization whose founding would drive some of the JBS's most anti-Semitic leaders from membership.[458] During the early 1960s, Blumenfeld posited an anti-racist reason for supporting French colonialism and opposing Charles de Gaulle. He did not accuse de Gaulle of being a knowing Communist, as Robert Welch did. Instead, he argued that de Gaulle was interested in building a racially "pure" France and Europe. It was for this reason that he was so eager to grant Algeria independence from France: he wanted to be rid of the Muslim presence in the French Republic and to "build his Europe of fatherlands from the Atlantic to the Urals." De Gaulle mistakenly believed he could build a racial alliance with the Soviet

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[457] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January 1960," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1960* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1961), 21.
[458] Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "The Jewish Society of Americanists," John Birch Society Report, Transcript 7, April 17, 1966, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

Union by exploiting that nation's rift with China, Blumenfeld argued, failing to realize that "the Communist conspiracy is an *international* movement on the part of organized criminals."[459]

Against the backdrop of African decolonization during the early 1960s, radical rightists rediscovered a Communist tactician who had once placed black Americans at the forefront of the proletarian struggle and simultaneously numbered them among the colonized peoples of the world. József Pogány was a Hungarian who in 1928 published the pamphlet "American Negro Problems" under the alias "John Pepper." Whittaker Chambers recalled having seen him in 1929, when, as the Comintern's official representative to the American Communist delegation, Pogány "strutted down the center aisle of the meeting…a small man swollen with pride of place and power." But his support for Jay Lovestone's faction of the CPUSA placed him among Joseph Stalin's ever-growing number of political enemies. He died in 1938, a victim of the Great Purge.[460]

"American Negro Problems" contained many ideas that anti-Communists and white supremacists could use to put a fearsome face on the civil rights movement. Pogány had pledged the Communist Party's support for nearly all goals of the 1950s and 1960s movement, including the abolition of Jim Crow and laws against interracial marriage, as well as support for federal anti-lynching and employment non-discrimination legislation.[461] But Pogány quickly turned to the struggle of the working class against their capitalist overlords. He argued that to be free of "capitalist

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[459] Samuel L. Blumenfeld, "About De Gaulle" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1962): 8, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 7, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.
[460] Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York: Random House, 1952), 247.
[461] John Pepper, "American Negro Problems" (New York: Workers Library Publishers, 1928), 4.

exploitation," black Americans would first have to free themselves from social and legal segregation. Only then could American workers form a united, class-conscious political force. Pogány then placed the struggle against American racism in terms of the global struggle against European imperialism.[462] In the United States, as in the colonized world, he wrote, it "is necessary to supplement the struggle for the full racial, social and political equality of the Negroes with a struggle for their right of national self-determination. Self-determination means the right to establish their own state, to erect their own government, if they choose to do so."[463]

Despite the fact that the black Soviet republic was never likely to be achieved, and despite the CPUSA's 1959 repudiation of the program, grassroots anti-Communist organizations drew on the testimony of disgruntled former Communists like Manning Johnson who had worked for the establishment of this "Negro republic," and who insisted that Communist designs remained the same as they always had been. In *Color, Communism, and Common Sense*, Johnson argued that Communists expected black nationalists to use violence to achieve their nationhood, and that the Communists' civil rights agenda was to provoke as much violence as possible. Claiming to speak from experience, Johnson told civic groups that hatred, not idealism, was what fired a Communist's devotion to his cause.[464]

Because they understood the concept of "national self-determination" to be of Communist origin, many U.S. conservatives saw Communist influence behind the revolutionary turmoil that spread into Africa during the early 1960s. Some also

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[462] John Pepper, "American Negro Problems," *The Communist*, October 1928, 628.
[463] Ibid., 632.
[464] Manning Johnson, "Reds Work at Spreading Hate," *Manchester Union Leader,* Tuesday, May 5, 1964, 22. This 1964 reprint was attributed to Johnson's 1954 address before the American Legion in New Hampshire, originally in response to the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

understood the violence besetting this continent's decolonizing nations to be a portent of what might soon happen in the United States. Among those who characterized capitalism—rather than "racial integrity"— as the guardian of civilization, it was increasingly possible to disavow racism while simultaneously forming political alliances with racists. Other unlikely political bedfellows also emerged from the intellectual world of the radical right as its members lambasted anti-colonialism.

In August 1962, the fundamentalist leader Billy James Hargis's fourth annual Christian Crusade Convention featured several Catholic speakers. Martin Camacho spoke as head of the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs. Camacho claimed to have lost all hope in the Kennedy Administration's policy toward Africa. He derided the "inevitable winds of change that blow over Africa," which Kennedy's best and brightest believed represented "the yearnings, the hopes, the aspirations, and the rising expectations…of people who desire national existence, free and independent from their alleged colonial oppressors." Such ideas had been manufactured in the 1920s as Communist propaganda, Camacho insisted, when the word "colony" was "debauched and perverted" by Communists bent on casting colonial powers as oppressive empires. As far as the Portuguese were concerned, Angola, Mozambique, Goa, and other overseas possessions were "integral parts of Portugal, [forming] one nation, just like we have Hawaii and Alaska."[465]

To Camacho, those who fought for Angolan independence were terrorists. Holden Roberto, president of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola, had conducted a raid in March 1961 and murdered over a thousand people, "both black and

[465] Martin Camacho, "Portugal=Angola," Fourth Annual Christian Crusade Convention, Tulsa, Oklahoma, August 5, 1962, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

white; men, women, and children." Surely it was foolish, he argued, to consider such acts of barbarism "expressions of nationalist aspirations."[466] Thus Camacho emphasized a foundational radical right belief: Those who fought in the name of national self-determination were in fact bent on spreading terror and subduing resistance to their cause. When Portugal responded to anti-colonial uprisings with lethal force, it did not act merely in its national interest, and certainly not from racism, but from a desire to maintain "law and order" and pursue "human decency." And for this, the United Nations had censured Portugal.[467]

Denying Racism While Supporting Colonialism

By the time Congress began debating the Civil Rights Act of 1964, radical rightists were usually on the side of white Southern segregationists on any issue involving race relations at home and decolonization abroad. They often framed their support for colonialism as a way of maintaining law and order. While many remained sensitive to charges of racism, they became more comfortable with the excuse that any movement on behalf of a racial minority or previously colonized national group was a pro-Communist movement. They believed that nations like Rhodesia and South Africa should be rewarded for their staunch anti-Communism, not censured for practicing Jim Crow-style segregation.

The white government of Rhodesia was a case in point. In November 1965, just over a year after the British colony of Northern Rhodesia declared itself the independent Republic of Zambia, Southern Rhodesia's white government also declared independence from Great Britain, hoping to delay transition to black majority rule. The British

[466] Ibid.
[467] Ibid.

government had been prepared to grant independence to Southern Rhodesia following such a transition, but under the circumstances it refused to recognize the white government as valid.

Many anti-Communist spokespeople criticized the U.S. government's refusal along with Britain to recognize the white Republic of Rhodesia, not necessarily because they favored the segregation practiced there, but because the government was aggressively anti-Communist. "Nothing will serve to play into the communists' hands better than the present unfriendly attitude in our country toward Rhodesia," wrote J. C. Phillips, a Texas newspaper editor and onetime head of Texas's Investigative Committee on Un-American Activities, to Republican Senator John Tower in 1966. "Once we have lost Rhodesia and South Africa to the communists, we will have lost the entire continent of Africa. You surely know what that will mean to the civilized Western world."[468] The John Birch Society likewise declared for "Rhodesian independence," with the slogan, "If there had been a United Nations in 1776, do you honestly believe it would have been on the side of Freedom?"[469]

Representatives of the Rhodesian government actively courted conservative activists in the United States. In a letter to American newspapers, Prime Minister Ian Smith framed the Rhodesian government's declaration of independence from Britain in terms of the United States' own such declaration of 1776. Americans and Rhodesians both came from pioneer stock, he wrote, and were the descendants of people who had

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[468] J. C. Phillips to John Tower, December 21, 1966, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 77, Folder 3, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois; Annette Priemer, "Second Anniversary, Progress Report," Committee of Christian Laymen, Inc., October 1963, John G. Schmitz Papers, Box 33, Folder 2, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[469] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for April, 1967" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1967), 5, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

established civilization in the wilderness. "In each case a government thousands of miles away, convinced it knew better than those on the spot, compounded mistake after mistake, Smith continued. "Today, it is sad to see the United States going back on its own history and joining the chorus of those who scoff at the Rhodesian stand."[470]

Smith touched on the usual points that American anti-Communists tended to make, while carefully avoiding objectively racist remarks. Rhodesia was openly offering "troops, supplies, anything we can spare" to fight the Communists in Vietnam, and yet President Johnson rebuffed such offers. Britain's folly lay in its policy since the end of World War II of "setting the African countries free." Though this sounded right enough in theory, in practice it had meant "the imposition of totalitarian slavery for the masses." The principle of "one man, one vote" had become "one party, one leader" and often "one election," resulting in "injustice, corruption, chaos, bloodshed, revolutions and army mutinies." The white Rhodesian government was not attempting to suppress the rights of the black majority, Prime Minister Smith insisted. It was simply trying to keep the Communists from gaining the upper hand in politics and Rhodesia from falling into chaos. "We don't even arm our policemen," Smith boasted, "and Rhodesia continues as an oasis of calm in a continent of simmering violence."[471]

In 1964 Tom Anderson, a JBS speaker, Tennessee humorist, and editor of *Farm and Ranch* magazine, had told Southern audiences that the civil rights bill was "part of the grand design of the collectivists for their One World: one race, mongrel; one church,

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[470] Ian Smith, "Rhodesia's Leader Sees His Struggle, Ours in Viet Nam as 'All the Same'," *Daily Advance*, Thursday, April 21, 1966 (reprint from American Friends of Rhodesia, Nashua, New Hampshire), Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 2, Folder: "American Friends of Rhodesia," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[471] Ibid.

apostate and antichrist; one government, under the Beast."[472] By 1966 he had become the JBS's "expert" on African decolonization, defending Ian Smith's Rhodesia on the new "John Birch Society Report" radio program. "Since when is colonialism worse than dictatorship?" Anderson asked rhetorically, as if no other option existed on the African continent. "The issue is not color, but capacity; not race, but fitness to shoulder responsibility…The blacks are egged on by the leftists and the Communists in Africa, demanding unearned equality and freedom without responsibility. A 'one man, one vote' Rhodesia would produce a black government, which would produce another Congo: chaos, hunger, and Communism."[473]

Radical rightists had the difficult task of insisting that relations between imperialists and the colonized were naturally peaceful and respectful without the added ingredient of Communist subversion. Such beliefs became linked to ideas about the civil rights movement in the United States. The Communists' campaign in the United States, according to radical rightists, was to convince Southern blacks that they composed an oppressed nation within a nation. Without such agitation, they argued, race relations in the South would be placid.

"Two Revolutions At Once"

Robert Welch believed that the race war would begin in 1965, and he suspected that Selma was the "disturbance" that would set it in motion.[474] In the wake of nationally televised violence against demonstrators in Selma and the ensuing march to Montgomery,

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[472] Thomas J. Anderson, "Here We Go Again," Key Records, 1964, The John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[473] Thomas J. Anderson, "Rhodesia," The John Birch Society Report, Transcript 6, April 10, 1966, The John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.
[474] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June 1965" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1965), 12, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

Welch linked the John Birch Society's earlier campaign against the Civil Rights Act to its broader mission to defeat the global Communist conspiracy. While Welch had long argued that the civil rights movement was one of many tools Communists hoped to use to strengthen the power of the federal government, by 1965 the civil rights movement had become *the* issue. Welch added details to an earlier argument that the civil rights movement was an anti-colonial movement within the United States.

In his bulletin to JBS members in April 1965, Welch included a new essay entitled "Two Revolutions at Once," in which he attempted to explain "[t]he whole matrix of agitation, turmoil, rioting, and propaganda, which is currently designated by the phrase 'civil rights."[475] Communism, as Welch had long argued, was premised on the "Basic Big Lie" that the downtrodden were compelled by their economic circumstances to rebel against exploitative capitalists. Anti-colonialism, he explained, was an alternative version of this same lie, a substitution of race consciousness for class-consciousness. By 1920 European imperialists "were giving their subjects a very enlightened and benevolent rule indeed." With little popular support for anti-colonial nationalism, "separatist movements had to be artificially created," and Communists had made the creation of these movements an integral part of their program.[476]

Welch believed that József Pogány's 1928 pamphlet "American Negro Problems" had been inspired by the founding of the international League Against Imperialism the year before. Communists like Pogány, of course, were interested neither in ending the oppression of African Americans in the United States nor of people in the colonized world; they hoped instead that colonized people would "be stirred and agitated – and

[475] Robert Welch, "Two Revolutions At Once," (Belmont: American Opinion, 1966), 18, Radical Right Collection, Box 32, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford University, Stanford, California.
[476] Ibid., 2, 3.

eventually terrorized – into an appearance of seeking their 'freedom and independence'."[477]

Anti-colonialism was therefore but one "strategy" for accomplishment of the global proletarian revolution—a strategy that had borne fruit around the world—and inevitably the result was violence and disorder. Moreover, as European governments like de Gaulle's became increasingly comfortable relinquishing their colonial holdings in the name of "national self-determination," repression of those who opposed independence sometimes came at the hands of the European governments themselves. In Algeria, for example, Welch alleged, "tens of thousands of the finest officers and men in the French army" had formed a counter-subversive force "to try to save Algeria from Communist hands." But de Gaulle had opposed them, just as "the Administration in Washington is visibly planning to use the U.S. Army, to whatever extent necessary, to suppress opposition to the leaders of the Negro Revolutionary movement in the South."[478] All of the preceding information, Welch concluded, might serve as "both an explanation of the present turmoil and a preview of the future horror in our Dixie States."[479]

The "Molotov" in the Molotov Cocktail

Anti-Communist conspiracy theory in the United States was based on the recognition of actual tactics that American Communists had been known to use. During the 1930s, a period political historian Harvey Klehr has called "the heyday of American Communism," Communists had formed ad hoc groups tasked with joining and influencing the policy of established organizations. They often referred to these groups as "mass organizations," while detractors called them "fronts," and they were an

[477] Ibid., 10.
[478] Ibid., 8.
[479] Ibid., 14.

important force in leftist politics during the 1930s.[480] By the 1960s, the major point of disagreement between right-wing conspiracy theorists and non-conspiracy theorists was not the recognition that a Communist conspiracy existed. It was a disagreement over whether that conspiracy was still influential enough to be dangerous to American institutions.

The "united front," a tactic put into practice at the beginning of what Communists recognized as the "third period" in their revolutionary efforts, began in 1928, the same year that József Pógany published "American Negro Problems." The idea behind the united front was the Communists were to pretend to cooperate with non-Communists in seeking reformist goals, while in fact working assiduously to weaken the influence of their ostensible political allies. It was popular during this time to denigrate leftist opponents to Communist efforts as "social fascists." People as far to the left as John Dewey and W.E.B. Du Bois at times received this epithet from Communists.[481]

The year 1928 also saw the purging of Jay Lovestone's faction of the CPUSA. Despite his popularity among American Communists, Lovestone had preached "American exceptionalism," arguing that economic conditions specific to the United States were bound to make the working class's radicalization lag behind that in other parts of the world. This proved unacceptable to the Comintern's delegates, who saw to it that leadership of the CPUSA went to William Z. Foster.[482] It was a stroke of luck for American Communism that this chastisement from Moscow came within a year's time of the stock market crash and the greatest test capitalism would face during the twentieth

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[480] Harvey Klehr, *The Heyday of American Communism: The Depression Decade* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), 6.
[481] Ibid., 13, 17.
[482] Ibid., 8.

century. American Communists would enter the 1930s not only with a newly persuasive critique of the system that had allegedly caused all the misery, but also with an unprecedented amount of discipline, always clinging to directives from Moscow, even as they continued to infiltrate and do their best to direct independent leftist movements.[483]

As decolonization abroad and the civil rights movement at home accelerated during the 1950s and 1960s, a handful of former Communists testified that they had trained for violent anti-colonial activity during the 1920s and 1930s at a Moscow school called the Lenin Institute of Political Warfare. While many anti-Communists referred casually to such a school, some scholars have since denied its very existence. The references were likely to a Moscow institution normally called the International Lenin School.[484] Frank Barnett was typical of anti-Communist speakers at Fred Schwarz's 1960 "Education for American Security" seminar in Glenview, Illinois. "From Cuba to the Congo, from Rome to Tokyo, from San Francisco to Mexico City, the graduates of the Lenin Institute of Political Warfare and their allies are demonstrating their skill at riots, propaganda, agitation, and political sabotage," Barnett told his audience.[485]

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[483] Ibid., 17.

[484] For example, an influential 1958 report by the American Bar Association on "Communist Tactics, Strategy, and Objectives" referred to the "Lenin School of Political Warfare" and paired it with a quotation attributed to Soviet official Dmitri Manuilski: "War to the hilt between communism and capitalism is inevitable. Today, of course, we are not strong enough to attack. Our time will come in twenty or thirty years…The capitalistic countries, stupid and decadent, will rejoice to cooperate in their own destruction." "Report of the American Bar Association, Special Committee on Communist Tactics, Strategy, and Objectives," reprint in *American Opinion* (December 1958): 37. Historian Paul F. Boller, Jr., has noted that "a thorough search in the relevant files in the Library of Congress has failed to locate the statement," and moreover, "there has never been a Lenin School of Political Warfare in Russia." Paul F. Boller, Jr., and John George, *The Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 15.

[485] Dr. Frank Rockwell Barnett, "A Decade of Conflict," Education for American Security, Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, August-September 1960, Naval Air Station, Glenview, Illinois, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia.

By 1965, Robert Welch treated every instance of direct action protest in the United States as an example of what he called "civil turmoil." He conflated the summertime riots of 1964 and afterwards with SNCC's Freedom Summer voter registration drive in Mississippi and the Selma-to-Montgomery March in Alabama. College students from outside the South who had flocked to these efforts were "swarms of brainwashed youngsters, but on carrying all the elements of a 'long, hot summer' to other Selmas…"[486] A month before the Watts riots, Welch hatched plans for the organization of ad hoc committees around the country to be called "The Truth About Civil Turmoil" or "TACT" Committees. The purpose of these committees was "exposure of the fraud known as 'civil rights'." Welch cautioned that such committees should have "no position with regard to integration or segregation" and that no "purveyors of hate" should be members.[487]

To combat anticipated accusations that the TACT Committees espoused white supremacy, Welch recruited several African American former Communists to speak on the ad hoc group's behalf. One of these speakers, Leonard Patterson, claimed that he had been trained in urban guerilla warfare at the Lenin School in Moscow, and he echoed Robert Welch's contention that the phrase "civil rights" was part of a wider program of violence. Interviewed by John Rousselot on the JBS's short-lived radio program in

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[486] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June, 1966" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1966), 12, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[487] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for July, 1965" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1965): 25, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas. Welch would later recall having formed the TACT Committees "immediately after the Watts riot in 1965." In fact, the Committees were launched in July and inspired not by Watts, but by Selma. Robert Welch, "Bulletin for June, 1968" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1968), 3, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

March 1966, Patterson recalled having joined the Communist Party in the important year 1928, and that he had been trained in "self-determination," "the so-called 'colonial question'," and "military tactics." "Civil rights, against the police brutality, all that we used, the same as what's going on today," Patterson said. The recent riot in Watts was, to Patterson, "just a continuation of what was done back in the thirties," when he had learned in Moscow how to make Molotov cocktails and spark riots of his own.[488]

Police Brutality

The McCone Commission's report on Watts highlighted one major problem besides poverty and lack of education: the black community's pervasive "resentment, even hatred, of the police." "'Police brutality' has been the recurring charge," the report's writers noted of their interviews with local residents.[489] While reformers of various political stripes understood that police brutality was a real social problem, radical rightists understood it to be a slogan with little existential reality. They believed that to charge "police brutality" was a Communist revolutionary tactic designed to weaken the resolve and effectiveness of law enforcement. It had been Communists, they insisted, who originally pressed for the establishment of police review boards, and Communists were behind the current drive to abolish local police forces in favor of state-controlled

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[488] John H. Rousselot interviews Leonard Patterson, Parts I and II, *The John Birch Society Report* Transcripts 2 and 3, March 13 and 20, 1966, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia. Patterson also claimed that while he was in Moscow, he was Gus Hall's roommate and attended classes with Chiang Kai-shek's son, Chiang Ching-kuo. The younger Chiang had indeed studied in Moscow before his father turned against his Communist allies among the Kuomintang. However, his place of training was Moscow's short-lived Sun Yat-sen University, after which he allegedly "studied guerilla warfare at the top military academy in Leningrad for three years," from 1927 until 1930, finally breaking with the Communist Party in 1931. Allen S. Whiting, "Mystery Man of Formosa," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 12, 1955, 26-27; 116-118.

[489] "Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning?"

ones. It was therefore not surprising to radical rightists that in many cases urban riots came in response to alleged abuse by the police.[490]

Congressional investigative bodies had also helped to popularize the idea that there existed a global Communist plot against law enforcement. Such ideas were useful to organizations like the John Birch Society that taught that Communists had bored into the most influential reaches of the federal government. In 1961, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee produced a report entitled "A Communist Plot Against the Free World Police." The witness was Lyman B. Kirkpatrick, inspector general on the staff of CIA director Allen Dulles. Though Kirkpatrick did not refer directly to Communist activity within the United States, his questioners clearly held in mind the recent protest in San Francisco against House Committee on Un-American Activities, and HUAC's subsequent film about the protest, *Operation Abolition*, which depicted a protest against HUAC staged mostly by college students at the alleged provocation of Communists. Anti-Communist attention, Kirkpatrick argued, had recently shifted from a focus on organizational espionage to a focus on organized protest. This stood to reason, because there were two fundamental aspects of Communist subversion wherever the international conspiracy operated. The first was the familiar "subversive aspect," by which Communists infiltrated government and civilian groups in order to influence policy. The second was that which appeared to be bearing fruit around the globe in 1961. It was the

[490] Most of the credit for this set of ideas went to Bella Dodd, a former schoolteacher who had been active in the Communist Party during the 1930s and became an outspoken anti-Communist during the 1950s. A frequent speaker on the topic was W. Cleon Skousen, a special agent for the FBI, who claimed that Dodd had been personally involved in efforts to create "civilian review boards," designed to "gain control of the police and paralyze them when riots and violence were instigated." W. Cleon Skousen, *The Communist Attack on U.S. Police* (W. Cleon Skousen, 1966).

"militant aspect," involving "agitation, demonstrations, riots, insurrection, and rebellion."[491]

Kirkpatrick cited as an example that an unnamed "major country of the free world" with an excellent police force had recently been the subject of Communist efforts to "[discredit] the police in the eyes of the people." Communist subversives provoked fights with police in public places sure to draw attention and then "linked arms to show that it was the police who were causing the incident."[492] Also in this unnamed country, "the Communist press…[specialized] in playing up and discrediting all police action against rioters, strikers, and mobs."[493] Thus it was that agitators provoked well-meaning police into "police brutality," and well-meaning citizens came to believe that police brutality was a legitimate problem. Communist efforts in this country were made all the more difficult to suppress after "the Reds reached Cabinet level…not as Communists but using a political front party." Such subversives then used their newfound influence in government to protect agitators.[494]

For several years, urban police departments had complained that government-imposed restrictions rendered them ineffective at protecting and serving the public, and frustrated police officers often echoed anti-Communist teachings. In a 1963 speech to the Fourth Area Caucus of the American Legion, Los Angeles police officer Norman Moore invoked J. Edgar Hoover's claim that local police forces were "the greatest bulwark against organized crime." Moore believed that Communism was a global network of

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[491] "A Communist Plot Against the Free World Police (An Exposé of Crowd-Handling Methods)," Hearing Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Eighty-Seventh Congress, First Session, June 13, 1961 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1961): 23.
[492] Ibid., 3.
[493] Ibid., 23.
[494] Ibid., 15.

organized criminals, and strong local police forces were necessary to combat it.[495] Police officers, Moore said, were some of the most anti-Communist people in the country because they so frequently encountered Communist-inspired disruptions in the line of duty. As far back as 1930, Communists were training subversives to attack the police and then cry "police brutality," just as had happened at the 1960 anti-HUAC protest in San Francisco.[496]

In 1963, inspired by the "disorder" of Martin Luther King's Birmingham Campaign, the John Birch Society launched an ad hoc group called "Support Your Local Police" (SYLP). Robert Welch told his followers that there had long been "a subtle, but now increasingly bolder and more extensive effort, to harass and discredit local police forces and their individual members."[497] Support was especially needed now, he wrote, because "Communist inspired racial riots are getting to be a regular part of the American scene." Welch credited Birmingham police chief Bull Connor with "doing a superb job of maintaining law and order in the midst of a hot situation." But then the Communists had countered his efforts with "a carefully planned tableau," famously captured on camera when "one or more hotheads or dupes among the Negroes went up to the line and deliberately kicked one or more of the [police] dogs." Thus was the desired "police brutality" produced for the world to see.[498]

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[495] H. Norman Moore, "The Trend to Render Law Enforcement Ineffective, *Fire and Police Research Association of Los Angeles Bulletin*, speech to the Fourth Area Caucus, American Legion, February 3, 1963, 1, Box 28, Folder: "Fire and Police Research Association of Los Angeles Bulletins," Knox Mellon Collection of Material about the John Birch Society and other Radical Conservative Organizations and Causes, Box 24, Folder: "Various Pamphlets," Special Collections, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.
[496] Ibid., 3.
[497] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for July 1963," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1963* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated), 12.
[498] Ibid., 12-13.

Much as Welch was simultaneously doing when he tied civil rights activism to the machinations of a federal government ostensibly bent on despotism, he combined fears of urban rioting with fears of a federalized police force. In January 1964 Welch wrote that "the Communist press of America has been screaming for years…to have local police forces discredited, shunted aside, or disbanded, and replaced by Federal Marshals or by similar agents and personnel of a *nationalized federal* police force." The federal government's determination to do such a thing, he argued, had been exhibited in the "invasion" of the University of Mississippi in the name of racial integration.[499]

In November 1965, former FBI agent W. Cleon Skousen, perhaps the John Birch Society's most outspokenly supportive nonmember, told the Macon, Georgia, American Legion that the violence in Watts conformed to a pattern often seen in Communist-inspired anti-colonial uprisings in other nations. An attack on the integrity of the local police was followed by terrorism against the white power structure, and finally marauders unleashed a "reign of terror" against the very people they claimed to represent. Like Welch, Skousen had little interest in distinctions between violent and nonviolent civil disobedience in the United States. He insisted that "in every case," these stages of agitation had been the same, lumping together the demonstrations in Birmingham, Selma, St. Augustine, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles.[500]

Like many observers, Skousen was surprised that such a long, destructive riot would take place in Watts, a neighborhood in which he had once lived. Watts was the

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[499] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January 1964," *The White Book of the John Birch Society for 1964* (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1965), 20-21; Earl Lively, Jr., *The Invasion of Mississippi* (Belmont: American Opinion, 1963).

[500] W. Cleon Skousen, speech before American Legion Post 3 and the Committee of 150, Macon, Georgia, November 12, 1965, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

last place one would imagine having a race riot, Skousen told his audience in Macon. It was "a low-income area, but not a poor area" with modest homes and racially integrated schools and police departments. Surely the blame for such violence lay with Martin Luther King, he said, who had recently traveled to Los Angeles and suggested that "more action" was needed in the name of civil rights. Skousen also blamed non-Communist liberals who were demanding the establishment of police review boards in urban areas. They did so without realizing that such review boards "were originated by the Communists back in the 1930s."[501]

Though his main topic was Watts, Skousen also spoke in detail about what he believed had happened in Birmingham and Selma. He put a twist on the story of civil rights activist Annie Lee Cooper's altercation with Selma's Sheriff Jim Clark. Skousen described Cooper as "a bouncer at a local club" who deliberately grabbed Clark's nightstick and was then photographed by *Newsweek* when a struggle ensued between the two of them. Thus did Cooper come to be portrayed as a victim of police brutality. Similarly misrepresented rumors and media portrayals of attack dogs were all that had been required to "to start the bloodshed in Birmingham," Skousen told his audience.[502]

Cleon Skousen and others emphasized a Communist tactic of deliberately spreading rumors designed to provoke violence against the police. Leonard Patterson took partial credit for having sparked the 1935 Harlem Riot that followed the beating of a teenage shoplifter. He recalled having been ordered by his superiors to spread rumors about "police brutality" and to distribute dramatic leaflets around Harlem.[503] Julia

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[501] Ibid.
[502] Ibid.
[503] John H. Rousselot interviews Leonard Patterson, Part II, *The John Birch Society Report*, Transcript 3, March 20, 1966, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript,

Brown, a former Communist informant for the FBI, was another African American paid speaker who represented TACT Committees. She referred to the charge of police brutality as the Communists' "familiar 'divide and conquer' tactic." "I [have] never witnessed any instance of police brutality to Negroes," she wrote in *I Testify*, a memoir commissioned by the JBS. "On the other hand, I have witnessed incidents where every effort is made by misguided Negroes to provoke law enforcement officers into some action which might be propagandized as police brutality."[504]

Similarly, Julian E. Williams, research director for Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade, portrayed the rumors that often fueled rioting as subversive tools. Regarding the 1964 Philadelphia riots, he quoted from a *Philadelphia News* article alleging that "agitators waited for 'a minor incident' and then 'quickly put into operation a well-organized plan…much like demolition experts would set off a series of charges." At the appropriate moment, "the terrorists weaved through the rapidly forming crowd spreading lies: 'Police have killed a woman'; 'The cops have shot a boy'; 'Police have beaten a pregnant woman'."[505] Investigators on the McCone Commission also recognized the importance that rumors had played in sparking the violence in Watts, though they did not

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Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia. As with Skousen's portrayal of what had happened in Selma, it wasn't so much the details that were in dispute as the assessment of those details. Patterson did not dispute the fact that the police officer had beaten the boy in 1935; he instead emphasized that the boy was a shoplifter, and that his beating would not have resulted in rioting without Communist political activity.

[504] Julia Brown, *I Testify: My Years as an Undercover Agent for the FBI* (Boston: Western Islands Publishers, 1966), 160-161.

[505] Julian E. Williams, *"Burn, Baby, Burn!" Is Your City Next?* (Tulsa: Christian Crusade Publications, 1968), 5, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 16, Folder: "Hargis, Billy James (Christian Crusade)," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

imagine that a subversive political movement was necessary for the rumors to spiral out of control.[506]

The Analysis of Watts and the Spread of Violence

By 1967, the rioting in Watts had taken on a new and frightening significance to people on all sides of the political spectrum. As radical black activists came to characterize Watts as a "rebellion," the event became associated with the Black Power movement and the Black Panther Party, despite the fact that the Party had not yet existed and the slogan had not yet in come into popular parlance in August 1965. At the end of a summer of unprecedented violence in 1967, "Black Power's" original articulator—Mississippi civil rights activist Stokely Carmichael, would attend a revolutionary conference in Havana, identifying urban rioting as a form of guerilla warfare.[507] It was not until the summer of 1967 that Robert Welch and the JBS began to address rioting as an issue separate from the civil rights movement, perhaps recognizing its unique significance to the American public.

But the JBS's basic explanation remained the same. In the May 1967 edition of *American Opinion*, JBS commentator Gary Allen wrote that the Watts riots had been deliberately planned and perpetrated by Communists subversives who now swelled the ranks of the militant black left. Allen's most significant point was an assertion that Watts was "a rehearsal for a nationwide revolution," planned and encouraged by a "board of revolutionary strategy…composed of some forty to fifty Negroes sent by the Communists into the Los Angeles area from all over the United States." He charged that police in Los Angeles knew the group well, that it was composed of "Black Muslims, Black

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[506] "Violence in the City: An End or a Beginning?" 4.
[507] Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 202-203.

Nationalists…the paramilitary Deacons for Defense, [and] the Communist Revolutionary Action Movement," and that locals called this group simply "The Organization."[508]

Thus Allen created a story, purporting to explain how the much-vaunted strangeness of the riots fit into the long-range Communist strategy for taking over the United States. Communists knew, Allen argued, that if they could stage a destructive riot in Los Angeles, they could stage one in any city in the United States. After all, Los Angeles had been known as one of the best U.S. cities in which African Americans could live, and even the McCone Commission Report had noted that unemployment was "surprisingly low even among those who were actually arrested during the insurrection." A full seventy-three percent of those arrested were found to be "employed – including many in skilled, technical, and even government work."[509]

In Allen's telling, the conspirators had made certain that all things went according to plan. They had deliberately set looters on "liquor stores, supermarkets, pawn shops, and department stores" in order to keep the looters drunk and armed, and the locals hungry and angry. Snipers shot at firefighters to keep them away from burning buildings, "so that any potential evidence [of Communist plotting] would be consumed in the flames," but they also deliberately misfired, sparing lives in order to keep full martial law from being declared and "their guns and loot" discovered.[510]

Communist conspirators served two distinct purposes in Allen's telling of the story of Watts. On the one hand, they composed the membership of the shadowy "Organization" that instigated and oversaw the sad event. They were also brainwashers,

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[508] Gary Allen, "The Plan to Burn Los Angeles," reprint from American Opinion, May 1967 (Belmont: American Opinion, 1967), 1.
[509] Ibid., 2.
[510] Ibid., 3-4.

having deliberately subjected Southern California to "a five-year investment in systematic conditioning," including the constant use of the phrase "police brutality." Because the black citizens of Watts had been taught that they would be "brutalized" by the police, many naturally adopted a hostile attitude toward law enforcement. "[S]uch resistance often gave the police no choice but to use force – and so the myth fed upon itself." Though the conspirators were theoretically in control of the violence, they had also created a powder keg set to explode in the proper "climate."[511]

The "climate" re-emerged with a vengeance that summer. Riots in Newark and Detroit were merely the most destructive episodes that erupted in over one hundred cities in 1967.[512] An Associated Press poll in January 1968 reported that "law and order looms, with the possible exception of Vietnam, as the nation's prime preoccupation in Election year 1968."[513]

The "Rape" of America

In June of 1971, former Georgia Governor Lester Maddox, who was then serving as Lieutenant Governor to Jimmy Carter, penned a fiery letter to President Nixon, all members of Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Government officials who had rendered "social and political decisions, rather than constitutional interpretations," Maddox wrote, "cannot escape major guilt for the bombings, killings, rapes, injuries, deterioration of education, property destruction, pornography, immorality, treason and communism which sweep across America." Such people, he concluded, "are guilty as sin

[511] Ibid., 2-3.
[512] Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*, 202.
[513] Flamm, 143.

of the rape of America…The blood of the innocent victims of this betrayal is upon [their] hands…"[514]

By 1971, conservative activists and politicians often railed against pornography and "immorality" as young people flouted traditional strictures of social and sexual behavior, the Supreme Court moved to protect obscenity as a form of free expression, and public schools began to introduce adventurous new curricula. Yet at its root, Maddox's diatribe embodied an older conservative fear of violence and disrespect for "law and order." His language harked back to some of the earliest anti-Communist critiques of U.S. foreign policy after World War II: that those influential in government had "betrayed" the American people and their anti-Communist allies. Indeed, it was in the context of a society that seemed on the verge of planned breakdown that the "culture wars" were born.

[514] Lester Maddox to the President of the United States, Members of the United States Congress and Members of the United States Supreme Court, June 1, 1971, John G. Schmitz Congressional Papers, 1970-1973, Box 29, Folder 5, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita State University Libraries, Wichita, Kansas.

CHAPTER 6

Smut Peddlers in the Classroom: MOTOREDE and the Rise of the Culture Wars in the 1970s

In a March 1969 newsletter to his constituents, Congressman James Utt of Orange County, California, alleged that Communists had opened a new front in their war of cultural subversion: the promotion of sex education in public schools. Utt believed that the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS)—the major promoter of "comprehensive sex education"—was in league with professional pornographers, and that Communist subversives sought to use both pornography and sex education to destroy "moral standards" among young people.[515] This was part of the same effort by which Communists had "long ago infiltrated the seminaries of the leading religious faiths." SIECUS's comprehensive approach to sex education was not simply an affront to decency; without due attention to traditional moral standards it threatened to make schoolchildren "diseased, suicidally depressed, or criminal sex fiends."[516]

Some commentators in the mainstream press mocked Utt's statement. Yet they also recognized that 1969 had seen a sudden burst of organized opposition to sex education in public schools, and that this opposition was traceable to two organizations:

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[515] Dr. Rhoda M. Lorand, a conservative psychologist often cited in anti-sex education literature, succinctly identified the difference between traditional and "comprehensive" sex education. The "simple, traditional type…begins in the late 5th or early 6th grade, with separate classes for boys and girls in which they are given a simple explanation of the momentous events of puberty." On the other hand, the "elaborate new type…begins to explain sexual intercourse in kindergarten and…is coeducational throughout all the grades." Rhoda M. Lorand, Ph.D., "A Psychoanalytic View of the Sex Education Controversy, *Journal of the New York State Nurse Teachers Association*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 1970 [reprint], 13, John G. Schmitz Papers, Box 122, Folder 1, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[516] Congressman James B. Utt, *Washington Report*, Vol. 69, No. 4, March 26, 1969, 1-2, reprint by Truth About Civil Turmoil Committee [TACT], San Marino, California, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 35, Folder: "TACT," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade and Robert Welch's John Birch Society, both known as organizations of the "radical right."[517] In January 1969 the JBS published "Sex Education in the Schools," a reprint of Christian Crusade education director Gordon Drake's more bluntly titled "Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?" making it the cornerstone of the new Movement to Restore Decency (MOTOREDE) campaign.[518] MOTOREDE materials would become primers for many activists who opposed sex education, abortion, and other controversial social issues during the early 1970s, and they would set in place several of the rhetorical patterns that activists would use during that decade and later.[519]

As sociologist Janice M. Irvine and historian Whitney Strub have demonstrated, campaigns against sex education and pornography were central to the New Right's grassroots strategy during the 1970s, partly because these issues mobilized the electoral base that became known as the Christian Right.[520] Irvine portrayed the Christian Crusade's collusion with the JBS over sex education as an example of "a new willingness among certain right-wing fundamentalist leaders…to abandon separatism and forge political ties" with secular anti-Communists.[521] Yet Robert Welch and Billy James Hargis had long worked to expose what they characterized as Communist subversion in American institutions. Their tactical alliance in 1969 was no sudden abandonment of

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[517] Janice M. Irvine, *Talk About Sex: The Battles Over Sex Education in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 44, 57.
[518] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January, 1969" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1969): 17, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[519] Irvine, 10. Irvine notes that anti-sex education activists relied on "national vocabularies" that functioned as "scripts…repeated at town meetings, school board hearings, and local media debates." Such scripts, dubious as they were, came to be accepted as facts.
[520] Irvine, 62; Whitney Strub, *Perversion for Profit: The Politics of Pornography and the Rise of the New Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 179-180.
[521] Irvine, 44.

fundamentalist separatism; it represented a continuing interest in combatting alleged subversion and brainwashing by influential leftists in government, church, and school. Such ideas had been forged during the 1950s, and they were reframed in response to the late 1960s and early 1970s sexual revolution.[522]

Disputes over culture, sexuality, and education during the 1970s existed at a transitional moment in the history of American conservatism. It was a moment in which old anti-Communist arguments gave way to new arguments about culture. Those who had once warned of Communist infiltration began to decry the cultural influence of "secular humanists," whom they believed were as hostile to traditional religion as Communists had always been.[523] To focus on the shift in conservative rhetoric during this period can distract from the extent to which conservative anti-Communists had always insisted that subversives were interested in changing culture. The culture warriors of the 1970s were thoroughly indebted to anti-Communist rhetoric of the 1950s and

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[522] The cultural politics that animated the right-wing during the 1970s were spurred—to be sure—by economic changes, especially by the decline of the manufacturing base, the rise of the service industry, and the entry of an unprecedented number of women into the paid workforce. For an emphasis on the economic basis of cultural change during the 1970s, see Matthew Lassiter, "Inventing Family Values" in Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 14-15. As Lassiter points out, the roots of anxiety were economic, but the visibility of feminists, gays, and changing sexual mores provided conservatives with scapegoats. The "mainstream news media" unwittingly aided conservatives by "consistently elevat[ing] cultural over economic analysis in exploring the 'crisis of the American family'…"

[523] Irvine, 64; Strub, 117-118; Carol Mason, *Reading Appalachia from Left to Right: Conservatives and the 1974 Kanawha County Textbook Controversy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 105. Strub argues that "morality" served "both as a replacement for the fading discourses of racism and anticommunism and as a discursive displacement of the complex politics of race and class brought into play by the liberal Great Society programs of the 1960s. Mason and Irvine explicitly use this transition to differentiate the "Old Right" from the "New Right." The John Birch Society and Christian Crusade were Old Right organizations in Irvine's narrative, with New Right activists using concerns about public morality to distance themselves from these organizations' "conspiracist thinking." Mason identifies "secular humanism" as the enemy that replaced Communism among the New Right. She uses the Kanawha County, West Virginia, textbook controversy as a case study of this transition. Daniel K. Williams pinpoints the year 1976 as the beginning of national consciousness of "secular humanism," as the term was popularized in books by the Heritage Foundation's Onalee McGraw and the evangelical theologian Francis Schaeffer. Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 136-139.

1960s, especially in their insistence that American children were the targets of a coordinated plot.

Though it had widely been considered a political third rail for nine years, the JBS was highly influential in popularizing the idea that increasing social tolerance of films, magazines, and sexual acts once considered obscene was part of the left's wider "un-American" program. The JBS also played an important role in popularizing the belief that proliferation of pornography was related to education experts' enthusiasm for comprehensive sex education in the public schools, and to the broader projects of progressive and "intercultural" education. In 1974, when a great row erupted over Language Arts textbooks in West Virginia, some conservative activists had become convinced that conspirators were determined to peddle smut in public school classrooms, even if they had to do it through the seemingly innocuous medium of English textbooks.

Establishing MOTOREDE

During the late 1960s, pornography suddenly became more visible in American public life than it had been before. By the early 1970s, advertisements for pornography often showed up in citizens' mailboxes and next to mainstream films in newspapers. The year 1968 saw what Whitney Strub has called the "public surfacing" of hardcore pornography.[524] This trend continued alongside a series of Supreme Court decisions that increasingly protected pornography as a form of free expression, culminating in the 1973 case *Miller v. California*, which declared that to be censored, the material in question must lack "serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."[525] This trend, coupled with the sudden visibility of a sexual counterculture during the second half of the 1960s

[524] Strub, 162.
[525] Ibid., 170.

and the promotion by education experts of a new kind of sex education for public schools, heightened the concerns of those who had warned for years that Communists and their fellow-travelers were interested in promoting immorality. By peddling smut among the young, such activists believed, the conspirators hoped to ready them for submission to collectivist tyranny.

Despite his organization's increasing distance from mainstream conservatism, Robert Welch seemed optimistic about the John Birch Society's future in December 1968, as he addressed its tenth anniversary reception in Indianapolis. In ten more years, Welch predicted, the JBS would have succeeded in removing "the Communist motivating force behind all of this disintegration." Members would swell the ranks of "thousands of ad hoc groups, which might be called MOTOREDE Committees…or the Movement To Restore Decency." After having lived through the present era of "shoddiness in everything," future Birchers would work to "restore decency and responsibility in American life."[526] The MOTOREDE idea proved more immediately popular than Welch had anticipated, and members of his Council urged him not to wait. So Welch devoted most of the material for his January 1969 bulletin to the subject of sex education. MOTOREDE was to begin with "organized, nationwide, intensive, *angry* and determined opposition to the now mushrooming program of so-called sex education in the public schools."[527]

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[526] Robert Welch, "Looking Ahead," December 10, 1968, "Bulletin for December, 1968" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1968): 31, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society Bulletin," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[527] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January, 1969" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1969): 17, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

The Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS), the chief enemy in MOTOREDE's initial drive, had been founded in 1964 to educate Americans about sexuality in a scientific way, without moral posturing. Its founder and head was Dr. Mary Calderone, a matronly woman who toured the country encouraging adults and children to talk more openly and frankly about sex. SIECUS drew support from the JBS's usual list of enemies, including the National Education Association, the Office of Economic Opportunity, the U.S. Office of Education, and the National Council of Churches. Indeed, it was during the NCC-sponsored North American Conference on Church and Family in 1961 that Dr. Calderone and her associates decided to organize SIECUS, as Protestant religious leaders openly discussed masturbation, homosexuality, premarital pregnancy, abortion, and other controversial topics.[528]

With the MOTOREDE campaign, the JBS joined a vocal minority of those in the conservative movement who believed that the proliferation of pornography in print and film was not merely the capitalist exploitation of lust that it seemed to be, but a Communist-inspired attempt to subvert traditional morals. The JBS used established ideas about places in which Communist subversives operated to link SIECUS's interest in promoting sex education among schoolchildren to the breakdown of traditional morality. The new "culture war" issues of the 1970s thus drew heavily on ideas from the brainwashing scare of the 1950s, and they were infused with an air of "un-Americanism" that they might otherwise have lacked.

Subversion and "Pornography" Before MOTOREDE

[528] Irvine, 6-7, 23; Evelyn Millis Duval, "North American Conference on Church and Family," *Marriage and Family Living,* Vol. 23, No. 3 (Aug., 1961): 270.

Though MOTOREDE arose suddenly and drew press attention in 1969, during the preceding decade radical right spokespeople had often argued that the National Council of Churches and other liberal groups wished to sexually stimulate schoolchildren against their parents' will, and that their plans were tied to the global Communist conspiracy. Such ideas had flourished especially around 1960, as conservative experts on brainwashing like Edward Hunter and William Mayer argued that shortcomings in American character had been fostered by the public education system, leaving young people susceptible to Communist influence. Edward Hunter's descriptions of brainwashing were filled with the language of corruption. "Communist slavery," he would often say, was more destructive than any past form of slavery because it "prostitutes and captures and perverts the mind."[529]

MOTOREDE materials recycled stories from this earlier period to demonstrate that Communist plans were bearing fruit a decade later. These stories were often about "pornography," but they usually had little to do with the actual commercial pornography that became increasingly visible to the public around 1968. Even so, they contributed to the belief that comprehensive sex education was pornographic, and that SIECUS would promote both sex education and pornography in schools.

Gary Allen, the JBS's expert on the New Left, turned his attention to SIECUS in early 1969. Comprehensive sex education, he argued, was an important step in a plan first uncovered in May 1919 at Dusseldorf, Germany, when the Communists' "Rules for Revolution" fell into Allied hands. According to this document, the Communists' first objective was to "[c]orrupt the young, get them away from religion, get them interested in

[529] Edward Hunter, "Brainwashing," Macon, Georgia, Fall 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

sex, make them superficial, [and] destroy their ruggedness."[530] "Rules for Revolution" was more likely a British product of the early Cold War than a Soviet product of World War I, but it became an important piece of anti-Communist propaganda.[531] In 1960, four years before SIECUS was founded, the newsletter *Facts in Education* had already paired the story of "Rules for Revolution" with a story that would later appear in anti-SICUS literature: that of an over-enthusiastic sex educator, Cecil M. Cook of Los Angeles, who allegedly was dismissed from his teaching position after asking his high school students to describe their experiences having sex with animals.[532]

George Schuyler, conspicuous during the 1960s as an African American anti-civil rights activist, also lent his voice to MOTOREDE in 1969. In a January editorial for *American Opinion* that would become part of the apparatus of MOTOREDE material, Schuyler wrote that with the usual help of the National Council of Churches, the Communists were using SIECUS's sex education "to destroy the moral character of a generation." He culled this phrase from a story about General William F. Dean. After his release from captivity at the end of the Korean War, Dean's captors allegedly told him that they hoped to use brainwashing to "destroy the moral character of a generation of

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[530] Gary Allen, "Sex Study: Problems, Propaganda, and Pornography," *American Opinion,* Vol. XII, No. 3, March 1969, 19.

[531] The first verified appearance of "Rules for Revolution" was in the British *New World News* of February 1946. Paul F. Boller, Jr., and John George, *They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 115.

[532] Attributed to Vincent X. Flaherty, "Candid Sex, Weird Ideas Being Taught, *Los Angeles Examiner*, April 6, 1960, in *Facts in Education,* Vol. VIII, No. 3, May-June 1960, 3-4, Knox Mellon Collection of Material about the John Birch Society and other Radical Conservative Organizations and Causes, Box 18, Folder: "Facts in Education," Special Collections at University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California.

your young Americans," so that "when we have finished you will have nothing with which to really defend yourselves."[533]

With a similarly dubious story, Schuyler alleged that Communists were adept at using pornography to corrupt the minds and morals of the young and impressionable. At some unspecified time in the past, he wrote, the Chicago-based journalist Jack Mabley had exposed such efforts in a *Fort Worth Star Telegram* article. The story was set in an unnamed town in western Poland during "late spring 1954." After scouring the prisons of Russia and Poland, unidentified Communist agents recruited "hundreds of sex criminals, perverts and prostitutes," transported them to the unnamed town, and then turned them loose to partake in a ten-day orgy. Pictures of the spectacle were shipped via Turkey to Mobile, Alabama, after which pornographers in the United States made "literally millions of prints" that went on to "poison the minds of countless young Americans."[534] While the historical veracity of this story is doubtful, it is significant that

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[533] George S. Schuyler, "The Fall: From Decency to Degradation," *American Opinion*, Vol. XII, No. 1, January 1969, 24. General Dean published a memoir about his captivity in 1954, but in it I found no reference to the above story, nor any other attestation before Schulyer's editorial in January 1969. Indeed, the story differs from the whole tenor of Dean's memoir, in which his captors are never vindictive connivers, but always idealists who believe deeply in their flawed cause. See Major General William F. Dean, *General Dean's Story* (New York: The Viking Press, 1954), 292. Ezra Taft Benson and others would repeat aspects of Schuyler's story—often word-for-word—in 1969 and later. By October, Benson omitted any reference to General Dean or brainwashing, reporting only, "The godless Communists have declared, 'We are going to destroy the moral character of a generation of young Americans, and when we have finished you will have nothing with which to really defend yourself against us'." Ezra Taft Benson, "Godless Forces Threaten Us," *Conference Report*, October 1969, 60-64, accessed July 5, 2015, http://scriptures.byu.edu/gettalk.php?ID=1722. As recently as 2013 the same story—including Dean—was repeated in nearly the same words in a letter to the editor of the *Manteca* [California] *Bulletin*, denouncing the removal of religious symbols on federal buildings. Ruth Russell, "Agrees with Council Backing Religious Ads," *Manteca Bulletin*, February 7, 2013, accessed July 5, 2015, http://www.mantecabulletin.com/archives/66350/.

[534] Schuyler, "The Fall," 24. Incidentally, this was the same Jack Mabley who first exposed *The Politician* in 1960. Because he was based in Chicago, the alleged connection to the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* seems odd. I have traced Schuyler's story not to Jack Mabley, but instead to a 1960 letter to the editor claiming to quote an editorial Mabley had written "several months ago." The quoted story was identical to the one Schuyler would use in 1969; even the ellipses were in the same places. A. Hopper, "Imported Pornography," Letters Column*, Pasadena Independent*, Monday, September 5, 1960, 7. Whitney Strub has

it should be set in "late spring 1954" in Mobile, Alabama, just as Southern whites began to react to the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Janice Irvine has observed that "as explicitly racist claims lost social and political acceptability…the Right found that public arguments about sexuality…could serve as a code for race; a way to implicitly tap racial fears."[535] During the late 1950s and early 1960s, concerns about the corrupting effects of pornography were often more explicitly tied to white fears of African American sexuality and Communist subversion than they would later be. A case-in-point is the publicity surrounding Southern California Congressman Donald Jackson's 1960 speech denouncing the National Council of Churches' 1957 book list "The Negro American." Representatives of the NCC's Department of Racial and Cultural Relations had arranged the list in response to impending school desegregation, characterizing it as a pedagogical tool for interracial understanding, a collection of "books about Negroes…safe to recommend for children—safe because they avoid the stereotypes and because they qualify as literature."[536]

Because the books' authors had often participated in civil rights activity during the 1930s, it was easy to find Communist-front associations among them. Congressman Jackson specifically named Victor Perlo, Herbert Aptheker, W. E. B. Du Bois, Shirley Graham, Gene Weltfish, and E. Franklin Frazier, among others, as Communist authors now being recommended to schoolchildren. He also alleged that several of the books contained passages so "pornographic" that one postmaster had deemed them unmailable.

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noted that this story also appeared during the early 1960s in propaganda by the anti-pornography group Citizens for Decent Literature. Strub, 31-32.

[535] Irvine, 77.

[536] Edith Hussey, Mary Henderson, and Barbara Marx, *The Negro American—A Reading List* (New York: The Department of Racial and Cultural Relations, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1957), 4.

Jackson refused to read or describe the offending passages, allegedly for fear that he would bring on himself "the strongest condemnation from all right-minded persons." The only title he was willing to name as pornographic—without giving any details about why—was Bucklin Moon's *Without Magnolias*.[537]

Congressman Jackson's exposé inspired a 1960 speaking tour by the Church League of America's Edgar Bundy, during which Bundy railed against "pornography" he claimed to have discovered in the libraries of several Protestant theological seminaries. His associate, Robert L. Knight, compiled a list of allegedly pornographic and otherwise dangerous quotations that Bundy distributed during his speeches. Knight's assessment revealed racist anxieties even more clearly than had Jackson's speech. Regarding *Without Magnolias*, he dredged up only the observation that the book contained "intimate bedroom scenes between [a] negro girl and [a] white man."[538] Another book, *Color Blind*, was humorist Margaret Halsey's memoir of organizing an interracial canteen during World War II, including her thoughts on white reactions to interracial dancing. Knight and Bundy portrayed the book as propaganda for interracial sex. To them, racial integration implied interracial sex, and interracial sex was pornographic by nature. Like material available on "smut racks," Knight opined, these books were often available in cheap pocket or paperback editions.[539]

Inspired by such sources, a combined campaign against subversion and pornography in schools had worked its way into local campaigns by JBS members

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[537] Congressman Donald L. Jackson, "The National Council of Churches Vis-à-vis the Air Force Manual," *Congressional Record*, April 20, 1960, 8431-8434.
[538] Robert L. Knight, "Demoralization of American Youth Through Pornographic Literature in the Churches," 6, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 70, Folder 8, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[539] Ibid., 2.

several years before MOTOREDE was organized. In 1963 JBS member Margaret Rivers, the wife of South Carolina Congressman L. Mendell Rivers, discovered several books from the NCC's "Negro American" list on "Teaching Americanism," a school syllabus promoted by the National Society of the Colonial Dames. Writing to Jane Dingess, the chair of that organization's National Patriotic Service Committee, Mrs. Rivers claimed she was "shocked to find that two books were listed without any indication that they were written by the identified Communist author, Shirley Graham."[540] Graham's books were relatively innocuous—including, for example, a biography of the eighteenth century slave and poet Phillis Wheatley—but Mrs. Rivers linked Graham's Communist sympathies to those of her husband, W. E. B. Du Bois, citing as evidence Du Bois's poem "I Sing to China." This poem was not included in the "Teaching Americanism" reading list, but Congressman Jackson had called attention to it in his 1960 speech about the "Negro American" list.[541]

Mrs. Dingess of the Colonial Dames agreed to "obliterate beyond recognition" five books—including all those by Shirley Graham—and to arrange the remaining titles into a new list called "Teaching Patriotism." But Mrs. Rivers was still not satisfied, suggesting that the list ought to be examined by "a group of reliable investigative experts," perhaps including Archibald Roosevelt, son of President Theodore and head of the Veritas Foundation. Communist sympathies were not the only problem; also dangerous was the "subversion and pornography" that Communists tended to sneak into

[540] Margaret Rivers to Jane Dingess, May 29, 1963, Rivers Family Collection, Box 1, Folder: "RFC Correspondence, John Birch Society," Special Collections, Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library of the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.
[541] Jackson, "The National Council of Churches Vis-à-vis the Air Force Manual," 8432.

their books.[542] "The seepage of poison into a child's mind can affect his entire future," Rivers wrote to a friend about the situation. "Since this is a well-known fact in the enemy's successful infiltration in other countries, should a patriotic American organization knowingly sponsor any material written by a Communist or Communist fronter?"[543]

Gordon Drake and Public Education

MOTOREDE's initial campaign against sex education in 1969 was most immediately indebted to work conducted by Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade the year before. A spate of strikes by teachers in 1967 and 1968 inspired Hargis's education consultant, Gordon V. Drake, to unearth and put to use Congressman Paul Shafer's 1952 speech about radical 1930s educators and their desire to "reach for power."[544] The result was Drake's 1968 *Blackboard Power: NEA Threat to America*, which portrayed the National Education Association as the American arm of an international effort to radicalize teachers and turn them against capitalism. The book was heavy-handed in its allusion to a better-recognized conservative concern that year: its cover featured the clenched fist associated with the Black Power movement.

To link both teachers' strikes and progressive education to black radicalism, Drake resurrected controversy over the "Negro American" reading list. Despite the fact that the NCC had quietly stopped promoting the list in 1960, Drake alleged that the NEA was now recommending several books by the same authors for a new list entitled "The

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[542] Rivers to Dingess, May 29, 1963, unsent draft.
[543] Margaret Rivers to "Mrs. Hudson," undated, Rivers Family Collection, Box 1, Folder: "RFC Correspondence, John Birch Society," Special Collections, Marlene & Nathan Addlestone Library of the College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina.
[544] Paul W. Shafer, "Is There a 'Subversive' Movement in the Public Schools? The Documentation of a Call for the Teachers of the Nation to Reach for Power," *Congressional Record* [reprint], Friday, March 21, 1952 (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1952), 11, 12, 22, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 174, Folder 7, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Negro American in Paperback." For this reason, danger lurked in educators' efforts to emphasize black history in public schools. Almost invariably they seemed to emphasize black history through the writings of Communist and leftist authors. As far as Drake was concerned, any book written by a Communist was designed to "encourage race hatred, violence, and revolution." For this reason, the NEA's efforts to include African-American history in school curricula were contributing to summertime spates of urban rioting.[545]

The NEA's greatest threat, Drake argued, lay in its association with the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession (WCOTP), an international group dedicated to carrying out the "one-world" plans of the United Nations and its subsidiary, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Because of its commitment to promoting world citizenship and discouraging nationalism among schoolchildren, UNESCO had long been a *bête noire* among the radical right. Drake wrote *Blackboard Power* as a new installment in a long line of conservative screeds against progressive education and internationalism: more a reminder than a new call-to-arms. "For over thirty years," he wrote, "we have been concerned over the liberal teacher, the little 'red' school house, the educational pablum being fed children, the growing inability of teachers to grasp the primacy of reading, writing and arithmetic." If the NEA were to sponsor UNESCO programs openly, surely "local resistance would quickly mount, as it has in the past."[546]

However, Drake's warnings did not inspire a broad campaign against the United Nations or UNESCO; by 1968 another cause was required to arouse the conservative

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[545] Gordon V. Drake, *Blackboard Power: NEA Threat to America* (Tulsa: Christian Crusade Publications, 1968), 115, 104.
[546] Ibid., 61, 41.

public. Drake devoted only one chapter of *Blackboard Power* to sex education, but he may have sensed its political possibilities, for he soon expanded the chapter into the pamphlet-sized "Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?" This short book established several of the oddly connected ideas that would animate MOTOREDE's movement against sex education, particularly the easy link between sex education and pornography.

Drake discovered that several of SIECUS's board members also served on the editorial board of *Sexology* magazine, a publication that since the 1930s had discussed sexuality in an intellectually stimulating and sexually titillating manner. Drake referred to the magazine's subject matter as "sex-sensationalism," and his book and subsequent anti-SIECUS literature wallowed in it, usually mentioning a set of article titles from *Sexology*, such as "The Prostitutes of Ancient Greece," "Group Sex Orgies," "My Wife Knows I'm Homosexual," or "Do Sex-Change Men Want to be Mothers?"[547] Though SIECUS's board members did not suggest that material from *Sexology* ought to be used in school curricula, it was not difficult for Drake to argue that such a thing might happen, especially in light of the fact that each issue of *Sexology* carried a subtitle portraying the magazine as an educational tool, sample subtitles including "Modern Guide to Sex Knowledge," "Educational Facts for Everybody," and "Authoritative Guide to Sex Education."[548]

To suggest that SIECUS's mission was a Communist one, Drake indulged in old-fashioned red baiting, seeking out all Communist front and leftist associations he could

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[547] Gordon V. Drake, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* (Tulsa: Christian Crusade Publications, 1968), 6.

[548] These subtitles were selected from the covers of the March 1964, September 1967, and June 1962 editions of *Sexology*, respectively.

find on the board members of SIECUS and *Sexology*, while simultaneously portraying them as sexually deviant. Isador Rubin had been dismissed from his teaching post in New York for pleading the Fifth Amendment when questioned about his membership in the Communist Party. He had been a member of the red-stained New York City Teachers Union, which had been purged from the AFL-CIO. He also seemed intent on normalizing homosexuality. During the 1930s Albert Ellis had been "a leader in one of the dozens of left-wing political groups in New York City" and had written *The American Sexual Tragedy*, in which he denounced "men who cannot be sexually satisfied with any form of sex activity but coitus." Joseph Fletcher had published *Situation Ethics—The New Morality*, arguing that people might understand ethical action to depend on circumstance. A HUAC report had listed Fletcher as a member of thirteen Communist fronts. "It should be evident," Drake concluded, "that the sex educators are in league with sexologists, who represent every shade of muddy gray morality, ministers colored atheistic pink, and camp followers of every persuasion."[549]

Drake used Sweden as an example of a society poisoned by comprehensive sex education in its schools. Ten years after launching a SIECUS-like program, Swedes generally accepted premarital sex as normal, contraceptives were available from street vending machines, and incidence of venereal disease had risen to "catastrophic" levels. To demonstrate that Americans were "on the Swedish way," Drake popularized a series of alarming but virtually unverifiable stories about the extremes to which some schools and teachers had taken SIECUS's sex education program. In one story, elementary art teachers encouraged children to fashion penises and vaginas out of clay. Another school had allegedly sought to "desensitize" children to their anatomical differences by

[549] Drake, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* 31.

installing "joint boy-girl toilet facilities without partitions." A teacher in Van Nuys, California, had asked his students to speak openly about their experiences with kissing, fondling, masturbation, homosexuality, and bestiality. Another enterprising teacher had dispensed with models, charts, and slides, and invited her husband to class for a live demonstration.[550]

MOTOREDE in Action

From its founding, MOTOREDE combined concerns about traditional morality with the John Birch Society's usual concerns about the power of the federal state. As Robert Welch put it in his January 1969 Bulletin, the SIECUS-approved sex education programs—already imposed on "some five to ten percent of the schools"—represented "a final assault upon the family as a fundamental block in the structure of our civilization." They forced parents to surrender to the state "*all* responsibility for the education of their children" and promoted "such universal sexual promiscuity—and perversion—that the family will become, as the Communists have always wanted, merely a temporary arrangement for economic convenience."[551]

Spokespeople for MOTOREDE, however, tended not to emphasize Communist plotting, putting the matter in plainer terms of "parents' rights." For example, a MOTOREDE spokesman in Minnesota's twin cities claimed that his organization did not oppose "traditional" courses in human reproduction, nor to the proposition that parents should be better educated about sexuality, so as to pass along more accurate information

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[550] Ibid., 18, 21. Janice Irvine refers to such stories as "depravity narratives" and notes that the final one was—by various different sources—set in New York, Texas, Minnesota, and Michigan. The story of the teacher in Van Nuys was a version of the 1960 *Facts in Education* story about Cecil M. Cook of Los Angeles. Such stories, of dubious provenance, were often repeated in anti-sex education literature as factual. Irvine, 55.

[551] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January, 1969" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1969): 17, 19, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

to their children. Even "voluntary sex education courses after school hours for parents and their children" would be acceptable, but the SIECUS-style programs specifically promoted sex education to take the place of parents' instruction, without their involvement.[552]

Thus MOTOREDE's anti-sex education movement, as publicly framed, became part of an apparatus of "parents' rights" causes, promoting the idea that parents were losing control of their children to the state. Though it was based on anti-Communist conspiracy theory, even Robert Welch had by 1969 abandoned any hope that the majority of MOTOREDE activists would be JBS members. Instead, Birchers were to provide the leadership, and "[t]he remaining ninety percent will consist of good citizens, drawn from every level and division of American life, who are seriously concerned about the future of their children and of their country."[553] The kinds of people Welch had once sought to swell the ranks of the JBS would now swell the ranks of MOTOREDE, and indeed the majority of those active in MOTOREDE committees were not members of the JBS.[554] However, they spoke in a language forged by anti-Communist conspiracy theory, and the major thrust of that language concerned the sexual corruption of children.

MOTOREDE's 1969 "Statement of Purpose" linked sex education to the increasing visibility of pornography and identified both as symptoms of decadence. Smut seemed to be everywhere, "on our newsstands, on the stage, in our movies, on television, in private parties, and now even in our schools." Similar periods of licentiousness had

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[552] Karren A. Mills, "Two Major Twin Cities' Groups Oppose Sex Education," *The Winona Daily News* [Minnesota], Thursday, December 4, 1969, 5.
[553] "The Principles and Purposes of the Movement to Restore Decency" (Belmont: The MOTOREDE Committees, 1969), 5, J. Howard Pew Personal Papers, Box 98, Folder: "W, 1969," Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Hagley Library and Museum, Wilmington, Delaware.
[554] Irvine, 48-49.

recurred throughout Western history, as a result "of prolonged or destructive wars, as accompaniment to the loss of a former religious faith, as the by-product of long sustained prosperity, as a form of superficial sophistication prompted by rapidly blooming new knowledge…" By 1969 each of these factors was arguably in play, the MOTOEDE Statement argued, making the contemporary period of licentiousness even more threatening than those past.[555]

Gordon Drake's pamphlet, reissued as "Sex Education in the Schools," became the most important document of MOTOREDE's initial campaign because of Drake's argument that SIECUS's backers wished to "convert the youth of America to a new sexuality."[556] According to Drake and the MOTOREDE materials he inspired, SIECUS's "sinister objective" was "to create an unceasing and dangerous obsession with sex in the minds of our children."[557] Some detractors thus concluded that small children would soon be taught how to have sex and encouraged to try it out. Sarasota doctor William Campbell Douglass's editorial on the subject gave Louisiana Congressman John Rarick fodder for alarm on the House floor: SIECUS threatened to produce "a new generation of 'sexually free' children, who are taught from *kindergarten* how to do it…"[558]

In "The Innocents Defiled," a 1969 MOTOREDE filmstrip, the JBS tapped into such fears and spoke directly to the religious conservatives Robert Welch hoped to recruit for activism. The film began with a well known biblical quotation: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged around his neck, and he should be drowned in the depths of the sea." The

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[555] "The Principles and Purposes of the Movement to Restore Decency," 5.
[556] Drake, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* 2.
[557] "The Principles and Purposes of the Movement to Restore Decency," 5.
[558] Quoted in John Rarick, "Sexation in the Classroom," *Congressional Record*, April 15, 1969, 9089.

background music shifted from the lilting, innocent First Movement of Beethoven's Sixth Symphony to the stormy Fourth Movement, as the screen depicted cartoon slides of various animals in the act of coitus, followed by one of a human couple in bed. These, the film declared to its audience, were the very slides their children would see in school, where they would be encouraged to understand human sexuality along the lines of animal reproduction.[559]

Freudian Psychology and the "Knowing Child"

Mary Calderone and her associates were not interested in sexually stimulating schoolchildren. They believed that children were inherently sexual beings who needed proper guidance, and they promoted grade school lessons not merely in the facts of reproduction, but in sexuality as an aspect of human nature. They had little patience for traditional notions of childhood innocence, taking seriously the work of midcentury Freudian psychologists who used scientific objectivity to overcome the taboo of discussing children's sexuality.[560] This tendency was troubling enough to cultural conservatives, quite apart from any sublimated racism.

Dorothy Baruch was a representative Freudian child psychologist at midcentury. Her 1959 book *New Ways in Sex Education* gained SIECUS's approval.[561] It also caught Edgar Bundy's attention as he hunted for pornography in seminary libraries, and he portrayed it as the most depraved book he had come across. "God Almighty must have

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[559] Rex T. Westerfield (Director), "The Innocents Defiled" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1969). Such alarmism illustrates one of the consistent contradictions in MOTOREDE's anti-sex education campaign. While MOTOREDE spokespeople frequently argued that they did not oppose traditional lessons about reproduction—which the slides in question seemed to represent—they simultaneously relied on the anti-Communist proposition that Communists sought to reduce humans to the status of animals.

[560] Janice Irvine refers to a shift in intellectual culture from the ideal of the "romantic child" in the nineteenth century to that of the "knowing child" in the twentieth. Cultural conservatives tended to cling to the ideal of the "romantic child." Irvine, 17-18, 14.

[561] Claire Chambers, *The SIECUS Circle: A Humanist Revolution* (Belmont: Western Islands, 1977), 116.

something special reserved for people who will write the filth and vileness that we have taken out of this book page-by-page," Bundy told an Atlanta audience in October 1960. Though he was sure those listening would feel like "railroading [him] out of town" were he to read any of the filth aloud, he paraphrased one passage in which a boy's father dies and the boy asks his mother if he might take his father's place and impregnate her. "It goes into all of the intimate details," Bundy marveled.[562]

Baruch's book was filled with quotations and stories from children she had encountered in her clinical work. The story that caused Bundy such alarm was in fact a six-year-old's plot for a puppet show in which a boy fights and kills his father's "dragon," grows up, and then takes his mother as his wife. Baruch used it to illustrate the applicability of Freudian psychology to young children's fantasies, to demonstrate her premise that "[t]here comes a time—too often and too soon denied or forgotten—when every little boy wants to marry his mother…"[563] Baruch was convinced, as was SIECUS's Mary Calderone, that sex education for children was necessary to properly guide them through their inevitable Freudian fantasies.

Those who campaigned against sex education during the late 1960s and early 1970s had a mixed relationship with Freudian psychology. On the one hand, Freud was largely responsible for raising the reprehensible proposition that children are sexual creatures. At the same time, anti-sex education activists attached singular importance to the "latency stage" identified by Freud as a period during which children lose interest in

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[562] Edgar C. Bundy, "Pornography in the Church's Literature," Allstate Building, Atlanta, Georgia, October 26, 1960, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

[563] Dorothy Walter Baruch, *New Ways in Sex Education: A Guide for Parents and Teachers* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), 138-139, 137.

sexuality, between early childhood and the onset of puberty.[564] To awaken sexual thoughts at this age threatened to fix children with dangerous and lasting obsessions. In words that MOTOREDE contributor Gary Allen attributed to psychologist Melvin Anchell, sex education was comparable to sexual molestation; it would interfere with "normal instinctual growth" and "catapult the child into advance sexual information." In Anchell's words, "If you turn into an obstetrician at eight years of age, you have developed a fixation." The development of such fixations promised to create "more perverts than were ever created before, and more diversified perverts."[565]

In fact, both those in favor of and against comprehensive sex education were concerned with preventing the production of perverts. While conservatives criticized sex education's potential to turn children into "obstetricians" during the latency stage, psychologists like Dorothy Baruch alleged that only a *lack* of information about sexuality could explain "[t]he hen-pecked man, the baby doll, the frigid wife, the impotent husband, the homosexual, the gallant bachelor, the man or woman who marries and divorces repeatedly"—each of these problems was the result of inadequate sex education during childhood. Indeed, Baruch believed that frank facts of sexuality were best repeated again and again, especially during "[t]he years between losing the first tooth and

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[564] Janice Irvine considers this to have been a tactical decision by religious conservatives who believed their cause would be more influential if it were discussed with the imprimatur of science rather than traditional morality alone. Irvine, 47.

[565] Quoted in Gary Allen, "Sex Study: Problems, Propaganda, and Pornography," *American Opinion,* Vol. XII, No. 3, March 1969, 15-16. Dr. Rhoda Lorand was another psychologist whose work on the latency period MOTOREDE often cited. However, Lorand dismissed MOTOREDE's characterization of sex education as a coordinated plot. The problem, she argued, was that "the far right cannot believe that anyone could possibly view these [sex education] programs as anything but destructive. Like SIECUS, they ignore the existence of the unconscious." Rhoda M. Lorand, Ph.D., "A Psychoanalytic View of the Sex Education Controversy, *Journal of the New York State Nurse Teachers Association*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Fall 1970 [reprint], 33, John G. Schmitz Papers, Box 122, Folder 1, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

losing the childish shape"—the latency stage—because common misunderstandings about sex were almost certain to lead to social and sexual shortcomings in adulthood.[566]

Homosexuality and National Security

In a 1969 speech to a local John Birch Society committee meeting in Macon, Georgia, political novelist Robert Winston praised MOTOREDE. Under the pen name "Col. Victor J. Fox," Winston had made a splash among conservatives with his 1958 book *The Pentagon Case*, which told of a plot by Pentagon insiders to weaken military morale. Sex education, he predicted, would finally bring the anti-Communist cause widespread influence; by threatening to bring pornography into the classroom it would make parents angrier than any previous educational scheme had done. The "flow of filth" through the public sphere was "unlike anything that has ever been seen before since Sodom and Gomorrah," Winston declared, "and the American people will not take it."[567]

Winston's 1968 sequel, *The White House Case*, was another screed against corrupt, pro-Communist State Department officials. Careful again to slightly disguise real names, Winston described how Communist subversives had attempted to conquer the United States from the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis up to the summer of 1968. It was they who had directed the President's "sellout" to the Russians over the Cuban missiles. It was they who had attempted to turn populist rage against "right-wing extremists" in the wake of his assassination. It was they who had directed the successor President to

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[566] Baruch, 24, 174.

[567] Robert A. Winston, pen name "Colonel Victor J. Fox," "America's Might is Being Subverted," Middle Georgia TRAIN Committee, Macon, Georgia, June 10, 1969, John Birch Society Sound Recordings Collection, Emory University, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Atlanta, Georgia. The TRAIN (To Restore American Independence Now) Committees, referenced in the previous chapter, were initially formed in 1966 as an extension of the JBS's movement to get the United States out of the United Nations. By 1969 the TRAIN Committees were best known for circulating petitions encouraging elected officials to push for "winning" the Vietnam War. However, at this particular meeting in Macon, John Birch's brother Ellis circulated a petition encouraging members of Congress to "make an effort to stop the war in Vietnam," showcasing the difference of tactics among JBS members at the grassroots.

promote the passage of civil rights legislation. And it was they who eagerly fanned the flames of urban rioting, more of which would surely soon erupt. However, the actual "White House case" in the book's title referred to a seemingly unrelated scandal involving Lyndon Johnson's aide Walter Jenkins, who had been arrested weeks before the 1964 election for soliciting sex in the restroom of a Washington YMCA. The chief antagonists in *The White House Case* were "perverts" in the State Department. As long as they remained in government service, the United States could not hope to win the war in Vietnam.[568]

In his history of the Christian Right, Daniel K. Williams has noted that a conservative Christian campaign against gay rights sprang into existence suddenly in 1978, such that it caught the born-again President Jimmy Carter by surprise. Carter had made tenuous statements in favor of gay and lesbian rights during his campaign, not realizing how this might hurt him politically, because conservative Christians had long seemed "almost oblivious to the presence of homosexuality in America."[569]

However, the anti-Communist right was far from oblivious, having long considered homosexuality a danger to national security and national culture. In a sense, homosexuality was the ultimate symbol of moral turpitude among the federal bureaucrats that members of the radical right so despised. Though MOTOREDE organized no specific movement against homosexuality, homophobia was an important spur to activism. As far as most MOTOREDE spokespeople were concerned, homosexuality was an alarming symptom of perversion, often relegated to the rung of a downward spiral

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[568] Col. Victor J. Fox, *The White House Case: A Sequel to The Pentagon Case* (Pleasantville, NY: Fargo Press, Inc., 1968): 112, 131, 139, 145-147, 181-182.
[569] Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 146, 147.

between casual heterosexual sex and bestiality. In an early list of the issues that MOTOREDE would address, Robert Welch wrote that Communists were eager to promote "homosexuality, and every other form of sexual perversion, as smart and normal and acceptable from the classroom to the White House." Such liberal luminaries as John Maynard Keynes and Sumner Welles had risen to prominence, Welch argued, "specifically because they [were] flagrant homosexuals."[570]

To the extent that conservative activists talked about homosexuality before the late 1970s, they tended to refer to it as a problem that existed within the federal bureaucracy, and specifically within the State Department. The character Max Escotti, *The White House Case*'s fictionalized version of Herbert Philbrick, declared that "the little group of 'insiders' who control the foreign policy of the United States…have succeeded in making sexual perversion a *qualification* for appointment to a policy-making position in our government..."[571] According to this kind of thinking, Communist conspirators had no intention of promoting gay rights in the wider culture. They believed that gay men would be drawn to espionage because of their pre-existing outsider status, and that they would be easy to blackmail should it become necessary.

By peppering his talk in Macon with references to "security risks," Robert Winston was speaking in a language familiar to early Cold War investigators of "un-Americanism." The red scare of the early 1950s had been accompanied by a "lavender scare" that saw the firing of hundreds of federal employees on the grounds of homosexual activity. Indeed, more federal employees were fired for "sexual misconduct" during the

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[570] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for January, 1968" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Inc., 1966), 6, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[571] Ibid., 54.

early Cold War than for any other reason, including suspected Communist sympathies or espionage. They were called "security risks" because their aberrant sexual behavior ostensibly made them susceptible to Communist blackmail.[572] Perhaps even more fundamental than susceptibility to blackmail was the fact that homosexuality was understood to be a perversion that threatened social stability. As a threat to the traditional family, it was also a threat to national security during the Cold War.[573] "The image of the subversive-as-homosexual," as historian K. A. Cuordileone has put it, was perhaps the most lurid image of the early Cold War, one of men who secretly flouted all sexual restraints and rules of decency, and were therefore perhaps capable of any act, no matter how repugnant.[574]

Though the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 are usually identified as the gay rights movement's opening salvo, several earlier events caused conservatives to fear that homosexuality was spreading from the federal bureaucracy and into society at large, including the first "annual reminder" at Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 1965, staged by men and women of what was then called the "homophile movement."[575] In January 1965 the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that several local Protestant churches had held a fund-raising dance to promote "a dialogue between the church and the homosexual." Some six hundred gays and lesbians attended the event, and like the customers at the Stonewall Inn four years later, they encountered police harassment.[576]

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[572] K. A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 64.
[573] David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2; Strub, 5, 14.
[574] Cuordileone, xx.
[575] Warren J. Blumenfeld and Diane Raymond, *Looking at Gay and Lesbian Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 305.
[576] Donovan Bess, "Incidents at a Homosexual Benefit: Angry Ministers Rip Police," *San Francisco Sunday Chronicle*, January 3, 1965.

Discussing the event that March, Fred Schwarz of the Christian Anti-Communism Crusade remarked that encouraging "dialogue" between gays and Protestant ministers was comparable to "establishing good terms with criminals by assisting them in their crime." Surely such spectacles made Communists "laugh with satanic glee as they observe this suicidal development within our free and Christian society."[577]

Critical reports of the 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery March showcased concerns about aberrant sexuality. Reports of interracial orgies in the campsites along U.S. Highway 80 found their way into a speech by Congressman William L. Dickinson of Alabama. By his own account, after quoting newspaper accounts on the House floor, he printed and distributed ten thousand copies of his speech. Dickinson described participants in the March as a collection of "Alabama Negroes, do-gooders, Communists, adventurers, beatniks, and prostitutes," and he claimed that the Communists had given this motley group "cohesiveness, strength, and money, and welded them together into a formidable force." Among other things, he charged that the marchers had engaged in an all-night orgy inside a Montgomery church.[578]

By the time George Schuyler wrote for MOTOREDE in 1969, he blithely referred to "the notoriously homo-infested Selma-to-Montgomery March," perhaps because activists Bayard Rustin and James Reuben Reid, both convicted "sex deviates," were involved in it.[579] While Schuyler admitted that increasing sexual permissiveness was partly the result of urbanization, ease of travel, and increasing numbers of women in the workforce, he focused mostly on "the dual Marxist conspiracies (Communist and

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[577] Fred C. Schwarz, *Christian Anti-Communism Crusade Newsletter*, March 15, 1965, 3, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 66, Folder 2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[578] "Dickinson Claims March Misconduct," *Alabama Journal*, March 31, 1965.
[579] Schuyler, "The Fall," 28.

Fabian)" whose members had questioned traditional sexual morality during the early twentieth century.[580] "Practices once unmentionable," Schuyler wrote, "now publicly fetch loud guffaws and snickered commentary as wrist-danglers relate their indiscretions and a neighboring butch tells of her latest conquest. This is a sure sign of society sliding down the drain, of the failure of manhood and womanhood, of a jaded slump into death."[581]

Medford Evans, *American Opinion*'s cultural critic, also connected pornography to homosexuality in a 1969 essay on the nature of freedom and the influence of sadism on American culture. "Next to the love of God," he mused, "the preference that a man has for one woman above others…is the greatest natural safeguard of political liberty, since if one woman were like another, or if other men and even animals were readily interchangeable with women, then a man might as well take what the dictator would let him have." Because pornographers often demonstrated contempt for the female subjects of their work, Evans believed they were "usually homosexuals." They resembled their forefather, the Marquis de Sade, who sexually "preferred men…[and] had a special hatred for women…because they bring new human beings into the world."[582]

MOTOREDE and "Abortion on Demand"

Nothing quickened the political alliance of conservative Catholics and Protestants in the new Christian Right like the 1973 Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which declared that a constitutional "right to privacy" allowed women access to abortion.[583] During the 1970s, the Presbyterian theologian Francis Schaeffer deemed legal abortion a

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[580] Ibid., 23.
[581] Ibid., 22.
[582] Medford Evans, "Pornography: Mindless with Gazing," *American Opinion*, Vol. XII, No. 4, April 1969, 43, 46.
[583] Williams, 207.

manifestation of the Marxist doctrine of dialectical materialism. Christianity was, to him, the only philosophical worldview that could adequately explain the human condition. Much as Robert Welch had long done in the name of anti-Communism, Schaeffer encouraged his disciples to get involved in American cultural institutions to combat the materialist philosophy within them.[584]

Through MOTOREDE—and before the *Roe v. Wade* decision was handed down—the JBS constructed an anti-Communist campaign against abortion. In his November 1970 Bulletin, Robert Welch turned his members' attention to the growing threat of "abortion on demand." Belmont staffer Jack McManus's first extended statement on the matter was unequivocal: "MOTOREDE believes that abortion is murder. When, therefore, we note the cries for relaxation of laws prohibiting abortion, liberalized attitude toward abortion, or abortion on demand, we read instead, relaxation of laws prohibiting *murder*, liberalized attitude toward *murder*, or *murder* on demand."[585] However, in direct instructions to people involved in MOTOREDE committees around the country, considerations were more tactical. Members were urged "not to get into the controversy over birth control, but to confine their efforts to opposing the legalization, encouragement, and subsidization of 'abortion on demand,' especially by the federal government…"[586]

Though he urged activists to avoid talking about birth control, Robert Welch made clear in the same set of instructions that he was more concerned about efforts to limit population growth than about the immorality of killing unborn babies. "Visibly

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[584] Ibid., 139.
[585] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for November 1970" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1970): 22, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[586] Ibid., 23.

planned to come right behind the drive for abortion," he wrote, "will be similar drives for infanticide to be practiced on the very young and euthanasia to be practiced on the very old – with government determining who shall be allowed to live and who shall be killed. From this it would be a short step toward deciding that anybody hostile to government should be done away with, for the good of society."[587] As Francis Schaeffer was publishing his first philosophical critiques of dialectical materialism, Welch turned the JBS's attention to similar issues, from a tactical rather than a philosophical standpoint.

Abortion, for the JBS, was couched in the context of the other concerns MOTOREDE raised in 1969 and afterwards. As one resident of El Paso, Texas, put the matter in 1972 after watching the JBS's anti-abortion filmstrip "License to Kill," the "One Worlders" now wished to destroy the world's middle classes with "birth control, sterilization, abortion, [and] euthanasia." As part of a coordinated plot, they were also "trying to destroy our youth by drugs, pornography, etc., to bring about a complete moral breakdown."[588] Retired Lieutenant Colonel Jack Mohr, who with William Mayer had studied allegedly brainwashed Korean War POWs waylaid in Japan, became a MOTOREDE spokesman in 1970. In his speeches, Mohr argued that the federal government was deliberately promoting abortion as part of an effort to enforce "population controls as brutal and restrictive as those of Hitler's Germany and modern Russia." Paul Ehrlich's recent warnings of a population explosion were unfounded, he insisted; they were "one of the greatest propaganda hoaxes of this century."[589]

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[587] Ibid., 24.
[588] Doris R. Martinez, "Abortion Move Is International," *El Paso Herald-Post*, Wednesday, June 21, 1972, 14.
[589] "Washington Promotion of Abortion is Topic," *The Daily Intelligencer* [Doylestown, Pennsylvania], Friday, February 5, 1971, 5.

Anti-abortion activism had arisen early in California partly in response to that state's Therapeutic Abortion Act of 1967.[590] As the Pro-Life Council of California expressed the matter in 1971, this law had in four years "resulted in the destruction of more than 150,000 tiny human lives," and the abortion rate had been rising each year. The Pro-Life Council connected abortion to another cause that had long been popular among activists on the radical right: opposition to the concept of "mental health." The 1971 broadside noted that "93% of these legalized killings have been for reasons of 'mental health'," and suggested that the true purposes were "materialistic selfishness or social inconvenience."[591]

By 1972, as JBS member and former California Congressman John Schmitz was running for President on the American Party ticket, he ran thoroughly as a "culture war" conservative, emphasizing several issues that the JBS wished to portray as coordinated. Charles Armour, District Governor of the JBS's West Coast Regional Office, encouraged Schmitz to talk on the broad topic of "people control" and to include within that rubric "the subjects of ecology, population control, abortion, bussing [*sic*], and education into the whole effort of the Insiders to control people in their environment." While other prominent JBS members would handle the topics of inflation, taxes, foreign policy, welfare, crime, the death penalty, and gun control legislation, Schmitz was to be the spokesman for the new host of culture war issues.[592]

Dirty Textbooks in West Virginia

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[590] Williams, 112-113.
[591] "The PRO LIFE Council of California: A Compendium," undated [circa 1971], John G. Schmitz Papers, Box 66, Folder 2, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.
[592] Charles R. Armour to John Schmitz, August 2, 1972, John G. Schmitz Papers, Box 66, Folder 3, Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

The cultural politics of the 1970s changed the way some conservatives thought about their enemies, who were increasingly described not as "Communist conspirators" but as "secular humanists," a term popularized by Onalee McGraw, education consultant for the Heritage Foundation, in her 1976 book *Secular Humanism and the Schools*, and by the evangelical Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer.[593] One crucible in this shift was a widely publicized protest against Language Arts textbooks in West Virginia that effectively shut down one county's school system for half a year. In April 1974, the Kanawha County Board of Education adopted a set of three hundred twenty-five textbooks, partly for their emphasis of "the intercultural character of our pluralistic society," but conservative activists and local parents claimed the books were un-patriotic and hostile to Christianity.[594] In the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy, opposition to textbooks' alleged socialistic bent met with fears of radicalism and indecency to produce a conservative populist outcry with national repercussions.

Alice Moore, a Kanawha County minister's wife, had gotten her start as a local politician by opposing sex education. While running for a seat on the Kanawha County board of education in 1970, she framed her campaign against a program embedded in the School Health Education Survey (SHES), a subsidiary of SIECUS. Her opponent, the incumbent Dr. Carl Tully, told his constituents that the John Birch Society was supporting Moore's campaign. There is little evidence that this was the case, and considering the press MOTOREDE had received in 1969, Tully probably associated anti-

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[593] Williams, 136-139. Williams credits Schaeffer with "convert[ing] a new generation of evangelicals into culture warriors" by encouraging them to "confront and infiltrate the cultural institutions of their society in order to transform them," much as radical rightists had been doing for years.

[594] National Education Association, *Inquiry Report: Kanawha County, West Virginia: A Textbook Study in Cultural Conflict* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, Teacher Rights Division, 1975), 1.

sex education activism with the JBS.[595] However, Moore's activism was no simple reaction to offended sensibilities; she was well read on the topic of subversion in education. She campaigned with literature produced by local branches of MOTOREDE and other anti-sex education groups, and she handily defeated Tully.[596] Her campaign newsletter put the issue in terms of parents' rights: "What right does the teacher have to create in a child's mind doubts about a parent's judgment? Just how far will we allow the state to go in intruding into our private lives?"[597] These were questions Moore would raise again in 1974, as she led the campaign against Language Arts textbooks.

Moore credited her activism in that conflict not to the John Birch Society, but to Mel and Norma Gabler of Longview, Texas, who since the early 1960s had policed what they believed to be anti-capitalist bias in public school textbooks. Moore had become familiar with their work through her membership in America's Future, which since 1959 had published a regular series of textbook reviews, entitled *Operation Textbook*. The first issue was clearly inspired by Congressman Paul Shafer's 1952 speech about radical educators and E. Merrill Root's book *Brainwashing in the High Schools*. "Beginning nearly 30 years ago," *Operation Textbook* declared in 1959, "a group of left-wing educators—interested in using education for propaganda—devised the means to distort and slant the textbooks used in teaching our children," so that they would "instill a belief in collectivist, left-wing ideas and institutions."[598] Like Alice Moore, the Gablers were fundamentalist Christians, but their sophisticated line-by-line textbook critiques

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[595] Catherine Ann Candor, "A History of the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy, April 1974-April 1975 (EdD diss.,Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1976), 28.
[596] Mason, 105.
[597] Candor, "A History of the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy," 30.
[598] "America's Future, Inc., announces 'Operation Textbook'" (New Rochelle, NY: America's Future, Inc., 1959), 3, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 2, Folder: "America's Future," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

mimicked those by the textbook critics of America's Future, a diverse group of conservative academics that included Russell Kirk and *American Opinion* contributor Medford Evans.[599]

In their April 1974 *Faith for the Family* newsletter, the Gablers told subscribers that their children were likely to be reading "trashy, pornographic, immoral, and anti-American books" in school. The problem was no longer limited to the teaching of "collectivist, left-wing ideas"; it now included the teaching of violent revolutionary aspirations. Like the John Birch Society and many Southern politicians had done since the mid-1960s, the Gablers elided distinctions between civil rights demonstrations and violence, suggesting that the concept of civil disobedience was to blame for both. They cited passages from recently published textbooks to demonstrate that children would be taught lessons in civil disobedience, "replete with examples of 'freedom' songs, marches, sit-ins, boycotts, 'freedom' rides, and the like."[600] Textbook authors, the Gablers alleged, were engaged in a brainwashing exercise of the sort Edward Hunter had described during the 1950s. Textbooks were deliberately worded to "sow seeds of doubt in the student's mind" until "he reaches the position of not believing anything." Afterwards the books "subtly indoctrinate the student with new 'values,' such as anti-Americanism, hatred for the home and family, man as an animal, and anti-Christian attitudes."[601]

Just after this newsletter appeared, Alice Moore aired her first objections to the proposed textbooks in Kanawha County, West Virginia. She cautioned her fellow school board members about the dangers that lurked in "anti-American social science books" in

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[599] Ibid., 6-7.
[600] Mel Gabler, "Have You Read Your Child's School Textbooks?" Vol. 2, No. 1, March/April 1974, 10, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 175, Folder 2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[601] Ibid., 9.

which "everything in America is denigrated."[602] At a May 23 school board meeting, after having read some of the proposed books, Moore claimed that they were "trashy, filthy, and too one-sided" in their emphasis on the works of radical black writers. She was careful to emphasize that it was radicalism—not race—that was objectionable; the books included works by George Jackson and Eldridge Cleaver. Moore especially emphasized Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*—recommended as supplemental reading for college-bound high school seniors—and his description of having been a serial rapist in his youth.[603]

MOTOREDE material appeared in the summer 1974 campaign against the Language Arts textbooks, though not necessarily with Alice Moore's consent. Perhaps the most exaggerated piece of anti-textbook propaganda was a four-page flyer that contained passages from some of the textbooks, along with an interleaf featuring diagrams of the penis and vagina, various "street words" for the sex organs, and instructions for condom use. Though none of this material was directly attributed to any of the Language Arts textbooks in question, it was identified for use in seventh and eighth grade classrooms. The flyer originated in an American Opinion Bookstore in the small town of Reedy, West Virginia.[604] During that summer and fall, protesting parents often referred simply to "the dirty books," as if all three hundred twenty-five of them were pornographic.[605]

When the new school year began in September 1974, protesters boycotted the schools by forming picket lines that, according to traditions of labor unionism, were

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[602] Mason, 93.
[603] Ibid., 19, 21.
[604] James Moffett, *Storm in the Mountains: A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict, and Consciousness* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 108.
[605] William Martin, *With God On Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 127.

honored by local coal miners and bus drivers. At the height of the school boycott, with thousands of children truant, many of the county's workers on strike, and violence occurring sporadically, the board of education voted to recall all textbooks pending an evaluation by a "citizens' textbook review committee." Before long seven of the fifteen committee members had broken away in protest and formed their own group. This splinter group assembled over four hundred pages of objections to specific passages from the textbooks. Many of these were copied verbatim from the Gablers' own catalogued objections, which Alice Moore had at hand.[606]

The resulting report relied heavily on charges of indecency, frequently citing profanity out of context. James Moffett, head editor of the *Interaction* series, perhaps the most controversial series of the collection, objected strenuously to the charge that his textbooks were "pornographic" in the legal sense of the term. "[P]rofane or coarse language," he pointed out, "often fills the speech of people living in dehumanized environments…[and] the practical effect of banning such speech is to cut off the voices of soldiers, workers, minorities, or others whose plight tells us of things we don't want to hear."[607] Members of the textbook review committee, on the other hand, put the matter in terms of protecting their children: "We only ask that you honor our right to hold our opinions and protect our children from that which we feel would do them harm."[608]

By November, Moore and her ad hoc committee had drawn up a set of guidelines for future textbook selections. Weary after several months of strife, the board of education voted to adopt the guidelines. One of these, "Textbooks must not encourage or teach racial hatred," codified an objection Moore had made in May, that the textbooks

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[606] Moffett, 116.
[607] Ibid., 112.
[608] Ibid., 117.

were "too one-sided."[609] Dorothy Whitehurst served on a screening committee created to review textbook adoptions for Social Studies in 1975, and operating under this new guideline. Speaking at a board of education meeting in February 1975, she argued that the ban on teaching "racial hatred" was designed to eliminate black history from the curriculum. However, the rule was no sinister trick; Moore and her committee believed that "if the black student reads certain portions of the history of the South it would cause racial hatred because it would cause the blacks to hate the whites."[610] This was an old anti-Communist idea updated for the 1970s: that subversives emphasized past and present injustices in order to make differently interested groups aware of their differences, hoping to incite revolutionary violence.

Before 1974, textbooks in West Virginia were required to "assist students in examining their own self-image."[611] One of the guidelines that Moore persuaded the board to adopt in November stood in direct opposition to this requirement, asserting that "textbooks must not intrude into the privacy of students' homes by asking them personal questions…"[612] It is likely that in open-ended critical thinking questions, Alice Moore sensed an attempt by textbook authors to promote "situation ethics." The Gablers had been decrying situation ethics ever since the introduction of the controversial "Man, A Course of Study" (MACOS), in 1963. MACOS, created with a grant from the National Science Foundation, was a yearlong program in which fifth and sixth-graders studied the Netsilik Inuits of northern Canada. As part of the curriculum, students were asked to consider whether some of the Netsiliks' historical practices, such as infanticide, might be

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[609] Kanawha County Board of Education, *Minutes*, November 8, 1974, 5, Kanawha County Board of Education Office, Charleston, West Virginia.
[610] Kanawha County Board of Education, *Minutes*, February 13, 1975, 6.
[611] Candor, "A History of the Kanawha County Textbook Controversy," 43.
[612] Kanawha County Board of Education, *Minutes*, November 8, 1974, 5.

acceptable according to the cultural norms of their society. Such critical thinking was supposed to "lead the children to understand how man goes about understanding his world, making sense of it."[613]

Moore's most significant objection was one she first expressed at a June 27 board of education meeting: that the textbooks were hostile to fundamentalist Christianity. She codified this belief in November with a requirement that future textbooks "must not ridicule the values and practices of any ethnic, religious, or racial group."[614] By framing such a requirement, Moore again echoed the Gablers' concerns. In their April 1974 edition of *Faith for the Family*, they declared that "humanism" was "another religion" that had rushed into public schools to fill the vacuum left by the absence of prayer and Bible-reading. To the extent that public school textbooks were promulgating secular humanism, they argued, such textbooks violated the Constitution's Establishment Clause.[615]

After visiting West Virginia during the textbook controversy, the Gablers saw the fruition of what they had worked for years to accomplish. "Christian schools & 'schools in homes' have sprung up with more to come," they wrote in a breathless memorandum to supporters. And despite the fact that Kanawha County's board of education seemed determined to enforce the attendance law and keep most of the books in classrooms, Texas and Georgia had decided to remove two series from their own state curricula.[616]

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[613] Eugene F. Provenzo, Jr., *Religious Fundamentalism and American Education: The Battle for the Public Schools* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 43-44.
[614] Kanawha County Board of Education, *Minutes*, November 8, 1974, 5.
[615] Daniel Kenneth Williams, *From the Pews to the Polls: The Formation of a Southern Christian Right* (PhD diss. Providence: Brown University, 2005), 169-170. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black had suggested in the 1961 case *Torasco v. Watkins* that secular humanism might be considered a religion, though not in an attempt to score a jurisprudential point for fundamentalist Christians. Ibid., 216.
[616] Mel and Norma Gabler, "Latest News From West Virginia," T-26, undated, Herbert A. Philbrick Papers, Box 175, Folder 2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

James Moffett, head editor of the controversial *Interaction* series, recalled several years later that the events in Kanawha County had made textbook publishers wary of publishing anything that might give offense. A series under consideration in Texas had been "suddenly dropped" in 1975, despite its having been "rated right near the top" just beforehand. *Interaction* had been considered the cutting-edge of "open classroom" pedagogy, but the series was out-of-print by 1980. Though many state boards of education continued to promote pluralism in textbooks, "adoption committees will look in vain to find a program truly filling that requirement." Moffett believed that the textbook showdown in Kanawha County had produced a "reverberating network" of conservative activists.[617]

Indeed it had. Connie Marshner of the Heritage Foundation recalled the Kanawha County textbook controversy as the seminal event of the "parents' rights movement" she represented. Moreover, she echoed the dubious claim that the controversial Language Arts textbooks were "dirty."[618] Despite the diverse issues that had been raised in the textbook controversy, including an alleged anti-capitalist bent, the teaching of "dialectology," intercultural education, and critical thinking, the most powerful metaphor was that of corruption by educators. The fear of "dirty books" in school had reawakened a host of loosely related anti-Communist causes under a new rubric of opposition to secular humanism and the preservation of America's "Judeo-Christian" heritage.

The SIECUS Circle

By the late 1970s, even the John Birch Society had decided that it was wise to emphasize the influence of secular humanists in American culture, rather than the

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[617] Moffett, 28.
[618] Connaught Coyne Marshner, *Blackboard Tyranny* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House Publishers, 1978), 231, 16.

influence of Communists. *The SIECUS Circle*, with authorship attributed to Claire Chambers and published in 1977 by Western Islands, was likely a collaborative effort by a team of JBS researchers.[619] The encyclopedic text detailed the "circle" of organizations that supported sex education in the public schools. The ultimate goal of those involved in SIECUS, the book argued, was "to transform America into a secular and collectivist state."[620]

According to the book, most of SIECUS's backers subscribed to humanism, "an atheistic belief diametrically opposed to the basic tenets of our Judeo-Christian heritage," with "substantial Communist influence within [its] top ranks."[621] The authors rehashed the same warnings Robert Welch, Edgar Bundy, and other anti-Communists had made some fifteen years earlier. Once again, the most important plotters behind the scenes were associated with the United Nations and especially with UNESCO. It was G. Brock Chisholm, in his capacity as director of the World Health Organization, who had first laid plans for the construction of a "new world order" based on interracial breeding and the strict control of population growth through either voluntary or coercive methods of birth control.[622] What the conspirators euphemistically called "sensitivity training" or "critical thinking" in the classroom was in truth "thought reform or brainwashing."[623] The Supreme Court's liberal slant was no longer the result of the justices having imbibed Communist ideas, but the result of their having "drunk deeply at the humanist

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[619] Elaine Bechtel to Nicholas J. Bové, October 17, 1975, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 4, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois. Bechtel and Bové were both Belmont staffers, and Bechtel wrote that her work on *The SIECUS Circle* had given her the courage to tell Bové that she suspected he was a homosexual.
[620] Chambers, xi.
[621] Ibid., xiv.
[622] Ibid., 3-4, 7-8.
[623] Ibid., 22.

fountain."[624] The authors had discovered, allegedly in the course of their research, that "[p]opulation control, legalized abortion, homosexuality, pornography, sensitivity training, and even drugs…all are part of the same general theme."[625]

The SIECUS Circle's authors knew that their audience would consist in part of people who had long been concerned about Communist subversion in American culture. "Students of leftist strategy," they noted wryly, would recognize "the familiar charges of 'character assassination,' 'witch hunting,' and 'McCarthyism'" that liberals would level at the book.[626] Well-schooled readers would also recognize many of the names and organizations as the ones anti-Communist activists had warned them about for years, including not only international bodies like the United Nations, but also domestic advocacy groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Lawyers Guild. Like the collective identity of the book's "author," the anti-Communist conspiracy theory informing *The SIECUS Circle* was to be veiled from the uninitiated.

[624] Ibid., xi.
[625] Ibid., xv.
[626] Ibid., xv.

EPILOGUE

Criminalizing the Enlightenment

By the time *The SIECUS Circle* was published, the John Birch Society espoused a very different philosophy from the one on which it was founded. As early as 1965, Robert Welch had begun to discuss a new set of ideas concerning the international conspiracy that allegedly sought to conquer the world. As Watts burned, he was preparing for a three-day seminar much like the one over which he had presided in December 1958, one he believed would be every bit as foundational as that one had been. But this meeting was not to be for recruitment; it was instead to introduce committed Birchers to new details about the conspiracy. It "may affect your whole life," Welch told his invitees, "and will certainly affect a considerable part of your future thinking."[627]

Welch's new details included that the conspiracy had begun not with Karl Marx, but with the Bavarian Illuminati, a secret society founded on May 1, 1776, by a renegade Enlightenment philosopher named Adam Weishaupt. The Illuminati had allegedly drawn up a plot to gain global control by destroying "contemporary civilization." This destruction would involve "the overthrow of all existing governments, the merging of all nationalities and races into one people under one government, the abolition of all private property, the destruction of all religion, and the abrogation of all morality." Members were encouraged to seek influential positions in governments and universities. Within a few years, Welch alleged, all of the department chairs at Weishaupt's University of Ingolstadt were members. Thus, the repression and supposed elimination of the Bavarian

[627] Robert Welch to Clarence Manion, August 3, 1965, 3, Clarence E. Manion Papers, Box 61, Folder 6, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, Illinois.

Illuminati mattered little, for like the Communists of the twentieth century, the Illuminati had been infiltrators. During the French Revolution they had provoked the angry crowds of Parisian *scans-culottes*, just as Communists were now provoking rioters in American cities. It was possible that Karl Marx's utopian "League of the Just" was simply a nineteenth century "division of the Illuminati."[628]

Despite his earlier efforts to distance himself from the racists and anti-Semites of the conservative movement, Welch's new interest in the Illuminati drew on ideas that outspoken racists like Kenneth Goff had expressed in earlier decades. During the 1930s, Goff's mentor Gerald Winrod had fused anti-Illuminati conspiracy theory with Henry Ford's brand of anti-Semitism.[629] William Guy Carr, head of the Toronto-based National Federation of Christian Laymen during the 1950s, has been called "the most influential source in creating the American Illuminati demonology."[630] Welch, like these other conspiracy theorists, drew his ideas about the Illuminati directly from John Robison's 1798 book *Proofs of a Conspiracy*.[631] If Robison's book reveals anything, it reveals the endurance of particular ideas about subversion from the late eighteenth century to the present.

Though he continued to insist that the Communism was the most dangerous manifestation of the international conspiracy, Welch began to refer just as often in his monthly bulletins to the *Insiders*—a term he always capitalized and wrote in italics. The *Insiders* encompassed a broader fraternity of conspirators than the "international

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[628] Robert Welch, "One Dozen Trumpets, Part 7 of 8," accessed April 5, 2016, https://federalexpression.wordpress.com/.
[629] Martin Durham, *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics* (London: Routledge, 2007), 60.
[630] Bill Ellis, *Raising the Devil: Satanism, New Religions, and the Media* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 128.
[631] Robert Welch, "One Dozen Trumpets, Part 7 of 8," https://federalexpression.wordpress.com/, accessed April 5, 2016.

Communist conspiracy" could hold, including internationalist diplomats like Colonel House, Fabian socialists like George Bernard Shaw, and humanists like John Dewey. By 1967, Welch believed that the Communist Party itself had become a mere "front" for the *Insiders*.[632]

Indeed, by the 1970s the John Birch Society had arguably ceased to be an anti-Communist organization. It remained a nationalist organization that considered many of the nation's leaders to be traitors, though it was less and less clear against what or whom the treason was being committed. The *Insiders* bridged international Communism with transnational capitalism as part of a single global conspiracy. Even as the John Birch Society officially continued to denounce anti-Semitism, its rhetorical ties to groups and individuals who had long spoken against the "international Jew" and international bankers grew in tandem. Robert Welch, who once had created a scandal by referring to Dwight Eisenhower as an agent of the Communist conspiracy, now surprised few commentators when he regularly referred in his monthly bulletins to "the Washington-Moscow axis."[633]

As Communism fell in Eastern Europe between 1989 and 1991, members of the anti-Communist radical right looked on with more anxiety than joy. Both they and more mainstream conservative intellectuals had by this time transitioned to a broader critique of the West that would carry aspects of their anti-Communism into the continuing

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[632] Robert Welch, "Bulletin for May, 1967" (Belmont: The John Birch Society, Incorporated, 1967), 5, Contemporary Issues Pamphlet Collection, MS 81-07-A, Box 19, Folder: "John Birch Society," Wichita State University Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives, Wichita, Kansas.

[633] This phrase, along with the "*Insiders*," began appearing in 1967, usually in reference to the Vietnam War and the allegation that American statesmen were not, in fact, interested in "winning" it.

"culture wars" that accompanied what political theorist Francis Fukuyama called "the end of history."[634]

In a 1988 letter to his old friend Frank Barnett, William Rusher wrote of his plans to step down from his longtime position as publisher of the *National Review* at the end of the year. He had decided to join "with one or another of the conservative think-tanks out in California, to give me (like Archimedes!) a place to stand while I move the world."[635] Rusher's way of moving the world would be to tilt at the whole experiment of Western civilization. "I am convinced that many of the intellectual tendencies spawned by the Enlightenment have not only had it," Rusher continued, "but are now widely recognized as having had it. The whole pretentious structure of secular humanism is riddled with termites, and needs only a push. I would like to help give it that push."[636] Rusher's most immediate plans for the push were a series of seminars to consider "new modalities for 21st century man," based on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's 1978 commencement address at Harvard University, which Rusher considered to have "laid down the intellectual agenda of Western man for the next 50 or 75 years."[637]

Solzhenitsyn's address must have surprised many listeners in 1978, for he had made his name, like many other exiled Soviet citizens, by dramatizing the horrors exacted on those who dared to question the Communist system. But in his address to the Harvard graduates, he said little about life in the Soviet Union, and he expressed no praise for the United States' oft-touted freedoms, arguing that they had in fact been

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[634] See Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest*, Summer 1989; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press, 1992).
[635] William A. Rusher to Frank R. Barnett, July 6, 1988, 1, William A. Rusher Papers, Box 7, Folder 2, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[636] Ibid.
[637] Ibid.

carried too far. The "West" and the "East" suffered from the same spiritual sickness, Solzhenitsyn told the Harvard graduates, and that sickness was the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment had brought with it "rationalistic humanism or humanistic autonomy: the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him."[638] The unknown future, Solzhenitsyn concluded, would "demand from us a spiritual blaze; we shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life, where our physical nature will not be cursed, as in the Middle Ages, but even more importantly, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon, as in the Modern Era."[639]

Robert Welch, by shifting the John Birch Society's focus from the Communists to the *Insiders*, had undergone a transition that mirrored that of Rusher and Solzhenitsyn. By the late 1960s, he was already arguing that the Communist conspiracy was really just one arm of a modernist conspiracy, one that stretched back at least to Adam Weishaupt's Illuminati in 1776, a criminal plot at the edge of the Enlightenment that had allegedly inspired it.

[638] Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, "A World Split Apart," Commencement Address Delivered at Harvard University, June 8, 1978, *Orthodoxy Today.org*, accessed July 14, 2014, http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles/SolzhenitsynHarvard.php.
[639] Ibid.