RIGHT-WING PARANOID BLUES:

THE ROLE OF RADICALISM IN MODERN CONSERVATISM

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

John S. Huntington

May, 2016

RIGHT-WING PARANOID BLUES:

THE ROLE OF RADICALISM IN MODERN CONSERVATISM

An Abstract of a Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department

of History

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

John S. Huntington

May, 2016

ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of radicalism within the conservative movement of the mid-twentieth century United States, specifically by analyzing the strategies and activism of the Radical Right. The onset of the Cold War after World War II created an atmosphere ripe for anti-communism, and it also paved the way for a conservative backlash to liberalism and the mid-century revival of fundamentalist evangelicalism. This zeitgeist of Cold War anti-communism and frustrations with liberalism facilitated the formation of the Radical Right—a loose network of ultraconservative organizations and leaders that used conspiracy theories and grassroots tactics to energize the right-wing base. This dissertation examines multiple groups and individuals within the Radical Right that promoted far-right ideals and functioned as a vocal minority within modern conservatism: Robert W. Welch Jr., and the John Birch Society; Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade; Protestants and Other Americans United For the Separation Between Church and State (POAU); Texas cowman-agitator J. Evetts Haley; and Kent Courtney and the Conservative Society of America (CSA). The leadership of these groups mattered because the organizations were often dominated by ideologues that incorrectly conflated liberalism with communism and employed conspiratorial rhetoric to foment political change. The Radical Right found a modest constituency in the Sunbelt; organizational chapters for the John Birch Society and the CSA proliferated in key states like Texas and California. Though far-right activists had limited electoral success, the Radical Right played a role in the ascent of modern conservatism by acting as a foil for, and thereby helping legitimize, mainstream right-wing values.

Right-Wing Paranoid Blues: The Role of Radicalism in Modern Conservatism

Table of Contents

Common Abbreviations in Texts and Notes

Organizations

AU	Americans United for the Separation of Church and State
CASE	Committee Against Summit Entanglements
CEM	Christian Echoes Ministry
CFR	Citizens for Religious Freedom
CRA	California Republican Assembly
CSA	Conservative Society of America
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GHMA	Greater Houston Ministerial Association
HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
IOP	Ideological Organizations Project
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
JBS	John Birch Society
JDT	Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas
NAE	National Evangelical Association
NAM	National Association of Manufacturers
NCC	National Council of Churches
NCNP	National Committee for a New Party
POAU	Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State
SBC	Southern Baptist Convention
SIECUS	Sexual Information and Education Council of the United States

TFA	Texans for America
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
YAF	Young Americans for Freedom

Archives

DDEL	Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library	
	ODDE	Office of Dwight D. Eisenhower
	PPP	Post-Presidential Papers
HML	The Haley Memorial Library and History Center	
	JEH	J. Evetts Haley Collection
JFK	John F. Kennedy Digital Library	
NWSU	Northwestern State University	
	CGHRC	Cammie G. Henry Research Center
	KCC	Kent Courtney Collection
UASC	University of Arkansas Special Collections	
	BJHP	Billy James Hargis Papers

Introduction

Right-Wing Paranoid Blues: The Role of Radicalism in Modern Conservatism

In the founding document of the John Birch Society, *The Blue Book*, Robert H. W. Welch discussed what he believed was the leviathan of communist infiltration. Welch declared, "This octopus is so large that its tentacles now reach into all of the legislative halls, all of the union labor meetings, a majority of the religious gatherings, and most of the schools *of the whole world*."[1] Welch turned legitimate Cold War concerns, like global communist aggression, into conspiracy theories. He founded the John Birch Society in 1958 to oppose the perceived infiltration of communism in the United States, and his platform conflated liberal policies like welfare spending with socialism and communism. The Birch Society built an active constituency by using communist conspiracies to stoke anxieties about internal subversion and the erosion of socio-cultural traditions. This conspiratorial thinking epitomized the Radical Right of the 1950s and 1960s—a loose coalition of disillusioned far-right conservatives that contested liberalism through anti-communism and grassroots strategies.

Multiple Radical Right organizations and leaders promoted far-right ideals and functioned as a vocal minority within modern conservatism, and this dissertation focuses on a select few that were especially prevalent in the Sunbelt: Robert W. Welch, Jr., and the John Birch Society; Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade; Protestants and Other Americans United For the Separation Between Church and State (POAU); Texas cowman-agitator J. Evetts Haley; and Kent Courtney and the Conservative Society of America (CSA).

---

[1] Robert W. Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society* (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1959), 60.

These groups and leaders exemplified the Radical Right by incorrectly viewing liberalism and communism as the same, promoting conspiracy theories, appealing to Sunbelt voters, and building grassroots movements to foment political and societal change. Organizations like the Christian Crusade and POAU attracted religious conservatives while the Birch Society and Courtney's CSA energized politically-oriented right-wingers. I argue that the ultraconservative movement galvanized millions of Americans disenchanted with the trajectory of U.S. politics, and, more broadly, the far-right served as a foil for mainstream conservatives. Additionally, Radical Right leaders mattered because they employed conspiratorial anti-communism and grassroots strategies in an attempt to shift the American polity rightward. These far-rightists contended that the political zeitgeist of the mid-twentieth century—liberalism—had failed ultraconservative voters. The radicalism of these activists and organizations, especially their anti-communist conspiracy theories, helped delineate the divide between mainstream conservatism and the right-wing fringe.

The Radical Right coalesced during the mid-twentieth century to oppose socio-political liberalism in the United States, but this network of far-right agitators differed from previous iterations of conservatism. In general, conservatism in the United States embodied a distrust of reform, a suspicion of centralized power, and a desire to maintain the socio-political status quo.[2] George H. Nash postulated that these tendencies manifested in the post-World War II era as libertarian fears of federal encroachment, "new conservatism" and the rejection of cultural relativism, and evangelical anti-communism.[3] These tenets roughly

[2] Clinton Rossiter articulated this view in *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* (New York: Knopf, 1962), 11-15. George Nash referred to the general terms used by Rossiter as "inadequate and tendentious," but his definition of post-World War II conservatism offers similar themes with more nuanced divisions (libertarianism, evangelical anti-communism, and traditionalism). George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), xiv-xv.

[3] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, xv.

defined mainstream conservatism during the Cold War, but the political spectrum resembled a gradient rather than a series of rigid definitions. Two central issues separated ultraconservatives from their mainstream counterparts: a belief in a vast communist conspiracy and a black-or-white view dividing U.S. politics into a false binary of conservatism and communism.

The gap between the Radical Right and mainstream conservatives was narrow and their platforms frequently overlapped even if their methods did not. For example, prominent conservative writer William F. Buckley Jr., was a staunch anti-communist; Buckley viewed the Cold War as an apocalyptic struggle between good and evil, but he rejected the conspiratorial views of Robert W. Welch and the Birch Society.[4] Buckley's interpretation illustrated the disconnect between actual Cold War dangers and the conspiracy theories of the Radical Right; however, other platforms, like fiscal conservatism and states' rights, appealed to both radical and mainstream conservatives, especially within the Sunbelt South.[5] Historian Sean P. Cunningham defined Sunbelt conservatism as "anchored by preexisting notions of entrepreneurialism; rugged individualism; self-help . . . limited and local government . . . and traditional social mores informed by Protestant interpretations of the Judeo-Christian ethic."[6]

---

[4] Kevin M. Schultz, *Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship that Shaped the Sixties* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 22, 52.

[5] Lisa McGirr's seminal work charts the impact of suburbanization, federal spending, and the influence of far-right politics on the politics of southern California, in *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Matthew Lassiter contended that suburbanization, the language of liberty, and economic independence drove Sunbelt conservatives to the Republican Party, in *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). Darren Dochuk noted how the migration of evangelicals from the Deep South to the West revealed the religious influence of Sunbelt politics, in *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); Sean P. Cunningham's synthesis delineated the similarities and differences within the broad geographic region known as the Sunbelt, in *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[6] Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 12.

The Radical Right found a modest constituency in the Sunbelt eager to contest liberalism, even if it meant deploying conspiratorial rhetoric. At the same time, conservatism connected with the religious and social traditionalism of the Sunbelt, illustrating the breadth and complexity of conservative values.

None of the definitions of conservatism are fixed because they evolve in context with one another as the U.S. political spectrum shifts over time, and my definitions are particular to my study of the mid-twentieth century Radical Right. Establishing a barometer using 1960s Sunbelt politicians, from mainstream to radical conservatives, clarifies the political scale. Senator John Tower (R-TX) adhered to the tenets of mainstream conservatism—individual liberty, anti-communism, and limited government—but he encouraged party unity and rejected ideological purity by cooperating with liberal Republicans.[7] Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) stood a little further to Tower's right, embodying the same principles with greater vehemence and rejecting liberalism as a failed ideology. Goldwater referred to liberalism as a "leviathan" and "dehumanizing," and he contended that anything other than a strict constitutional interpretation amounted to a usurpation of power.[8] In particular, Goldwater's advocacy of nuclear weaponry in Vietnam placed the Arizona senator in the hardline, hyper-aggressive conservative camp.[9]

If Goldwater epitomized the libertarian radicalism of the western Sunbelt, Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) represented the staunch right-wing of the Deep South. Thurmond supported Goldwater's campaign in 1964, but his personal brand of conservatism embodied

---

[7] Sean P. Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism: Texas and the Rise of the Modern Right* (University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 34, 60.

[8] Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 139, 150.

[9] Ibid., 191.

the ardent segregationism of southern states. The 1964 Civil Rights Act illustrated the differences between the two men because Goldwater opposed the legislation out of fear of federal encroachment and as a matter of constitutional principle, whereas Thurmond's vote against the bill stemmed from the southern traditions of segregationism and racial politics (Thurmond was a harbinger of southern political realignment as he switched to the GOP on September 16, 1964).[10] Though the end result was the same—both men voted against the Civil Rights Act—their justifications illustrated regional variations within conservatism.

Goldwater and Thurmond embodied strains of staunch conservatism, but on the far end of the right-wing political spectrum resided men like former General Edwin A. Walker. While serving in the military Walker instituted a program called Pro-Blue that fear-mongered about communist subversion and outlined voting recommendations to his soldiers.[11] The military relieved Walker of his command for instructing troops to vote for hardline conservative politicians, and afterward Walker embarked on a crusade to warn Americans about the imminent threat of communist subversion.[12] Walker's delusional conspiracy theories placed him to the right of Thurmond and Goldwater on the political spectrum, an area I define as the Radical Right. The men and women that comprised the Radical Right employed conspiratorial anti-communism as a weapon against liberalism, and their rhetoric had a hint of revolutionary fervor. This dissertation uses multiple terms interchangeably to describe the Radical Right, like ultraconservative, far-rightist, right-wing, and fringe right. I

---

[10] Joseph Crespino noted that Thurmond's speech against the 1964 Civil Rights Act was not the most racist by a congressman, but Thurmond's leadership in the Dixiecrats and filibuster of the 1957 Civil Rights Act illustrated his view on racial issues. Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 172.

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

[12] Ibid., 106.

use the term “conservative” in a general fashion to refer to those ideals or individuals that resided on the right half of the political scale, from the mainstream to the radical fringe. However, I draw a line between the Radical Right and the extreme right. In my view groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the Robert DePugh’s Minutemen represented right-wing extremism because they advocated armed aggression and violence. The Radical Right, in contrast, exemplified an exaggerated form of mainstream conservatism by expanding anti-communism into the realm of conspiracy.

Conservative Forbearers

Understanding the fluidity of postwar right wing politics requires some attention to conservatism earlier in the century. The end of World War I initiated an era of anti-communist, xenophobic anxieties within the United States, the First Red Scare, which started a chain of events from 1918 through 1954 that animated the rising tide of far-right politics during the mid-twentieth century. Starting with the First Red Scare, ultraconservatives used anti-communism and conspiracy theories to fight political enemies. The contours of the 1920s’ state economy, regulatory and interventionist economics of Roosevelt’s New Deal, and recalibration of liberalism during World War II all constitute significant events in the development of far-right political philosophies. Anti-communist anxieties flared after World War II, and many right-wingers viewed the liberal consensus of the early Cold War as contradictory to conservative, traditional values. The activists of the Cold War Radical Right did not emerge in a vacuum; rather, their platforms built upon previous strains of conservatism and served as an antithesis to liberalism. The subjects of my dissertation lived

during these times of heightened anxieties, and drew on their experiences with conservatism in the interwar years to make political arguments after World War II.

The United States emerged relatively unscathed from the Great War, but the impact of Russia's communist revolution and subsequent settlement with Germany rippled through U.S. politics. American journalist John Reed called Russia's October Revolution in 1917 the "ten days that shook the world," which paved the way for the First Red Scare, a high tide of xenophobia, ideological repression, and anti-radicalism in the United States.[13] The economic instability born out of the transition to a peace time economy exacerbated this anti-communist nativism. Economic volatility fostered societal unrest, and conservatives viewed the battles between labor and capital as a microcosm of the larger war between socialist-collectivism and capitalism. Wartime espionage legislation turned public sentiment against left-leaning ideologies, and Republicans exploited the disquiet as a way to curb the progressivism of the previous generation.[14] These xenophobic tensions, in part, led the Republican-dominated Congress of 1918 to reject American involvement in the League of

---

[13] John Reed, *Ten Days That Shook the World* (New York: Modern Library, 1935). The historiography of the First Red Scare is robust. For more, see: Charles Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965); Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Theodore Kornweibel, *"Seeing Red": The Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); Kim E. Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001); Erica J. Ryan, *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015); Regin Schmidt, *Red Scare: FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States, 1919-1943* (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2000).

[14] Murray, *Red Scare*, 13.

Nations because it "convinced many Americans that any form of international cooperation would destroy the America they knew, putting it under socialist control."[15]

The labor violence that permeated the Progressive Era—like the Haymarket Square Riot of 1886 and the assassination of President William McKinley by an anarchist in 1901—made the threat of leftist radicalism seem all the more credible during the First Red Scare.[16] High profile events like the 1919 Boston Police Strike and the 1920 Wall Street bombing led to paranoia regarding "bolshevism" and heightened the perception that communism was invading American shores.[17] The show trial and execution of anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti, who were both found guilty of murder, highlighted the nativist sentiments coursing through society.[18] Reactionary paramilitary organizations like the Ku Klux Klan experienced a renascence within this xenophobic environment.[19] The Red Scare and the elements that created it, as historian Robert K. Murray observed, strengthened "a sympathy for economic and political conservatism" rather than reinforcing "healthy patriotism."[20] The political oppression and anti-communist rhetoric of the First Red Scare laid the foundation for future generations of far-right conservative activists.[21]

---

[15] Heather Cox Richardson, *To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 179.

[16] James R. Green, *Death in Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006); Scott Miller, *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century* (New York: Random House, 2011).

[17] Murray, *Red Scare*, 129; Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded*, 2.

[18] Moshik Temkin, *Sacco and Vanzetti: America on Trial* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009), 3.

[19] For more on the second Ku Klux Klan, see: Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest*; MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*.

[20] Murray, *Red Scare*, 12.

[21] For more on the broader history of anti-communism in the United States, see: Robert Justin Goldstein, ed., *Little 'Red Scares': Anti-Communism in the United States, 1921-1946* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2014); M. J. Heale, *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins

The First Red Scare aided the GOP by providing an enemy—communism—that Republicans could blame for socio-economic issues. Republican conservatives emerged victorious in 1920 on a ticket featuring anti-intellectual, pro-business Senator Warren G. Harding (R-OH) and red-baiting, labor antagonist Calvin Coolidge.[22] The reverberations of the First Red Scare lingered during Harding's and Coolidge's presidencies.[23] During the 1924 presidential election Coolidge asked "whether America will allow itself to be degraded into a communistic and socialistic state, or whether it will remain American," which indicated that conservative Republicans harnessed the anti-communist anxieties of the 1920s for political gain.[24] Conservatives employed red-baiting language to contest their political opposition, especially when Cold War anxieties re-emerged in the mid-twentieth century. Kent Courtney, a third-party agitator in the 1950s and 1960s, targeted American fears of subversion through anti-communist rhetoric: "Unless we translate this anti-Communist education into political action, we will end up being the best educated anti-Communists in a Communist concentration camp."[25] The anti-communism of the 1920s propelled contemporary GOP victories, plus it laid the foundation for future generations of far-right activists.

University Press, 1990); Cynthia Hendershot, *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003); Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

[22] Richardson, *To Make Men Free*, 184.

[23] Murray, *Red Scare*, 4.

[24] Coolidge quoted in Clarence E. Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Md.: SR Books, 2005), 152.

[25] Letter from Kent Courtney to Friend, January 12, 1967 in "Folder 38 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1967," Box 6, Kent Courtney Collection (KCC), Cammie G. Henry Research Center (CGHRC), Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana (NWSU).

Presidents Harding and Coolidge promoted pro-business economic policies like high tariffs, low taxes, and de-regulation, and as commerce secretary Herbert Hoover implemented his vision of economics by erecting the "associative state."[26] Hoover's "associative state" promoted collaboration between the business community and the government through "cooperative institutions," like trade associations, that obviated large bureaucracies.[27] Scholar Robert R. Keller noted that Hoover "saw government operating in the middle ground between unsocial individualism/laissez-faire and state planning."[28] Undergirding Hoover's policy was an overarching aversion to liberal economic interventionism and a mistrust of federal bureaucracy, both of which became Cold War ideological staples for mainstream conservatives and the Radical Right.[29] For example, Willis E. Stone's Liberty Amendment Committee, a 1950s far-right movement that fought for the repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment and a strict interpretation of the Constitution, championed the anti-tax policies of 1920s Republicans.[30]

Hoover's role in the 1920s economy propelled him to the presidency in 1928. However, the "final triumph over poverty" that Hoover predicted never materialized, and the Stock Market Crash of 1929 ruined the public's trust in the Republican Party. Hoover

---

[26] Ellis W. Hawley coined the term "associative state" in "Hebert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an 'Associative State, 1921-1928," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (June 1974).

[27] Hawley, "Herbert Hoover," 117, 118, 127. Joan Hoff Wilson, *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1975), 70.

[28] Robert R. Keller, "The Role of the State in the U.S. Economy during the 1920s," *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (June 1987): 882.

[29] Douglas B. Craig, *After Wilson: The Struggle for the Democratic Party, 1920-1934* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 10.

[30] Liberty Amendment Committee of the U.S.A., "Progress Report: January through August, 1963" in "Folder 14 - Liberty Amendment Committee", KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Richardson, *To Make Men Free*, 188.

doubled down on his "associative" principles as the Depression hardened, but his forward-looking economic ideals, which historian Joan Hoff Wilson described as "progressive" in the broadest sense, helped shape New Deal policies.[31] To combat the Depression Hoover supported indirect governmental relief like public works—later a staple of Roosevelt's New Deal—but he stood against direct, welfare spending.[32] The soaring unemployment numbers wrought public animosity and paved the way for Franklin Roosevelt's election and a new era of liberal reform.[33]

By 1932 the Great Depression afflicted every aspect of U.S. society, and many Americans viewed Hoover's policies as ineffective. Roosevelt campaigned against Hoover on a mixture of traditional Democratic platforms, like lowering tariffs and balancing the budget, but he also embodied the spirit of reform-minded idealism.[34] Roosevelt captured eight million more votes than Hoover, and that figure pales in comparison to disparity in electoral votes: Roosevelt received four hundred seventy-two to Hoover's fifty-nine votes in the Electoral College.[35] Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression, the New Deal, defined liberty as economic security for the entire spectrum of American society, from the most vulnerable citizens to the banking industry.[36] The New Deal marshaled a new era of federal

---

[31] Wilson, *Herbert Hoover*, 56; Ellis W. Hawley, "Herbert Hoover and American Corporatism, 1929-1933" in *The Hoover Presidency: A Reappraisal*, eds. Martin L. Fausold and George T. Mazuzan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 101-119.

[32] Wilson, *Herbert Hoover*, 149.

[33] Richardson, *To Make Men Free*, 201.

[34] Robert Allen Rutland, *The Democrats: From Jefferson to Carter* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1979), 194; David M. Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 99.

[35] Alice V. McGillivray, Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004: John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 39.

[36] Kennedy, *Freedom From Fear*, 365.

expansion and deficit spending, but, as historian William E. Luechtenburg noted, "Even the most precedent-breaking New Deal projects reflected capitalist thinking and deferred to business sensibilities."[37]

Roosevelt's liberal revolution sent ripples throughout the U.S. polity.[38] The New Deal's federal expansion brought criticisms from conservative Republican and Democrats. Right-wing Republicans despised the New Deal's deficit spending, cooperation with labor, corporate tax increases, and mushrooming government programs; instead, they championed the pro-business conservatism of the 1920s.[39] Historian Douglas B. Craig pointed out, "Liberalism, conservatives thought, attempted to replace individual initiative with state paternalism."[40] Some right-wingers went further, arguing that Roosevelt was a socialist bent on destroying the U.S., especially after FDR re-established diplomatic recognition of the

---

[37] William E. Leuchtenburg articulated, "Roosevelt's program rested on the assumption that a just society could be secured by imposing a welfare state on a capitalist foundation. Without critically challenging the system of private profit, the New Deal reformers were employing the power of the government not only to discipline business but to bolster unionization, pension for the elderly, succor for the crippled, give relief to the needy, and extend a hand to the forgotten men," in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 165. Journalist Marquis Childs contended that FDR's New Deal was caught between wealthy Americans—awho were convinced FDR was butchering their income—and liberals who complained "that Roosevelt's chief mission has been to save the fortunes of the very rich," in Marquis Childs, "Why They Hate Roosevelt" in *The New Deal and the American People*, ed. Frank Freidel (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,1964), 100. David M. Kennedy noted, "Its cardinal aim was not to destroy capitalism but to devolatize it, and at the same time to distribute its benefits more evenly," in *Freedom From Fear*, 372.

[38] The historiography on the growth of the state and the New Deal is immense. For choice examples, see: Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds. *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955); Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corps, 2013); William E. Leuchtenberg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963); Jason Scott Smith, *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[39] Lynn Dumenil situates pro-business economics as a significant tension between 1920s modernity and the legacies of progressivism in *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995).

[40] Craig, *After Wilson*, 11.

Soviet Union.[41] This conspiratorial mindset lingered, fomenting anti-FDR activism within the right-wing and shaping the Radical Right of the mid-twentieth century.

The 1936 election provided an opportunity for the anti-FDR forces to oppose Roosevelt and the New Deal. A national far-right group emerged, the Jeffersonian Democrats, who characterized Roosevelt's party leadership as a "betrayal" and an "apostasy to Democratic principles."[42] One of the eight national committee members that signed the Jeffersonian Declaration was Texas cowman J. Evetts Haley, and Haley served as the chairman of the Jeffersonian's Texas chapter. The Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas retained the national organization's free market idealism and communist conspiracy theories, but Haley's chapter added white supremacist thinking to the platform.[43] Eventually the Jeffersonian Democrats spurned FDR and the national Democratic Party by promoting the candidacy of Republican Alf Landon.[44] Roosevelt won the 1936 election in a landslide, with Alf Landon netting a paltry eight Electoral College votes compared to Roosevelt's five hundred twenty-three. The revolt of the Jeffersonian Democrats, despite its modest membership, illustrated an undercurrent of disgruntled conservatives within the Democratic Party and among southern far-rightists.[45] Though not all opponents of the New Deal were

---

[41] Richardson, *To Make Men Free*, 205.

[42] "The Jeffersonian Party Platform," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 9, 1936.

[43] George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979).

[44] Telegram from J. Evetts Haley to John D. M. Hamilton, October 4, 1936 in "Folder - Republicans," Wallet XIII, Box 2 - Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas (JDT), Series III-A - JDT, J. Evetts Haley Collection (JEH), Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (HML). Elliot A. Rosen, *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 37.

[45] Historian Keith Volanto estimated the Texas Jeffersonian membership at around five thousand. Keith Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics during the Roosevelt Era" in *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of*

ultraconservatives, the red-baiting rhetoric used to fight FDR bridged the anti-communism of the First Red Scare and the Cold War Radical Right.

The New Deal significantly altered U.S. society, especially regarding the relationship between the federal government and the general population.[46] The Jeffersonian Democrats were but one of the many groups that emerged to contest the perceived leftist direction of the United States.[47] The backlash against Roosevelt's "court packing" scheme in 1936 resuscitated right-wing opposition.[48] After 1936 Roosevelt's congressional opponents solidified within the conservative wings of both major political parties.[49] Robert A. Taft's (R-OH) election to the Senate in 1938 provided an additional rallying point because Taft

---

Lone Star Conservatism, eds. David O'Donald Cullen and Kyle G. Wilkison (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 74.

[46] Louis Hartz defined American liberalism as a weaker version of European liberalism because Americans eschewed socialist tenets, in *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955). William E. Leuchtenburg argued that FDR's New Deal attempted to tame capitalism by providing temporary employment opportunities, which led citizens to increasingly turn to the government to solve the nation's problems after the New Deal, in *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963). Colin Gordon agreed with Leuchtenburg that the structure of New Deal retained capitalist impulses by regulated economic instability while attempting to enhance business prospects, in *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in North America, 1920-1935* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Alan Brinkley charted the evolution of liberalism during Roosevelt's presidency, noting that liberalism moved away from redistributive economics and the welfare state in favor of corporate-based capitalism, in *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995).

[47] Indeed, leftism during the 1930s flourished in certain areas and among specific constituencies, especially African Americans and the labor movement. For more on this wide ranging subject, see: Cheryl Greenberg, *"Or Does It Explode?": Black Harlem in the Great Depression* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Rosemary Feurer, *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Mark I. Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917-1936* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998); Randi Storch, *Red Chicago: American Communism at Its Grassroots, 1928-35* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Kate Weigand, *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

[48] James T. Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1967), 85; Robert Shogan, *Backlash: The Killing of the New Deal* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2006), 9, 225.

[49] Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal*, 337.

campaigned against liberal values by promoting free market capitalism and defining liberty as economic opportunity rather than security.[50] Additionally, the American Liberty League, a cabal of wealthy professionals, opposed New Deal liberalism on the grounds of fiscal conservatism and strict constitutionalism, while the anti-Semitic Mother's Movement fought for isolationism as the world hurtled toward war in the late 1930s.[51]

Even after the New Deal ended the legacies of economic intervention and welfare spending continued to inflame future generations of conservatives. In particular, New Deal liberalism engendered anti-communist arguments from far-right activists during the Cold War. Kent Courtney, in agreement with earlier Republicans like Herbert Hoover, argued that the federal government should sell off one of the New Deal's greatest triumphs, the Tennessee Valley Authority, to private interests.[52] Courtney, like J. Evetts Haley and many of Roosevelt's other detractors, viewed federal participation in the economy as anathema to free market capitalism. Billy James Hargis, the fundamentalist minister and leader of the Christian Crusade, contended that FDR's New Deal was the "beginning of the end" for U.S. society.[53] The New Deal became the bête noire for many conservatives, especially those on

---

[50] Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft*, 25-26.

[51] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2009), 10; George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives: A History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), viii. For more on the Mother's Movement, see: Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[52] "Plan Political Party to Repeal Income Tax," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 24, 1959. Wilson, *Herbert Hoover*, 226-227.

[53] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, Untitled, Undated, 5, in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)"; Box 1; Billy James Hargis Papers (BJHP), University of Arkansas Special Collections (UASC), Fayetteville, Arkansas; Rosen, *The Republican Party*, 13. Robert Mason noted that the liberal programs of the early New Deal, including the TVA, led to conservative Republican opposition, in *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 45.

the far end of the spectrum, but Roosevelt's liberalism continued to increase the power of the state as the U.S. teetered on the brink of war in the early 1940s.

Right-wing resentment toward the New Deal and Roosevelt's liberalism continued during World War II. The war exacerbated anti-New Dealer fears as the federal government expanded and spending skyrocketed to sustain the war effort.[54] When the war ended, millions of tax dollars headed overseas as part of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan in the hopes of rebuilding Europe and staving off communist uprisings there.[55] World War II was critical, as historian Nancy Beck Young articulated, for turning the "hopeful, experimental welfare state liberalism of the 1930s to the vital center warfare state liberalism of the 1950s."[56] This transition from the New Deal to the warfare state entrenched liberalism as the dominant political theory of the mid-twentieth century.

The consensus liberalism of the early Cold War recalibrated the welfare liberalism of the New Deal, but the preponderant power of liberalism horrified conservatives.[57]

---

[54] For example, nearly $400 billion dollars were spent mobilizing and fighting the war, and the creation of the War Productions Board further centralized the economy. Ralph M. Goldman, *The Democratic Party in American Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), 100; James Grant, *Bernard M. Baruch: The Adventures of a Wall Street Legend* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 282. Nancy Beck Young noted that tax receipts, expenditures, and the federal deficit all increased to meet the war effort: "tax receipts more than doubled from $3.1 billion in fiscal year 1934 to $7.6 billion in fiscal year 1941. For that same period, expenditures rose accordingly—from $6 billion to $12.7 billion—as did the deficit and the debt—from $2.8 billion to $5.1 billion and from $27 billion to $48.9 billion" in *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 58.

[55] For more on the World War II and liberalism, see: Jonathan Bell, *The Liberal State on Trial: The Cold War and American Politics in the Truman Years* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform*; Alan Dawley, *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003); Alonzo L. Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973); James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Young, *Why We Fight*.

[56] Young, *Why We Fight*, 1.

[57] Doug Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 195.

Roosevelt's death in 1945 and the conversion from wartime economics to the Cold War warfare state produced a conservative resurgence among conservative Republicans, led by Senator Robert A. Taft (R-OH) and some southern Democrats. This uneasy, bipartisan coalition mobilized, in part, to contest the liberal consensus. The same arguments used against the New Deal in the 1930s—strict constitutionalism, anti-communism, free market economics—aided the growth of conservatism in the late 1940s. Conspiracy theories continued to play a role as well, with congressional Republicans asserting that President Roosevelt fostered the Pearl Harbor disaster.[58] Alongside the gradual growth of a bipartisan conservative movement, the inchoate push for civil rights in the 1940s represented the greatest threat to the Democratic Party's New Deal coalition.

President Harry Truman's advocacy of civil rights, in particular, provoked a backlash from southern Democrats. Conservative southern Democrats wanted to defeat Truman as the standard bearer for the Democratic Party, and they formed the States' Rights Democratic Party, or Dixiecrats, to oppose defeat Truman in the South. The Dixiecrats' ticket featuring Governor Strom Thurmond (D-SC) carried only four states in the presidential election of 1948, all in the Deep South, but it highlighted the schism erupting within the Democratic Party.[59] Historian Kari Frederickson noted, "The Dixiecrat defection marked the exit of the

---

[58] Martin V. Melosi noted that Roosevelt's actions were "not a cover-up in the sense that Roosevelt and his cohorts concealed some vital secret that could ultimately lead to an indictment of Washington officials, but it was a cover-up brought on by feat that administration opponents would read too much into the data and employ it for unscrupulous political attacks." Melosi, *The Shadow of Pearl Harbor: Political Controversy over the Surprise Attack, 1941-1946* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1977), 164. This assertion proved prescient years later because even normally level-headed conservatives like Herbert Hoover and Robert A. Taft pandered to the conspiracy theories that Roosevelt played a role in the Pearl Harbor disaster. Richardson, *To Make Men Free*, 212; Rosen, *The Republican Party*, 76.

[59] For more on Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrat Revolt, see: Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*; Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008).

South from the New Deal coalition and the reorientation of the national party toward its more liberal wing."[60] The mutiny catapulted Thurmond into the national spotlight as a firebrand for fiscally conservative, segregationist values. Additionally, the revolt denoted the continued discontent among right-wingers, especially those on the fringe, with the liberalism emanating from both national parties.

The hardening of the Cold War in the late 1940s reinforced anti-communism as a potent political weapon for intimidating liberals. High profile cases of communist espionage, like the convictions of the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss, convinced some Americans that communism represented a tangible threat to the United States.[61] Additionally, foreign events like the first Soviet nuclear test and China's revolution in 1949 increased the perception that communism posed a serious menace.[62] No politician exploited this fear more effectively than Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI).[63] McCarthy's conspiratorial accusations about communists in the State Department contributed to his meteoric rise on the national stage.

---

[60] Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt*, 4.

[61] For more on the Rosenberg Trial, see: Marjorie B. Garber and Rebecca L. Walkowitz, *Secret Agents: The Rosenberg Case, McCarthyism, and Fifties America* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton, *The Rosenberg File: A Search For Truth* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1983); For more on the Alger Hiss case, see: John Earl Haynes, *Early Cold War Spies: The Espionage Trials That Shaped American Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); G. Edward White, *Alger Hiss's Looking-Glass Wars: The Covert Life of a Soviet Spy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[62] Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 291-298, 332.

[63] The historiography of Joseph McCarthy and the broader Second Red Scare is immense. For key examples, see: Don E. Carleton, *Red Scare!: Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, And Their Legacy in Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985); Thomas Patrick Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003); Richard M. Fried, *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2004); David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy so Immense: The World of Joe* McCarthy (New York: Free Press, 1983); Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Landon R. Y. Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

The anti-communism of the 1920s and 1930s, plus the increasing postwar global tensions, created an atmosphere of fear that legitimized McCarthy's specious charges.

McCarthy ignited the Second Red Scare with his speech to the Wheeling, West Virginia Women's Republican Club on February 9, 1950. He accused Truman's State Department, and especially Secretary of State Dean Acheson, of knowingly harboring hundreds of communists.[64] These allegations set off a wave of ideological repression that chilled U.S. politics. Allegations of communist subversion ruined thousands of careers during the Second Red Scare, and, as historian Ellen Schrecker noted, "If nothing else, McCarthyism destroyed the left."[65] The Second Red Scare modulated liberalism by linking left-leaning thought to anti-American, communist subversion. The early Cold War ushered in a new era of conservatism as politicians shifted rightward to avoid accusations of communist sympathies. The political uses of anti-communism did not fade after McCarthy's censure in late 1954 because far-right wingers, including every activist in this dissertation, and mainstream conservatives adapted the red-baiting rhetoric of the Second Red Scare to their own platforms.

McCarthy's anti-communism laid the foundation for mid-twentieth century ultraconservatism, but Robert A. Taft's defeat at the 1952 GOP convention catalyzed the political activity of the far-right. The Democratic ticket, featuring Adlai Stevenson and U.S. Senator John Sparkman (D-AL), highlighted the conflicted composition of the Democratic New Deal coalition. Stevenson fit the liberal tradition of Roosevelt and Truman, while

[64] Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, 108.

[65] Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, 369.

Sparkman, despite his moderation, represented the influence of southern Democrats.[66] On the other side of the aisle a similar internecine struggle occurred for the future of the Republican Party. Taft squared off against war hero Dwight D. Eisenhower for the GOP nomination. Taft transitioned toward a hawkish foreign policy when the Cold War emerged, and his domestic platforms—fiscal conservatism, strict constitutionalism, limited federal growth, states' rights—appealed to conservatives, including right-wingers.[67] Taft's campaign encouraged many right-wingers, including men like John Birch Society founder Robert Welch. Welch delivered twenty-five speeches on behalf of Taft's candidacy.[68] Taft focused on the South in an attempt to siphon the votes of disgruntled Democrats; however, Rep. Richard M. Nixon (R-CA), who skyrocketed to fame as the dogged investigator of Alger Hiss, delivered critical votes to Eisenhower at the Republican National Convention, which led to Taft's defeat.[69] Welch failed in his bid to serve as a Taft-pledged delegate from Massachusetts, and he later characterized Taft's loss as the "dirtiest deal in American political history."[70]

Ultraconservatives viewed Taft's defeat as the Republican Party's final capitulation to liberalism. Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism," which sought to moderate the antistatism of the GOP by accepting limited government intervention, further agitated the far-right.[71]

---

[66] Rutland, *The Democrats from Jefferson to Carter*, 210.

[67] Wunderlein, *Robert A. Taft*, 3.

[68] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 103.

[69] James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biograph of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 550.

[70] D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 177; Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 112.

[71] Mason, *The Republican Party*, 156. Conservatives, especially along the far-right, disdained Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" for its moderate platforms and the continuation of federal expansion. For more on this subject, see: Geoffrey M. Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gary W.

The 1952 GOP convention convinced Robert W. Welch, Jr., that a vast communist conspiracy controlled both major political parties. Historian D. J. Mulloy noted, "Indeed, as well as providing one of the principal launching pads for his career in conspiracism, for Welch, Taft's loss was *the* great missed opportunity for postwar conservatism."[72] Welch based much of the Birch Society's founding ideals on Taft's conservatism, and he later declared that Taft, had he won the 1952 election, would have led a "grand rout of the Communists in our government."[73] Other far-rightists like Kent Courtney were influenced by Taft's defeat. Courtney considered Taft and McCarthy "great Americans sacrificed on the altar of political expediency by demagogic Socialists within their own party."[74] Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" and the liberalism of the national Democratic Party, especially regarding civil rights, enraged Courtney: "Both the Democrat and Republican parties have been taken over by ultra-liberals."[75] Instead of trying to alter the policies of the major parties, Courtney created the Conservative Society of America to promote third-party politics that presented a radical version of Taft's conservatism.

The failure of Taft to secure the GOP nomination in 1952 catalyzed far-right conservatives, but the burgeoning movement for racial equality also inflamed the sensibilities of traditionalist southerners.[76] High profile events in the post-WWII era, like the maiming of

---

Reichard, *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1988); Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*.

[72] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 177.

[73] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 112.

[74] Conservative Society of America, "Organizational Manual of The Conservative Society of America," May, 1962, 2, in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[75] "Urges A Third Party to Stop Liberal Trend," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 16, 1961.

[76] The historiography of the civil rights movement is immense. For choice examples, see: Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); Steve Estes, *I*

Isaac Woodard and the Double V Campaign, thrust racial issues into the mainstream, and the Democratic Party suffered a crisis of conscience when southerners rebelled against Truman's civil rights plank in 1948.[77] Additionally, the Cold War increased global scrutiny on the plight of African Americans, which often led to antagonism from the Soviet Union that embarrassed the U.S. government.[78] The *Brown v. Board* decision in 1954 increased pressure on southern society to move toward racial equality, leading to "massive resistance" and the resuscitation of the political theory of interposition.[79] Southern states, by no means homogenous, used a variety of methods to forestall integration and maintain white supremacy throughout the 1950s.

Am a Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Adam Fairclough, *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); Wesley C. Hogan, *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-twentieth-century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Iwan Morgan and Philip Davies, *From Sit-ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

[77] Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 206-209.

[78] For more on how the Cold War influenced the civil rights movement and the U.S. government, see: Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944-1963* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986); Michael L. Krenn, *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy During the Cold War* (New York: Garland, 1998); Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Penny M. Von Eschen, *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[79] George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 62.

Many of the actors on the right-wing fringe viewed the civil rights movement with suspicion fueled by anti-communist conspiracism or states' rights ideals. Robert W. Welch, a native-born southerner, accused Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren of communist-leanings for his role in the *Brown v. Board* decision.[80] Welch and the John Birch Society formed numerous political action groups and movements, like the "Impeach Earl Warren" campaign, to provide an outlet for resentful southerners.[81] Billy James Hargis and Kent Courtney contended, like Welch, that the civil rights movement was driven by communist agitators.[82] Texan J. Evetts Haley waged a gubernatorial campaign in 1956 on a platform of conspiracy and segregation. The allegations leveled by ultraconservatives were ultimately false: communists aided the fight for civil rights, but the Communist Party served as a vehicle for equality rather than the movement's driving force.[83] However, deploying anti-communism as a weapon against the civil rights movement concealed the underlying racism of many Radical Rightists with a thin veneer of respectable conservatism.[84] For far-right activists, especially those in the South, the civil rights movement not only threatened the traditional southern social mores, it also represented a pathway for potential communist subversion.[85]

---

[80] Schoenwald, *A Time For Choosing*, 93. Robert W. Welch, *The Politician* in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, pp. 226, 256.

[81] Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 41-44.

[82] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Communists Intensify War on South," April 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Proposed Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP.

[83] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe*, xiii. For more on communism and African Americans, see: Kornweibel, *Seeing Red*; Wilson Record, *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964); Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity*.

[84] Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 254, 257.

[85] For more regarding the impact of civil rights and conservatism, see: Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of The New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi*

Civil rights, anti-communism, and a general disgust with liberalism galvanized the radical right movement of the mid-twentieth century, but the increased political presence of religious conservatives contributed equally to the burgeoning right-wing movement. An early iteration of the Religious Right emerged during the 1920s to challenge religious modernism and the perceived leftist tilt of Protestant churches.[86] The politicization of evangelicalism occurred in response to Roosevelt's New Deal, and this conservative religious zeitgeist permeated the Sunbelt South.[87] By the 1950s fundamentalist evangelicalism reached mainstream audiences through politically active ministers like Billy Graham.[88] Though Graham took a moderate position on civil rights, his anti-communism and sermons against big government helped animate the political ambitions of the Religious Right.[89]

The growth of the Religious Right also energized preachers who adhered to the philosophies of ultraconservatism.[90] Billy James Hargis founded his Christian Crusade organization in 1947 on a mixture of anti-communism, Protestant fundamentalism, and strict

---

and the Conservative Counterrevolution (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007); Kevin Michael Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Lewis, *Massive Resistance*; Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right.*

[86] Historian Allan J. Lichtman noted that the "dynamism" of the fundamentalist movement helped launch a "broad, enduring evangelical movement" during the first half of the twentieth century, in *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 29.

[87] Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, xxiii.

[88] For more on Billy Graham, see: Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014).

[89] Gary K. Clabaugh, *Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists* (Chicago, Ill.: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1974), 126; Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 23.

[90] The literature on the Religious Right is broad. For more, see: Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*; Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Mark A. Noll, *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Williams, *God's Own Party*; Robert Wuthnow, *Red State Religion: Faith and Politics in America's Heartland* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012).

social conservatism. Similarly, Protestants and Other Americans United formed in 1947 to maintain the tradition of church-state separation; however, the anti-communist fervor of the early Cold War exacerbated POAU's underlying anti-Catholicism. POAU conflated communism with the Catholic Church and accused Catholic politicians, notably Senator and liberal scion John F. Kennedy (D-MA), of trying to erode traditional social norms.[91] Robert Welch, Kent Courtney, and J. Evetts Haley did not lead religious organizations, but their ideologies aligned with the strappings of the religious far-right, especially the binary view of Christian America pitted against an atheistic communist threat.

By the 1950s the far-right resembled a cohesive movement, albeit one without central leadership. The First Red Scare laid the foundation for the anti-communism later epitomized by McCarthy, and ultraconservatives harnessed red-baiting rhetoric as a weapon against Cold War liberalism. Roosevelt's New Deal represented the specter of federal tyranny to those on the far-right, and the communist conspiracies that permeated Cold War society strengthened the convictions of conservative radicals. The subjects of this dissertation conflated liberalism and communism in an attempt to retrench the legacies of New Deal liberalism, and their organizational tactics and ideological strappings formed a crucial component of the conservative surge in the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter Organization

The ideological similarities—especially the reliance on communist conspiracy theories—and emphasis on grassroots organizing throughout the Sunbelt connected ultraconservative groups and activists. The Radical Right compressed the U.S. political

[91] John Wicklein, "Vast Anti-Catholic Drive Is Slated Before Election," *New York Times*, Oct. 16, 1960.

spectrum into a limited binary by conflating communism and liberalism and portraying conservatism as the only legitimate political philosophy. The belief in an overarching communist conspiracy, which the far-right contended was abetted by liberals, undergirded this world view. A politician that failed to adhere to a strict definition of socio-political conservatism was viewed as helping the communists, either implicitly or explicitly. This black-and-white attitude flattened U.S. politics into a series of seemingly apocalyptic scenarios, like Christianity versus atheism, states' rights versus federal tyranny, and liberal-communism versus conservatism. The far-right also saw the tinge of communism in the civil rights movement, which prompted vehement support for states' rights among many fringe conservatives. The groups and individuals studied in this dissertation embodied these philosophical parallels and comprised the far-right vanguard of mid-twentieth century conservatism

The far-right, especially the groups and activists in this dissertation, found a constituency in the Sunbelt inclined toward ultraconservatism's conspiracy theories and anti-liberal values. Each organization's greatest impact occurred through grassroots activism in the Deep South, southwest, or the west coast. In the post-WWII era, the Sunbelt— roughly the southern half of the United States, stretching from Florida and North Carolina on the east coast to the middle of California on the west coast—experienced tremendous suburban and economic growth.[92] Federal defense spending poured money into the region, which created a populace that lauded the values of modern conservatism, like a distrust of liberal economic

[92] Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, eds., *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 11-15; Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 7-10.

regulations and a belief in "bootstrap" politics.[93] The socio-cultural tenets of evangelical Protestantism similarly influenced Sunbelt voters.[94] The traditionalism and language of liberty permeating Sunbelt culture created a conservative atmosphere and a constituency primed for the grassroots activism of the far-right.

The natural starting place for a study of conservative radicalism in the mid-twentieth century is the most famous far-right organization: the John Birch Society. The first chapter analyzes how Robert W. Welch's Birch Society spread across the nation, especially concentrating in the Sunbelt, and coordinated with and influenced many other groups on the far-right, including Hargis's Christian Crusade and Courtney's CSA. The next four chapters are grouped together in pairs of two according to theme. The chapters on Hargis's Christian Crusade and POAU are paired together because both organizations used religion, specifically Protestant evangelicalism, to contest liberalism and perceived communist subversion. The next two chapters—examining the activism of J. Evetts Haley and Kent Courtney—round out the thematic pairings because both Haley and Courtney challenged liberalism through traditional political avenues like political campaigns.

The John Birch Society and its founder Robert W. Welch, Jr., are the subject of the first chapter of this dissertation.[95] Welch contended that communism lurked everywhere in

---

[93] Bernard & Rice, eds., *Sunbelt Cities*, 20. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 11-12; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 18.

[94] Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*; Wuthnow, *Rough Country*.

[95] Other books have touched on the influence of the John Birch Society, such as: J. Allen Broyles, *The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1966); Epstein and Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society*; G. Edward Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch: Founder of the John Birch Society* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: American Media, 1975); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*; Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing.*

the United States, and he formed the Birch Society in 1958 to promote his conspiratorial, ultraconservative philosophies. The Birch Society operated as a bastion for ultraconservative thought and action, and its chapters spanned the United States with a concentrated membership in Sunbelt states like California and Texas. Welch's background as a candy magnate and a leader in the National Association of Manufacturers influenced the society's advocacy of an unfettered free market and antipathy toward government economic regulation. Through grassroots campaigns, like the Impeach Earl Warren movement, the Birch Society sought to retrench the influence of liberalism in American society. The Birch Society's propaganda, widespread publications, and organizational tactics galvanized the far-right fringe to challenge the liberal orthodoxy of the 1950s and 1960s.[96] An examination of Welch and the Birch Society illustrates the prevalence of far-right ideologies in the Sunbelt, but it also highlights how the conservatives like William F. Buckley, Jr., distanced themselves from the society as a way to legitimize the conservative movement.

The second chapter examines ultraconservative minister Billy James Hargis and his Tulsa-based ministry, the Christian Crusade.[97] Hargis's hardscrabble upbringing during the Great Depression instilled religious fundamentalism and ultraconservative political ideologies, and he endeavored to counter the perceived communist infiltration in American

---

[96] Historian D. J. Mulloy referred to the Birch Society "as a kind of bridge between the older Right of the 1940s and 1950s—including the McCarthyite Right—and the New Right of the 1970s and 1980s," in *The World of the John Birch Society*, 11.

[97] Few books have written exclusively on Billy James Hargis, but many historians have devoted pages to Hargis's radicalism: John Harold Redekop wrote an extended analysis of Hargis's religious and political ideologies in *The American Far Right: A Case Study of Billy James Hargis and Christian Crusade* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968). Daniel K. Williams and Darren Dochuk contended that Hargis represented a symptom of the religious fundamentalist that permeated the Sunbelt in *God's Own Party*, 40-43, and *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 151, respectively. Heather Hendershot wrote a chapter on Hargis's efficacy as a media strategies, organizer, and fundraiser, in *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

churches and society. In 1947 Hargis established Christian Echoes Ministry, more popularly known as the Christian Crusade, which evolved into a nationwide organization that disseminated Hargis's anti-communist conspiracies and fundamentalist ideologies. Hargis produced numerous periodicals and radio programs, and his mixture of fundamentalist evangelicalism and far-right conservatism appealed to constituencies across the Sunbelt South. Hargis railed against the supposed communism within the National Education Association and the National Council of Churches, and he contested civil rights legislation through states' rights platforms. Hargis constituted an early prototype of the evangelical ministers that comprised the Religious Right, and through the Christian Crusade he created an ephemeral, but influential, network of far-right organizations, which helped lay the groundwork for future conservative activism.

The subject of the third chapter is Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation Between Church And State.[98] Founded in 1947, POAU fought to maintain a strict separation between church and state; however, this overarching goal contained a darker undercurrent of anti-Catholicism. The organization's mission of "education and action" discriminated against Catholics by accusing the Church of trying to usurp political power, and POAU linked Catholicism to communism in an effort to portray Catholicism as un-American. POAU published and distributed hundreds of thousands of anti-Catholic pamphlets and created a network of far-right evangelicals, especially within the Sunbelt, to attack Kennedy's religious and political views during the 1960 election. POAU represented

[98] No single monograph exists covering the history of POAU, but the organization appears in many works dealing with the 1960 election. For more, see: Shaun Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon, 1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009); G. Scott Thomas, *A New World to be Won: John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and the Tumultuous Year of 1960* (New York: Praeger, 2011); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1960* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1961).

an important cog in the fight against liberalism through its promotion of religious xenophobia, and the organization's activism also illustrated how right-wingers intertwined religion and politics during the Cold War.

The life of Texas ranchman J. Evetts Haley, a historian of the southwest and far-right political activist, is the subject of chapter four.[99] Haley's early life in the arid Llano Estacado of West Texas instilled a fierce individualism, a distrust of government, and a firm belief in states' rights. He epitomized southern radical conservatism because he attributed the dominance of liberalism in the Democratic Party to communist subversion. Haley's activism started when he helped create the Jeffersonian Democrats in 1936 to contest Franklin Roosevelt's bid for a third term. He went on to run for governor of Texas in 1956 and served as the state chair for the far-right group For America. During the 1960s Haley rose to national fame as an outspoken antagonist of fellow Texan President Lyndon B. Johnson. Haley's ideologies and campaigns reinforced the disillusion many southern conservatives felt toward the Democratic Party. Additionally, his political failures illustrated that mainstream conservatives turned away from the conspiratorial, segregationist rhetoric of the far-right during the mid-twentieth century.

[99] There are no political histories written about J. Evetts Haley, with the exception of Stacey Sprague's master's thesis: Stacey Sprague, "James Evetts Haley and the New Deal: Laying the Foundations for the Modern Republican Party in Texas" (Master's Thesis, University of North Texas, 2004). However, Haley appears in many books related to Texas politics. For more, see: Sean P. Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*; Ricky F. Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans: Allan Shivers and Texas Two-Party Politics* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005); Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*. Many of the early books written on Haley were hagiographical accounts. For more, see: Bill Modisett, *J. Evetts Haley: A True Texas Legend* (Midland, Tex.: Staked Plains Press, 1996); Chandler A. Robinson, ed. *J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West* (Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978).

Chapter five analyzes the life and ideologies of Kent Courtney and his far-right political organization, the Conservative Society of America (CSA).[100] Courtney epitomized the southern, states' rights conservatism of the 1950s and 1960s. Politicians like Strom Thurmond (R-SC) heavily influenced Courtney's hostility toward liberalism and advocacy for states' rights, which Courtney combined with a belief in a grand communist conspiracy. Courtney viewed any ideology or legislation that deviated from his strict definition of conservatism as "socialistic." He grew disgruntled with the prominence of liberalism in both major political parties during the 1950s, which prompted his advocacy for an alternative, conservative party. All of Courtney's national electoral endeavors failed, but his acerbic rhetoric and conspiracy theories helped delineate the differences between responsible conservatives and fringe radicals.

The reason why I chose these organizations is because they illustrate the web of connectivity between groups on the right-wing fringe. Welch's Birch Society influenced the structure of Hargis's Christian Crusade, and individual Birchers were involved in Courtney's Conservative Society of America. Haley's Texans for America contested legislation in coordination with the Birch Society and the Christian Crusade, and both Welch and Hargis's organizations included advertisements for Haley's polemical book, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, in their periodicals.[101] Courtney worked as a Birch chapter leader in New Orleans

---

[100] Historians have almost entirely ignored the historical contributions of Kent and Phoebe Courtney, which is especially surprising considering their contribution to Barry Goldwater's and George Wallace's campaigns. Dan Carter's seminal work on George Wallace never mentions the Courtneys, and Robert Alan Goldberg's equally influential work on Barry Goldwater only mentions Courtney twice, both times in passing. Jonathan Schoenwald frames the Courtneys against contemporary conservatives, but his book does not delve into the CSA's activism, in *A Time for Choosing*, 109-110.

[101] "Your Own Reading," *John Birch Society Bulletin*, August 1964, 21 in "Folder - Political Correspondence 1964," Wallet - Correspondence clippings and campaign material-1964, Box 1, Series III-E - Misc., JEH, HML; Advertisement, ed. Billy James Hargis, *Christian Crusade*, Vol. 6, No. 9, (October 1964): 23.

and corresponded with multiple figures on the far-right, including Welch, Hargis, and Haley. Other ultraconservatives—like General Edwin A. Walker, analyst and publisher Dan Smoot, and far-right broadcaster Clarence Manion—make cameo appearances throughout the chapters, further illustrating the interconnected nature of the Radical Right movement.

All of the activists studied in this dissertation held extremist views, but their impact extended beyond the confines of the fringe right. Ultraconservative leaders and their organizations left a legacy of grassroots consolidation that built a constituency for future generations of conservatives.[102] The Radical Right capitalized on the disillusion of Sunbelt conservatives, and ultraconservative groups flourished across the South and the West. Far-right organizations attuned this Sunbelt constituency to anti-communist, anti-statist language, which catalyzed political activism at all electoral levels. The strategies used by the far-right, like mass mailers and political action units, influenced future generations of conservative activists.

Most importantly, the Radical Right legitimized right-leaning philosophies by serving as a foil for mainstream conservatives.[103] The far-right's anti-communism, conspiracy theories, and ardent segregationism alienated voters throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, which created a rift within conservative ranks. For example, when Robert W. Welch accused

---

[102] Multiple historians link the Radical Right to the rise of mainstream conservatism: Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*, 215; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 76-77; Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 189; Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 257; Williams, *God's Own Party*, 4-7. Sean P. Cunningham tentatively noted that the "wealth and paranoia" of the Texas far-right might have influenced the rise of modern conservatism, but he questions the validity of a continuous strain of ultraconservatism from the Cold War to the modern day: Sean P. Cunningham, "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits: The Power, Influence, and Failure of the Postwar Texas Far Right," in *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*, eds. David O'Donald Cullen and Kyle G. Wilkison (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 118.

[103] Jonathan Schoenwald makes a similar argument in his book on the rise of conservatism. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 260.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower of communist leanings fellow conservatives, notably William F. Buckley Jr., rebuked the Birch Society as an irresponsible organization. This separated the mainstream right from the fringe radicals.[104] The activism of the Radical Right declined by the late 1960s as conservatives coalesced within the ranks of the Republican Party and the New Right. Some far-rightists, like J. Evetts Haley, transitioned into GOP conservatives, whereas men like Kent Courtney remained political outsiders. The populist anger and conspiracy theories of the Radical Right galvanized conservative voters, but the mainstream conservative movement's ostracism of the far-right ultimately helped legitimize right-leaning thought in an era of liberal dominance.

[104] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 82.

Chapter One

Extremism in the Defense of Liberty: Robert W. Welch and the John Birch Society

In April 1961, Robert H. W. Welch Jr., strode to the stage at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles to deliver a speech entitled "Through All the Days to Be." Despite the nebulous title, the topic of the talk held little mystery for the attendees. Welch's John Birch Society and his own personal brand of conservative extremism had already become a nationwide phenomenon. Welch cast an apocalyptic tone: "You have good reason to be worried, not only about the prospect of your grandchildren living in a socialist world . . . but of yourselves living in a slave state under brutal Communist masters, and in just a few more years."[1] Welch's rhetoric, an updated rendition of McCarthy's anti-communism, sought to galvanize patriotic citizens to fight the supposed dangers of internal subversion. While most government officials and citizens viewed communism as primarily an external threat, ultraconservative conspiracy theorists like Welch believed the wolf had already breached the door. Speaking to his Los Angeles audience, Welch warned, "Today the process has gone so far that not only our federal government but some of our state governments are to a disturbing extent controlled by Communist sympathizers or political captives of the Communists."[2]

This chapter analyzes the impact of Robert W. Welch and his anti-communist organization, the John Birch Society, upon the political discourse in the United States during

---

[1] Robert W. Welch, "Through All the Days to Be" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston, Mass.: Western Islands, 1966), 57.

[2] Ibid., 58.

the 1950s and 1960s. A charismatic figure, Welch indelibly influenced the views and activism of the society. An examination of his formative years underscores how Welch came to epitomize right-wing anti-communist radicalism. The First Red Scare planted the seeds of conspiratorial distrust toward progressive ideologies and intellectuals, and Welch's entrepreneurial career connected him to the right-wing fringe of the growing business conservatism movement.[3] Welch joined the growing chorus of conservative activists in the 1950s by forming the John Birch Society on the principles of far-right conservatism and anti-communism. The organization's namesake, John Birch, endeavored as a Christian evangelist living in China during World War II before meeting his demise at the hands of Chinese communist forces, which, according to Welch, made Birch the first victim of the Cold War.[4] Welch used the Birch Society to thrust his conspiratorial conservatism into the political arena, influencing and defining the shape of far-right conservatism during the mid-twentieth century.

The Birch Society was the most well-known far-right organization of the time, and its platform defined liberalism as a pathway to collectivism and forced both the Republican and

---

[3] Kim Phillips-Fein described the business conservatism movement as the effort of "those few determined few, those ordinary businessmen . . . from companies of different seizes and from various industries, who worked for more than forty years to undo the system of labor unions, federal social welfare programs, and government regulation of the economy that came into existence during and after the Great Depression of the 1930s," in *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2009), xi-xii.

[4] Welch wrote a short book covering John Birch's life in which he describes Birch's life and, most importantly, death near Suzhou, China; however, Welch's hagiography of Birch is bereft of footnotes. The only hint of research is a vague anecdote: "All alone, in a committee room of the Senate Office Building in Washington, I was reading the dry typewritten pages in an unpublished report of an almost forgotten congressional committee hearing," in Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., *The Life of John Birch* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), v. Chapter Thirteen, "A Hard Way to Die," tells the story of Birch's demise. In the future I intend to uncover more about the life of John Birch because Welch's account contains obvious bias and a lack of citations. Welch, *The Life of John Birch*, 127.

Democratic parties to react to Welch's visceral anti-communist rhetoric.[5] An analysis of Welch's conspiratorial views underscores that the Birch founder viewed the threat of communism as a life or death matter. In the society's foundational document, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, Welch asserted, "Gentlemen, we are losing, rapidly losing, a cold war in which our freedom, our country, and our very existence are at stake."[6] This paranoia prompted Welch, and, by virtue, the Birch Society, to lash out at any form of social or political progress. The Birch Society created front groups to fight against Dwight Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" and started a campaign to impeach Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren for his participation in the *Brown* decision.[7] Birchers influenced politics as well, notably by agitating against Richard Nixon in the 1962 California gubernatorial campaign. However, Welch's conspiratorial overtones earned rebukes from mainstream conservatives, especially analyst and editor of *The Nation* William F. Buckley Jr., during the early 1960s.[8] By the 1964 election politicians on both sides of the aisle disavowed the

---

[5] The Republican and Democratic parties both wrestled with the issue of Bircher extremism during their national conventions in 1964. The Democrats issued a condemnation of Welch and the Birch Society, while the Republicans like Nelson Rockefeller spoke out against Welch. Goldwater did not repudiate the Birch Society by name, but he issued a statement against "extremism." Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964, 27 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Post-Presidential Papers, 1961-69 (PPP), Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEL); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Fracturing of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 380, 383; Charles Mohrs, "Goldwater, In a Unity Bid, Rejects Extremists' Aid; Eisenhower is 'Satisfied,'" *New York Times*, August 13, 1964.

[6] Robert W. Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, Eighteenth Printing (Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1961), 24.

[7] Ibid., 100, 113.

[8] D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 79.

conspiracy theories of the Birch Society, leading to the group's ostracism after Barry Goldwater's defeat.[9]

Birch Society activism peaked in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and an investigation of this period reveals the conservative impulses that animated grassroots movements across the nation. Welch and the Birch Society connected far-right activism with various strands of the burgeoning conservative movement, like the growth of business activism, the rising importance of the Sunbelt, and the coalescence of the religious right. From a historical perspective, Robert W. Welch and the John Birch Society act as a lens through which to view Cold War politics, the rise of right-wing thought, and the continued political impact of conspiracy and anti-communism.[10]

---

[9] Ibid., 101.

[10] Though this chapter explores the importance of the John Birch Society, it is certainly not the first to do so. Early political histories from the liberal consensus school disregarded the activism and organizational importance of the Radical Right. For examples of the consensus school see Daniel Bell, *The Radical Right* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2002); Richard Hofstadter, "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," *American Scholar* 24 (Winter 1954-1955): 11-17; Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America: The Thankless Persuasion* (New York: Knopf, 1962); James Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1967); Arthur Schlesinger, *The Vital Center* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1949). However, modern scholars have begun to examine the contemporary impact and significance of Welch and the Birch Society. Historian D. J. Mulloy argued that a close inspection of the John Birch Society underscored the nature of Cold War politics and society, especially regarding the rising tide of conservatism and conspiracy. Furthermore, Mulloy wrote, "We can see the Birch Society as a kind of bridge between the older Right of the 1940s and 1950s—including the McCarthyite Right—and the New Right of the 1970s and 1980s," in *The World of the John Birch Society*, 11. Mulloy's arguments refined the analyses of other historians who noted the importance of grassroots anti-communism to conservative rhetoric. Many historians have analyzed the confluence of anti-communism and conservative grassroots activism. For further reading, see: Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Perlstein, *Before the Storm*; Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ellen Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). This gradual shift indicated that modern historians viewed the scholarship of consensus scholars like Richard Hofstadter and Daniel Bell, which depicted the far-right as inconsequential fanatics, did not fully represent the role played by groups like the John Birch Society. The current historiography situates the Welch and the Birch Society as a seminal figures within the far-right movement of the mid-twentieth century.

Robert Henry Winborne Welch, Jr. was born on December 1, 1899 to a landowning family in North Carolina, and during his formative years he developed the conspiratorial, anti-communist ideologies that shaped the John Birch Society. Welch grew up in a wealthy household, and his parents, Robert and Lina Welch, hired seasonal farm hands, which afforded young Robert Welch the opportunity to focus on education.[11] A precocious youth, Welch excelled in academics. He finished high school by age twelve and then graduated from the University of North Carolina four years later at the age of sixteen. During World War I Welch briefly joined the Naval Academy before transferring to Harvard Law School in 1919.

Welch's time at Harvard coincided with the onset of the First Red Scare, which helped foment his anti-communist, conspiratorial mindset. During his years in Cambridge the federal government passed anti-sedition legislation and deported supposed radical immigrants, and accusations of communism permeated the battles between labor and capital.[12] One of Welch's Harvard professors, Felix Frankfurter, sympathized with immigrants and labor unions.[13] Welch took Frankfurter's class on labor law in 1921 and

---

[11] G. Edward Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch: Founder of the John Birch Society* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: American Media, 1975), 30. Griffin received Welch's blessing when writing this biography, which made him the "official" biographer of Welch and the Birch Society. He also stated his admiration for Welch in the opening pages of the book, noting that the biography was a "friendly biography." Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, ix-x.

[12] M. J. Heale, *American Anticommunism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 60-78; Robert K. Murray's described the First Red Scare as an era when "civil liberties were left prostrate, the labor movement was badly mauled, the position of capital was greatly enhanced, and complete antipathy toward reform was enthroned." Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1955), 17.

[13] Michael E. Parrish examined Frankfurter's ideologies: "The gentry and the new intellectuals, [Frankfurter] believed, would moderate the excesses of American capitalism, discipline the vulgar business classes, uplift the poor, and usher in the benign future of expanded social welfare and security. He believed, finally, in the desirability of democratic change tempered by an elite; in this respect he remained throughout his life a typical

accused the professor of harboring Marxist sympathies.[14] Welch's characterization of Frankfurter distorted reality. Frankfurter's ideals epitomized the reformist mindset of the Progressive Era, but he openly disavowed Bolshevik communism.[15] Regardless, Robert Welch believed Frankfurter's progressive tendencies and friendliness toward labor suggested communist underpinnings. Disgusted with Frankfurter, Welch left Harvard to pursue an entrepreneurial career. Welch's perception of Frankfurter highlighted his binary world view—a person was either a conservative, representing the true values of America, or a liberal dupe with communist leanings. The anti-communist, anti-intellectual anxieties Welch developed during the First Red Scare shaped his political philosophies for the rest of his life.

After leaving Harvard Welch joined the ranks of entrepreneurial Americans by founding a candy manufacturing company, putting him in contact with many conservative businessmen who later aided his ultraconservative political activism. Welch had a briefly successful venture with Oxford Candy before leaving in 1935 to work as a sales manager for his brother's company, the James O. Welch Company.[16] Welch's business ventures funneled him into politics, starting with his position in the Boston Chamber of Commerce.[17] His entrepreneurial activities and free market conservatism eventually led to his extensive involvement with the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) during the 1930s and

---

turn-of-the-century progressive." Michael E. Parrish, *Felix Frankfurter and His Times: The Reform Years* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 3. For more on Frankfurter's years on the Supreme Court, see: Noah Feldman, *Scorpions: The Battles and Triumphs of FDR's Great Supreme Court Justices* (New York: Twelve, 2010).

[14] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 67-68.

[15] Parrish, *Felix Frankfurter and His Times*, 121.

[16] According to Welch's official biography he left Oxford Candy when the board of directors demanded a reduction of quality in 1929 to boost profit margins. Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 92.

[17] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 111.

1940s.[18] Historian Kim Phillips-Fein described NAM as the "leading organization of anti-New Deal industrialists" that detailed "a forceful defense of capitalism, to rally a national network of executives to oppose the rise of labor unions, and to defend the rights of management, both practically and ideologically."[19] Welch's conspiratorial worldview complemented NAM's goal of countering the power of labor and the federal government. The leaders of NAM stumped for free market capitalism while Welch's characterization of New Deal liberals as communists represented the right-wing fringe of economic conservatism.

Alongside the First Red Scare and the growth of the business conservatism movement, the presidential election of 1952, specifically Senator Robert Taft's (R-OH) defeat at the Republican national convention, hardened Welch's conspiratorial mindset. Throughout the GOP primaries Welch supported Taft because the Ohio senator was a fiscal conservative, a critic of liberalism, and an uncompromising anti-communist.[20] Taft entered the GOP convention as the darling of Republican conservatives and the presumptive front-runner because he held a plurality of delegates. However, Taft's plurality ebbed during the early convention politicking, and more moderate Republicans, like Representative Richard Nixon (R-CA), delivered enough delegates to inaugurate Eisenhower as the GOP candidate.[21] Taft's defeat at the convention convinced Welch that a vast communist

---

[18] J. Allen Broyles, *The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966), 28.

[19] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 13, 14.

[20] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 165. Clarence E. Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Md.: SR Books, 2005), 145, 177.

[21] James T. Patterson provided a trenchant account of the convention process in *Mr. Republican: A Biograph of Robert A. Taft* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 547-558; Gary W. Reichard, *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower* (Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1988), 79-80; Wunderlin, *Robert A. Taft*, 181. For more on Taft and the Republican Party, see: Robert Mason, *The Republican Party and American*

conspiracy controlled the government and prevented conservatives from gaining tangible political power. In the *Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, written just a few short years after the 1952 GOP convention, Welch declared that "Eisenhower's proper political classification was in the red fringes of the Democratic Party." Welch further noted, "Eisenhower and his more intimate backers had much more far-reaching purposes in mind. One of them was to destroy the Republican Party as an organizational crystallizer of the anti-socialist and anti-communist strength of the United States."[22] Historian D. J. Mulloy argued that Welch viewed Taft's candidacy as the final hope for mainstream conservatism to defeat the communist conspiracy, which convinced Welch that the best way to fight communism resided outside the realm of electoral politics.[23]

Welch's ultraconservative ideals solidified throughout the 1950s, and he used the John Birch Society to combat the perceived menace of communist subversion in the United States.[24] In 1958 eleven fellow industrialists joined Welch at a private meeting in Indiana with the intention of animating a conservative activist movement to counter the supposed

---

Politics from Hoover to Reagan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Elliot A. Rosen, *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

[22] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 105, 106.

[23] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 177.

[24] Named after a relatively anonymous Baptist minister, the John Birch Society projected Welch's ultraconservative, anti-communist message through its very name. Born on a farm outside of Macon, Georgia, John Birch sailed to China to evangelize as a missionary, becoming an unsung war hero during WWII by working as an interpreter and helping downed U.S. pilots escape the battlefronts. Welch seemed infatuated with Birch's personal character, describing him as an "unswervingly fundamentalist Baptist" characterized by "fanatical personal asceticism" and an undying belief in "free will." In his hagiography of John Birch, Welch argued that "John Birch personified everything that Communists hate," and he described Birch as "one of the finest examples of Americanism." Welch used John Birch's life, much like he would use the Birch Society, as a prism through which to interpret his binary perception of the world. Summarizing his interpretation of Birch's life, Welch intoned, "With his death and in his death the battle lines were drawn, in a struggle from which either Communist of Christian-style civilization must emerge with one completely triumphant and the other completely destroyed." Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., *The Life of John Birch* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954), 31, 44, 100, 127.

leftist tilt of U.S. society.[25] At the end of the exhaustive two-day meeting in Indianapolis, Robert Welch founded the John Birch Society in order "to promote less government, more responsibility, and a better world."[26] Welch's virulent anti-communist conspiracy theories undergirded these high-minded ideals. The meeting minutes were compiled and published in 1959 as *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, which constituted the organization's ideological blueprint and primary recruiting tool. During the meeting, Welch intoned "We are not beginning any revolution, nor even a counter-revolution, in any technical sense; because, while we are opposing a conspiracy, we are not ourselves making use of conspiratorial methods."[27] Welch's proclamation reflected his belief that communist subversion was a real threat, but it also highlighted the irony that Welch did not recognize that the Birch Society was founded on conspiratorial ideologies.

The founding principles of the John Birch Society were inextricably tied to the conspiracy theories and ultraconservative political views of Robert W. Welch. Welch wrote in the *Blue Book*, "Our immediate and most urgent anxiety, of course, is the threat of the Communist conspiracy. And well it should be. For both internationally, and within the United States, the Communists are much further advanced and more deeply entrenched than is realized by even most of the serious students of the danger among the anti-Communists."[28] This conspiratorial mindset fostered a binary world view in which anything other than far-

---

[25] Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 59. The eleven attendees were: T. Coleman Andrews, Colonel Laurence E. Bunker, William J. Grede, William R. Kent, Fred C. Koch, W. B. McMillan, Revilo P. Oliver, Louis Ruthenburg, Fitzhugh Scott, Jr., Robert W. Stoddard, and Ernest G. Swigert. Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 258.

[26] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 149.

[27] Ibid., 155.

[28] Ibid., xiv.

right conservatism was defined as communist-influenced. Welch blamed liberalism for abetting communist infiltration, and he conflated liberal policies, like foreign aid programs and progressive taxation, with the state-dominated economy and political repression of the Soviet Union.[29] Welch's anti-communism influenced his distrust of the federal government, advocacy for strict fiscal conservatism, antipathy toward civil rights, and anxiety regarding societal decay and a perceived decline of morality.

Anti-communist conspiracies reinforced Welch's anti-statist beliefs because Welch contended that communism had penetrated the highest level of the U.S. government. In 1957 Welch gave a speech at Dickinson College that outlined his suspicion of communist infiltration: "Today the process has gone so far that not only our federal government but some of our state governments are to a disturbing extent controlled by Communist sympathizers or political captives of the Communists."[30] Welch claimed the conspiracy even poisoned President Dwight Eisenhower. He contended that "communist bosses" controlled Eisenhower because Ike refused to break up or sell the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the federal-owned and operated power company created during the New Deal, even though the president had cut TVA funding in 1953.[31] Welch also contended that communists influenced the escalating military spending because it extended the power of the federal

---

[29] Robert W. Welch, "A Letter to Khrushchev" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston: Western Islands, 1966), 37-38.

[30] Robert W. Welch, "The New Americanism" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston: Western Islands, 1966), 58.

[31] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 115, 118-120; Aaron Wildavsky, "TVA and Power Politics," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (September, 1961): 583.

government.[32] Welch also objected to Eisenhower's foreign aid programs, which he believed were designed "for the specific and conscious purpose of helping the world-wide Communist conspiracy."[33]

The criticisms of Eisenhower's policies underscored how Welch's anti-communism influenced his advocacy for strict fiscal conservatism. Simply put, Welch viewed government spending as a pathway to collectivism. He argued that earlier presidents, like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt, facilitated communist subversion through liberal economic policies.[34] In a 1961 speech, Welch noted, "It was under Wilson, of course, that the first huge parts of the Marxian program, such as the progressive income tax, were incorporated into the American system."[35] Welch also blamed Eisenhower for fiscal excesses, noting that the expansion of Social Security and the creation of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare paved the way for an "all-powerful completely socialistic central government."[36] This characterization of Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" did not match reality. As historian Robert Mason noted, Ike sought "an alternative approach that answered a desire or need for welfare protections while remaining wary of statist expansions."[37] However, Welch's binary worldview lumped government spending and welfare programs together with

---

[32] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to Special Agent in Charge (SAC) Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 115, 118-120.

[33] Ibid., 166.

[34] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 44, 123.

[35] Robert W. Welch, "Republics and Democracies" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston: Western Islands, 1966), 105.

[36] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 122, 123, 127.

[37] Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*, 156.

communism. This fiscal radicalism stemmed from Welch's previous career as an entrepreneur. His ideologies overlapped with the right-wing business movement that agitated for a return to the anti-labor, libertarian economics of eighteenth century liberalism.[38] Illustrating his belief in the free market, Welch pontificated, "Few things are needed more now than to reconvert brainwashed American business and professional men back to a belief in classical economics."[39]

Welch's anti-communism and mistrust of liberal values influenced his views on race and the struggle for civil rights in the twentieth century. In 1958 Welch offered a rose-tinted assessment of southern race relations, stating, "Five years ago the white people and the Negroes of our South, more peacefully inclined towards each other than at any time since the Civil War, were making tremendous progress in the solving of our difficult racial problem."[40] As Jonathan Schoenwald noted, "Welch was a native-born southerner, and his vision was that of the white patrician who knew what was best for blacks."[41] Instead of viewing the lingering impact of economic exploitation and segregation as the catalyst for civil rights activism, Welch held communists responsible for racial conflict in the South. In *The Blue Book*, Welch lamented, "The trouble in our southern states has been fomented

---

[38] Doug Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 22-23. For more on the business conservative movement, see: Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart: The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands.*

[39] Robert W. Welch, "A Touch of Sanity" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston: Western Islands, 1966), 175.

[40] Welch, "A Letter to Khrushchev," 45.

[41] Schoenwald, *A Time For Choosing*, 93.

almost entirely [to start a civil war]. It has been their plan, gradually carried out over a long period with meticulous cunning, to stir up such bitterness between whites and blacks in the South that small flames of civil disorder would inevitably result."[42] Welch even referred to the civil rights movement as the "Negro Revolutionary Movement," which he believed was intent on setting up a "Negro Soviet Republic" in the South.[43]

In mistaking racial unrest for communist planning, Welch was not only factually incorrect but his analysis stripped away the agency of blacks and disregarded legitimate complaints about racial discrimination.[44] African Americans cooperated with communists as an avenue for racial uplift during the Great Depression, but communism did not galvanize the civil rights movement and most blacks refused to join the Communist Party.[45] During the Cold War the number of African American communists dwindled further through a combination of society-national anti-communist anxieties and missteps by the Communist Party, like ideological rigidity and organizational secrecy.[46] The modern push for civil rights started as the Cold War crystallized, which aided the movement because the federal

---

[42] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 19.

[43] Robert W. Welch, "Two Revolutions at Once" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston, Mass.: Western Islands, 1966), 186.

[44] For more on communism and African Americans, see: Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Theodore Kornweibel, *"Seeing Red": Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919-1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951); Mark I. Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917-1936* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998).

[45] Wilson Record's foundational study found that African Americans harnessed communism during the 1930s as an avenue for racial advancement, and historian Adam Fairclough agreed that the Communist Party's adherence to racial equality appealed to African Americans. Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party*; Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2001), 143. Gilmore wrote, "Their small numbers mattered less than their very existence," (see: *Defying Dixie*, 6).

[46] Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 215.

government grew sensitive to Soviet criticisms of American racism.[47] Welch nevertheless viewed the push for racial equality as communist inspired, which led to the creation of Birch Society-sponsored programs, like the campaign to impeach Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren for his role in the *Brown v. Board* decision. This indicated Welch's underlying support of states' rights ideologies, especially regarding racial issues, which garnered intense support among white southerners.[48]

Welch's conspiratorial view of civil rights aligned with his contention that communist infiltration subverted traditional society, and he argued that a decline in Christian morality abetted this societal decay. During his youth Welch attended a fundamentalist Baptist church, but he rejected the tenets of strict fundamentalism as an adult.[49] Nevertheless, Welch understood that his anti-communist movement needed the support of Protestant conservatives, so he created an inclusive version of Christianity to appeal to the broadest audience.[50] In *The Blue Book* Welch wrote that "all faith has been replaced, or is rapidly being replaced, by a pragmatic opportunism with hedonistic aims."[51] This view contradicted the reality that religious conservatism flourished in the 1950s, but Welch's binary view of the

---

[47] Azza Salama Layton, *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 7-8. See also: Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000); Brenda Gayle Plummer, *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[48] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

[49] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 267.

[50] Welch expanded on his religious beliefs in a letter to Mr. David Roemer of Houston, Texas: "In my presentation for The John Birch Society I have tried to draw a circle of religious faith large enough to take in, without violation, all of those specific faiths which are built on eternal truths." Interestingly, Welch refused to align with the fledgling evangelical movement, despite the fact that deeply fundamentalist Christians often aligned with Welch's political ideologies." Ibid., 270.

[51] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 49.

world as communist and anti-communist influenced his dim view of American morality.[52] "This is a *world-wide* battle," Welch proclaimed, "the first in history, between light and darkness; between freedom and slavery; between the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of anti-Christ for the souls and bodies of men."[53] Using a phrase coined by poet Harry Kemp, Welch tried to reconcile the differences between religious factions by noting that all denominations preached an "upward reach in the hearts of man."[54] Through this "upward reach" Welch hoped to unify religious conservatives while contesting political and economic liberalism. Ironically, Welch's religious philosophy resembled a form of religious collectivism, even though Welch and the Birch Society opposed communism in all forms. This paradox made sense in Welch's mind because he believed that only a unified nation of Christian conservatives could defeat communist atheism.

Many contemporaries took a more cynical view of Welch's vision of religious collectivism. Sociologist J. Allen Broyles argued that "Religious institutions and beliefs are of importance to the Birch Society . . . only as propagandistic and psychological supports for the economic and political ideological beliefs they hold as central."[55] Reverend Duane Thebeau, vicar of St. John's Episcopal Church in Indio, California, chastised Welch by noting

---

[52] Multiple historians have mapped the growth of the Religious Right during the 1940s and 1950s. Darren Dochuk charted the westward movements of Bible Belt preachers, which helped create a Sunbelt culture of evangelical Protestantism. Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Southernization of Southern California* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011). Daniel K. Williams noted the importance of Protestant fundamentalist to the rise of GOP conservatism. Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Kevin Kruse argued that "the new conflation of faith, freedom, and free enterprise then moved to center stage in the 1950s under Eisenhower's watch." Kruse, *One Nation Under God*, xiv.

[53] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 28.

[54] Ibid., 139.

[55] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 27.

that Bircher tactics "to fight what they think is communism is contrary to the Christian approach to this problem . . . We would choose to fight communism by proclaiming and spreading the Christian gospel."[56] Similarly, Lester DeKoster, the Director of the Library at Calvin College, argued, "Mr. Welch's religious hypotheses fit very nicely the competitive struggle into which he wishes to resolve society. His views enable him righteously to denounce social legislation as inimical to progress. But his religion is an amalgam of biological speculation and fuzzy mysticism."[57] These observations posited that Welch's moralism was a politically-motivated proxy to aid the Birch Society's anti-communist crusade. Nevertheless, Welch used religion to promote far-right ideologies, which coincided with the flourishing movement along the religious right and connected him with anti-communist ministers like Billy James Hargis and Fred Schwarz.[58]

Welch's moralistic leanings reflected the rise of family-values conservatism that emerged in the mid-twentieth century. In a 1964 speech, Welch argued, "We must not only defend the family ideal against all of the pressures and propaganda which would destroy it, but we must strengthen that ideal and increase still further the ties and loyalties that make family units the very bricks out of which a stable and happy society is built."[59] Welch's platforms linked with social moralism because, as historian Robert O. Self noted, "the

---

[56] "Pickets, minister bow out of Birchist talk," undated in "Folder - Birch Society," Box 26 - Principal File, 1964, Office of Dwight D. Eisenhower (ODDE), DDEL.

[57] Booklet, Lester DeKoster, "The Christian and the John Birch Society" (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 14-15 in "Folder - Pc," Box 10, 1966 Signature File, PPP, DDEL.

[58] Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster noted that Billy James Hargis organized his Christian Crusade in a similar manner to Welch's Birch Society. Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *The Radical Right: A Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies* (New York: Random House, 1966), 74.

[59] Robert W. Welch, "More Stately Mansions" in *The New Americanism and Other Speeches and Essays* (Boston: Western Islands, 1966), 147.

conservative definition of 'family values' represented an anti-welfare-state ideology."[60] Accordingly, family-values conservatism became another avenue for Welch to attack liberalism and the perceived communist conspiracy. Welch's anxiety regarding social decay in the 1950s and 1960s fostered the belief that the fabric of U.S. socio-cultural traditions was fraying. As Welch noted in *The Blue Book*, "One of the worst and most sadly disturbing traits for many of our young people today is that they take their [political] inheritance for granted, and have no thought of its cost. This is a vital part of the moral breakdown that is endangering our civilization."[61] Welch's antipathy toward liberalism and the perceived decline of society prompted his defense of family values, anti-communism, and the conservative political tradition. These tenets formed the foundation of the Birch Society, and during the late 1950s and early 1960s Welch and the society operated at the center of the Radical Right movement.

After founding the Birch Society in 1958, Welch structured the organization to ensure ideological purity by installing himself as "The Founder" atop the organization's hierarchy. Welch used this monolithic structure to guarantee strict ideological uniformity, using the *Blue Book* as the society's philosophical and organizational blueprint.[62] As contemporary journalist Leonard V. Finder observed, "Welch is the Birch Society. What he says or decides is the society's views and policies. He cannot be disowned; those who differ with him may

---

[60] Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 10.

[61] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 144.

[62] This uniformity did not always extend down to the regional and local levels. Sociologist J. Allan Broyles noted that regional organizers, and even members of the national council, challenged Welch's conspiratorial visions Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 62.

only resign."[63] Finder further remarked on the Birch Society's authoritarian configuration, "Other persons have declared that they think that Welch goes too far in certain ways but that they approve the society otherwise. They have no choice; if they back the Birch movement, they must support it as it is, not as they might like it to be, and that means with inclusion of Welch's beliefs and pronouncements."[64] Dr. Arthur Larson, former advisor to Eisenhower and director of the U.S. Information Agency, investigated the JBS through the National Council for Civic Responsibility. Larson assessed the Birch Society's hierarchical structure, "Welch appoints the entire leadership from the executive committee down through chapter leaders and maintains tight centralized control."[65] This rigidity, Welch noted, existed because "Communist infiltrators could bog us down in interminable disagreements, schisms, and feuds."[66] Indeed, Welch dominated the Birch Society, leaving dissenters to find other organizations or methods of political involvement.

The organizational hierarchy of the Birch Society started with the headquarters in Belmont, Massachusetts, where Welch and his staff wrote, recorded, and published the Society's propaganda, which was then disseminated to the local JBS chapters. Individual states had appointed chairs, called Major Coordinators, to handle intra-state affairs, and these men were tasked with monitoring chapters to ensure ideological and organizational uniformity.[67] The vast majority of the grassroots activism occurred through local chapters

---

[63] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964, 17 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

[64] Ibid.

[65] "Birch Society Investigated" *The Idaho Statesman*, October 9, 1964 in "Folder - Ca (3)," Box 29 - Principal File, 1964, Office of Dwight D. Eisenhower, DDEL.

[66] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 148.

[67] Ibid., 152.

with directives issued from the Belmont headquarters. Welch preferred that local Birch Society chapters remain small, insisting on no more than twenty individuals per chapter. If a single chapter gained more than twenty members, it was expected to break into two or more chapters. Chapter Leaders were appointed directly by the Belmont headquarters, or through a Belmont-appointed Bircher field officer.[68] The leaders of local chapters were responsible for collecting monthly dues ($2 for men, $1 for women), scheduling discussions of Bircher publications, and orchestrating activism in concert with the efforts of the national JBS.[69] The regional coordinators and organizational staff in Belmont were paid, salary or hourly, but the Birch Society's National Council, including Welch, and local chapter leaders worked as patriotic volunteers.[70]

An analysis of the Birch Society revealed Welch's efforts to control the ultraconservative party-line. Welch discouraged chapters from inviting outside speakers in order to preserve the ideological standardization of the Birch Society. Instead, Welch provided lengthy, dull video monologues in which he expounded on the dangers of the communist conspiracy.[71] Additionally, the Belmont headquarters sent out "homework," Welch's weekly marching orders, to local Birch Society meetings. As Society member Bud Lanker recalled, individual Birchers were "expected to conduct a massive one-man letter-writing campaign, directed at our congressmen, state senators and representatives and other

[68] Ibid., 151.

[69] Ibid., 151.

[70] Ibid., 152.

[71] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 90.

public officials."[72] Welch only claimed the title of "Founder", but he dominated the Society's activism and message in the manner of a political tyrant.

Men and women joined the Birch Society for a variety of reasons, ranging from patriotic nationalism to fearful paranoia to political disillusion. Publisher Leonard V. Finder observed, "Most persons believing in the Birch movement, whether actual members or fellow-travelers, tend to be fanatical in their zeal." [73] To join the Birch Society, as Journalist Wilson Sullivan humorously noted, "You've got to believe that everyone but the Birchers is either hell-bent for Communist tyranny, or just stupid."[74] Welch's conspiratorial beliefs capitalized on the anti-communist anxieties of the 1950s, which led to increased membership numbers and fundraising capabilities. A July 1964 Gallup poll indicated that sixty-six percent of Americans had heard of or read about the Birch Society.[75] Just a few months later, an Anti-Defamation League survey revealed that seventy-seven percent of Americans knew about the John Birch Society.[76] By 1965 the JBS claimed a membership of roughly 100,000 and brought in roughly $5.2 million per year, but scholarly estimates put the active

---

[72] Ibid., 85.

[73] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964, 15 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

[74] Wilson Sullivan, "Subversion from the Right: Part One - The Birchers" *The Winchester Star*, Vol. 81, No. 19, (January 11, 1962) in "Folder - Su," Box 56 - Ston to Tea, Alphabetical File 1962-63, Dwight D. Eisenhower "Signature" File, DDEL.

[75] Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll (AIPO), July, 1964, "Have you heard or read about the John Birch Society?," USGALLUP.64-695.R15A (Gallup Organization, Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 27, 2016.

[76] Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Anti-Semitism in the United States Survey, 1964, October, 1964, "Have you heard of the John Birch Society?," USNORC.64BNAI.R09, (National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 27, 2016.

membership of the Society around fifty to sixty thousand at its height.[77] Much of the Birch Society's membership was concentrated in the Sunbelt, particularly California and Texas.[78] This indicated a strong linkage between Sunbelt conservatism—a combination of anti-communism, Protestant evangelicalism, fiscal conservatism, and a resistance to centralize authority—and the overarching rhetoric of Robert Welch and the Birch Society.[79]

Publications formed a crucial part of the Birch Society's political outreach, especially the monthly periodicals printed by Birch-fronted presses. The Belmont headquarters produced numerous periodicals to serve as both recruitment tools and a method of ideological indoctrination. Welch started a self-publishing operation in 1956 with the creation of *One Man's Opinion*, which eventually transformed into the official Bircher publication, *American Opinion*, after the founding of the Society in 1958.[80] *American Opinion* amounted to a far-right review of current affairs with editorial contributions from fellow ultraconservatives. Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, analysts from the Anti-Defamation League, argued that *American Opinion* "intended to be a molder of 'Americanist' thinking, to instill in its readers a profound consciousness of the all-pervading Communist conspiracy allegedly stretching from the White House all the way down to the

---

[77] Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 11, 195. J. Allen Broyles estimated the membership between twelve and eighteen thousand, but that figure seems absurdly low considering over 100,000 people subscribed to Birch Society publications. Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 46, 165. Unfortunately, as historian D. J. Mulloy noted, "the truth is that there are no exact figures for the membership of the society or the readership of its publications." See Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 213n.

[78] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 3.

[79] Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 11-12, 18; Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, xxiii; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 8.

[80] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 193.

local town council, the school board, the town public library and the local pulpit."[81] It also illustrated how Welch's Birch Society created a network connecting far-right activists and politicians across the nation. For example, Martin Dies, the red-baiting former chair of the House Un-American Activities Committee, was a "Contributing Editor" to *American Opinion*, and by 1966 roughly 43,000 people subscribed to *American Opinion*.[82]

The other major Bircher periodical, the monthly *John Birch Society Bulletin*, disseminated Welch's marching orders to the Bircher faithful. In this respect, the *Bulletin* was the Society's core publication. The *Bulletin* contained short and long-term goals for the society, written and edited by Welch himself, plus lists of Society-approved books for purchase. Most crucially, the *Bulletin* promoted the "Agenda of the Month," which detailed the Society-sponsored political activism expected of each member. Usually this entailed participation in letter-writing campaigns aimed at a politician, issue, or a piece of specific legislation.[83] However, Welch's conspiratorial rhetoric, and the activism it engendered, earned the ire of contemporaries like California attorney general Stanley Mosk. In a 1961 letter to California governor Edmund G. Brown, Mosk noted, "In response to this fear [of communism] they are willing to give up a large measure of the freedoms guaranteed them by the United State Constitution in favor of accepting the dictates of their 'Founder.'"[84] Ever vigilant to attacks against the Society, Welch addressed similar criticisms: "Our members are

---

[81] Epstein and Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966*, 89.

[82] Ibid., 11, 91.

[83] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 37.

[84] Letter from Stanley Mosk to Governor Edmund G, Brown, July, 1961, 1 in "Folder - Extremist Associations: John Birch Society (1)," Box 16 - Awards & Contests-Calif. Newspaper Publishers Assn., Papers of Leonard V. Finder, 1930-1969, DDEL.

told specifically and emphatically in our bulletins . . . never to carry out any of our requests or to do anything for the Society that is against their individual consciences or even contrary to their best judgment."[85]

Welch contended that the Birch Society was not a political organization because it did not support specific parties or candidates. Welch tried to maintain the façade of political impartiality by instructing the Birch Society, as an organization, to avoid supporting or funding politicians or their campaigns. He also used indirect language—"urging" or "expecting," rather than ordering—to avoid accusations of partisanship while encouraging members to participate in grassroots crusades. Former Secretary of Agriculture for Eisenhower and Birch supporter Ezra Taft Benson agreed with Welch's narrow definition of activism, arguing that the Birch Society remained apolitical because it did not directly "endorse candidates, give money to candidates or recruit for political parties."[86] Conversely, journalist Leonard V. Finder thought only "apologists" believed that the Birch Society was a strictly educational, apolitical organization.[87]

Regardless of Welch's proclamations, the Birch Society was undeniably politically-motivated. In the pages of the *Bulletin* Welch promoted Bircher propaganda like "The Warren Impeachment Packet," a pamphlet vilifying the Supreme Court's decisions regarding segregation.[88] Welch noted that purchasing and distributing this pamphlet would prepare

---

[85] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 161n.

[86] Letter from Ezra Taft Benson to Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 9, 1965 in "Folder - BEN (2)," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDLE.

[87] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964, 19 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDLE.

[88] Robert W. Welch, *The John Birch Society Bulletin*, August, 1964, 7 in "Folder - Political Correspondence and Clippings 1964," Wallet - Correspondence, clippings, and campaign material - 1964, Box 1, Series III-E - Miscellaneous, J. Evetts Haley Collection, Haley Memorial Library and History Center.

people to "support the actual impeachment of Warren when the time comes."[89] Another example of overt political action occurred in 1964 when the *Bulletin* urged readers to bombard the Xerox Corporation with antagonistic letters for making a favorable television show about the United Nation. Xerox eventually received 51,279 letters from Bircher members, indicating a large far-right grassroots movement. But closer scrutiny revealed that many Birchers sent several letters, inflating the actual number of citizens concerned by Xerox's support of the United Nations. In reality, the real number of letter writers was a smaller fanatical group of 12,785, which revealed that the driving force behind the Birch Society was a modest number of dedicated activists that representing the conservative fringe.[90]

The most notable instances of grassroots activism occurred during the late 1950s and early 1960s when the Birch Society created front groups to target moderate Republicanism, Earl Warren and the civil rights movement, and Nixon's bid for the California governor's seat. In the *Blue Book* Welch argued, "The thorough and painstaking organization and work at the precinct levels, which wins elections, is not going to be done and can't be done by the Republican Party."[91] Yet, as historian Lisa McGirr noted, Birchers "often played key roles in Republican Party activism."[92] Bircher's indeed influenced Republican activism, especially in California, but the society also operated outside of the realm of party politics. The Birch Society's activism often crossed party lines in support of conservative ideals rather than

---

[89] Ibid.

[90] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 166.

[91] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 94.

[92] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 114.

partisan politics. By distributing right-wing propaganda and urging its constituency to get involved in politics Welch and the Birch Society paved an avenue for right-wing grassroots activism.[93]

The Birch Society's first major activist campaigns took place through fronts—political action groups that organized and carried out Welch's suggested Birch Society campaigns. Anti-Defamation League researchers Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster noted the irony of Welch's insistence on using front organizations since communist organizations were famous for pioneering that technique.[94] Front groups produced high levels of grassroots participation while simultaneously allowing the Birch Society to continue its apolitical charade. The creation of the first Bircher front, the Committee Against Summit Entanglements (CASE), illustrated how the Birch Society fomented conservative action through advertising slogans and circulating petitions. CASE organized in response to a proposed summit between Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev and President Dwight Eisenhower in July 1959. The proposed visit of the Soviet leader horrified Welch. Just a year prior Welch published an acerbic, delusional open letter to Khrushchev, accusing the Soviet premier of being a "front" for the real dictator—Welch suspected Communist Party leader George Malenkov—operating behind the scenes.[95] The Birch Society responded to the arranged summit by organizing a petition drive with the catchphrase "Please, Mr. President,

---

[93] The FBI's characterization of Welch is telling: "Republican of the extreme Right-Wing of the party who has become progressively more and more disillusioned by the post-World War II soft attitude of the United States toward International Communism and who has been frustrated by the preponderance of Moderate Republicans in the present administration." Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 18.

[94] Epstein and Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society,* 15.

[95] Robert W. Welch, "A Letter to Khrushchev," 19; Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society,* 145.

Don't Go!"[96] The goal was to force Ike into rethinking his participation by obtaining ten million signatures.

CASE grew into the largest national Bircher front organization and provided an outlet for conservatives not in the Birch Society to protest Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism.[97] Months before the summit President Eisenhower announced that he and Khrushchev were going to visit each other's countries in preparation for the meeting.[98] The Birch Society, in response, circulated 70,000 petitions in the summer of 1959 to protest Khrushchev's visit and the summit meeting, and Welch estimated that the Birch Society gathered one million signatures total.[99] Ultimately Khrushchev's trip to the U.S. occurred as planned, but Eisenhower's failure to make the trip to the Soviet Union led Welch to believe that the CASE petitions influenced Eisenhower's decision.[100] In reality, the U-2 Incident—a scandal involving the downing of a U.S. spy plane by the Soviet Union in May 1959—bred mistrust between the two superpowers and prevented the Summit Conference from occurring.[101]

The CASE campaign provided a platform for right-wingers to criticize both Eisenhower's diplomatic policies and international communism, and it demonstrated that anti-communism, as embodied by Welch's conspiratorial view of Khrushchev, continued to

---

[96] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 79, 98n.

[97] "Goldwater Aided Birch Unit, Rousselot Says; Senator Named as Member of Committee to Oppose Eisenhower-Khrushchev Parley," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1964.

[98] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 147.

[99] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 98n.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 150; Stephen E. Ambrose discusses the U-2 incident at length in *Eisenhower: Soldier and President, The Renowned One-Volume Life* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1990), 500-517.

play a significant role in far-right politics. Robert Welch served as the chair of CASE, but prominent right-wingers like Barry Goldwater and William Buckley, Jr., were also involved in the petition drive.[102] From the perspective of the Birch Society, CASE was a resounding success. Not only did the Birchers feel that their pleas were heard by national politicians, but the use of fronts helped galvanize their constituency by adding more names to the mailing and recruitment lists.[103] Historian D. J. Mulloy described CASE as a "stepping-stone for the Birch Society as it endeavored to turn itself into a major 'new force' on the American political scene."[104]

In 1961 Welch and the Birch Society embarked on the organization's second major grassroots campaign: the drive to impeach Earl Warren. Communist conspiracy theories and states' rights ideals influenced Welch's decision to attack the Supreme Court. Welch called the *Brown* decision "the most brazen and flagrant usurpation of power that has been seen in three hundred years," and contended that Warren's "unconstitutional" decisions necessitated the justice's removal.[105] He further argued that "the impeachment of Warren would dramatize and crystallize the whole basic question of whether the United States remains an independent republic, or gradually becomes transformed into a province of the world-wide Soviet system."[106] Welch alleged that Eisenhower appointed Warren to the Supreme Court

---

[102] "Goldwater Aided Birch Unit, Rousselot Says; Senator Named as Member of Committee to Oppose Eisenhower-Khrushchev Parley," *Los Angeles Times*, October 10, 1964; Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 147-148.

[103] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 150-151.

[104] Ibid., 151.

[105] Welch quoted in Mulloy, *The World of John Birch*, 111, 224n. Mulloy's footnote indicated that the phrase came from Robert Welch's "A Letter to the South: On Segregation."

[106] George Sokolsky, "These Days: Jumping Jupiter!," *The Washington Times, Post Herald*, January 14, 1961.

only after ensuring Warren would "take the pro-Communist side" when deciding cases, and he claimed that Eisenhower fomented racial unrest and violence as part of a larger communist conspiracy.[107] This aligned with Welch's contention that the civil rights movement resulted from communist infiltration. Warren's decision in the *Brown* case, Welch believed, indicated the pro-Communist sympathies present in the Supreme Court.[108]

The Birch Society designed the Impeach Earl Warren campaign to resemble the CASE movement, but this time Welch adjusted tactics to target new audiences like college students. Similar to CASE, petitions circulated with the intent of bringing impeachment charges before the U.S. House of Representatives, and Welch encouraged Birch Society members to form a letter writing campaign to pressure local officials.[109] An essay contest constituted the most interesting departure in strategy from the CASE campaign. In the summer of 1961 Welch announced a $2,300 contest for the best essay describing the "grounds for impeachment" of Warren.[110] Welch noted in the announcement, "We hope to stir up a great deal of interest among conservatives on the campuses on the dangers that face this country."[111] Targeting college campuses proved fruitful for right-wing activists because conservative youth organizations, like the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) and the Young Republicans, started forming around the same time.[112] The Birch Society's interest in

---

[107] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 225-226, 256.

[108] Ibid., 226, 256.

[109] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 114.

[110] John Wicklein, "Birch Society Will Offer $2,300 for Impeach-Warren Essays," *New York Times*, August 5, 1961.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Both Gregory L. Schneider and John A. Andrews III wrote works examining the impact of Young Americans for Freedom. Andrew's work *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the*

college-age conservatives foreshadowed the cooperation between Birchers and YAF members during the 1964 presidential campaign.[113]

Welch viewed the Impeach Earl Warren campaign as a way to galvanize his conservative base by tapping into white anxieties about racial issues, and his defense of states' rights through anti-communism appealed to the Birch Society's Sunbelt audience.[114] Communism had no impact on Warren's decision in the *Brown* case (he argued access to education was a "fundamental right"), but the rhetoric utilized by Welch mirrored the outcry among southern politicians that fostered years of resistance to federal desegregation mandates.[115] Some southern politicians, like Senator Olin Johnston (D-SC), alleged that "communist sources" dictated the *Brown* decision.[116] The campaign vilifying Warren appealed to the Birch Society's grassroots constituency as well. Kent Courtney—a far-right publicist; chair of the New Orleans Birch Society chapter; and leader of the Conservative

---

Rise of Conservative Politics (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), argues that YAF served as the right-wing counterpart to the leftist youth organization Students for a Democratic Society. Schneider's work, *Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), extends Andrew's periodization and centers the rise of conservatism on Goldwater rather than YAF. Rebecca E. Klatch's *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), builds off of Andrew's formula by comparing the youth organizations on the left and right as agents of socio-political change.

[113] Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 214.

[114] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 100n.

[115] G. Edward White, "Earl Warren as Jurist," *Virginia Law Review*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (April, 1981): 473-474; Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 9; George Lewis's work argues that "massive resistance" varied in furor across the South, but that the *Brown* decision definitely "sparked" the movement. George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25.

[116] Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2004), 67.

Society of America (CSA), a right-wing activist organization—urged his readers and CSA members to join the Bircher campaign to impeach Warren.[117]

The Warren campaign illustrated the Birch Society's success at rousing grassroots activism, but it also revealed the limitations of Welch's visceral anti-communism. The failed attempt to remove Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase in 1805 set the precedent that impeachment proceedings would prove difficult, if not impossible.[118] George Sokolsky, a writer for the *Washington Post*, noted that Welch had "no conception of the procedure involved in impeachment," and an updated version of the *Blue Book* revealed that Welch acknowledged such a plan was ambitious, even foolhardy.[119] Though the "Impeach Earl Warren" campaign did not result in Warren's departure from the judiciary, it accomplished Welch's goal by mobilized a grassroots constituency to lead protests and circulate propaganda charging Warren with communist leanings. The Impeach Earl Warren campaign extended into the late 1960s, but it declined in emphasis after 1962.[120] Nevertheless, the Impeach Earl Warren movement illustrated the Birch Society's ability to stimulate local right-wing activism, and it also highlighted the ties between Welch's conspiratorial rhetoric and Sunbelt conservatism.

---

[117] George Tagge, "Conservative Leader Backs Birch Society," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 4, 1961; Virginia Wilson, "How U.S. Government Supports The Communist Revolution," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 23 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), Kent Courtney Collection (KCC), Cammie G. Henry Research Center (CGHRC), Northwestern State University (NWSU). For more on the Birch Society's campaign against Earl Warren, see: Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 109-117.

[118] Legal scholar Richard B. Lillich wrote, "The Chase affair, which took well over a year and rendered impeachment as a political weapon forever impractical, was a tangled web of law and politics. The Senate's decision, acquitting the judge on eight counts of misconduct, limited the Congressional check of impeachment and thus insulated the judiciary from any substantial direct control by other branches of government.," in "The Chase Impeachment," *The American Journal of Legal History*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1960): 49.

[119] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 100n.

[120] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 116-117.

The crusade against Warren energized grassroots right-wingers, but the campaign to impeach Warren occurred simultaneously with the controversy surrounding Welch's book *The Politician*. Following in the footsteps of ultraconservative hero Joseph McCarthy, Robert Welch considered it the duty of the Birch Society to expose "secret Communists," and in this book Welch accused former president Dwight Eisenhower of working, either willfully or unwittingly, for the communist conspiracy.[121] Only Welch's closest friends received an early copy of the manuscript during the 1950s.[122] In the opening pages Welch urged the reader to "keep the manuscript safeguarded" and wrote that it was "for your eyes only."[123] The manuscript leaked to the press; someone sent a copy to Jack Mabley of the *Chicago Daily News* in the summer of 1960.[124] Press coverage of *The Politician* in 1961 caused a media firestorm.[125] Headlines across the country read "Welch Letters: 'Communists Have One of Their Own (Ike) in Presidency'" and "Reds Influence U.S. Decisions, Welch Charges."[126]

The conspiracy theories in *The Politician* instigated a political row in 1961, which, combined with the attacks against the Warren Court, resulted in high profile assaults on the

---

[121] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 87. This quote best summarized Welch's view of Eisenhower: "I personally think [Eisenhower] has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically willing to use Communist means to help them achieve their goals, knowingly accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all of his adult life." *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, p. 287.

[122] Some of these confidants were Cardin Crain, the editor of the *Educational Reviewer*; B. E. Hutchinson, a Detroit-based banker; and William F. Buckley, Jr. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 72.

[123] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8, 1.

[124] Ibid.; Mulloy, in *The World of the John Birch Society*, 15; James E. Clayton, "John Birch 'Antis' Point Unwelcome Spotlight: Conservative Complaints," *The Washington Post*, March 26, 1961.

[125] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 15.

[126] "Welch Letters: 'Communists Have One of Their Own (Ike) in Presidency,'" *Boston Globe*, April 2, 1961; Gene Blake, "Reds Influence U.S. Decisions, Welch Charges," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1961.

Birch Society. No attack was more damaging than the series of editorials penned by William F. Buckley Jr. Buckley founded the conservative periodical *National Review* and established himself as a conservative leader through his work as an author, television host, and political analyst. Buckley started off in the inner circle of the Birch Society: he received an early copy of *The Politician* in the 1950s and continued to work with the Birch Society despite privately disavowing Welch's views.[127] By the 1960s, however, Buckley's moderate conservatism—an adherence to traditional social norms, free market economics, and a libertarian fear of centralized government—foreshadowed the ascendance of the New Right.[128]

Welch's conspiratorial language seemed out of touch in comparison to Buckley, and, more importantly, Buckley worried about the impact Welch's rhetoric might have on the conservative movement.[129] On February 13, 1962, Buckley wrote a column titled "The Question of Robert Welch" arguing that the irresponsible rhetoric of Welch and the Birch Society was "damaging the cause of anti-Communism" because Welch lacked the nuance to discern between an "active pro-communist" and an "ineffectually anti-communist liberal."[130] Buckley's editorial sparked a debate within conservative ranks because it pitted the moderate conservatives, represented by Buckley, against the far-right and Robert Welch. The column also thrust the issue of radicalism and conspiracy theories out in the open. These events did

---

[127] Buckley wrote Welch upon receiving a very early draft of *The Politician*, "I for one disavow your hypotheses. I do not even find them plausible." Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 74.

[128] Kevin M. Schultz, *Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship That Shaped the Sixties* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 21.

[129] Jonathan Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 177-178.

[130] William F. Buckley, Jr., "The Question of Robert Welch," *National Review*, Vol. 12 (February 13, 1962); Lee Edwards, *William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement* (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2010), 80-81; Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 79.

not cause the immediate ouster of the Birch Society from the conservative movement, but it foreshadowed an internecine battle between modern conservatives and radical anti-communists.[131]

Despite the rebuke from Buckley, the Birch Society and Robert Welch focused on encouraging grassroots activism in California in preparation for the 1962 gubernatorial campaign. Richard Nixon wrote to Dwight D. Eisenhower on March 5, 1962, asserting that it was imperative for the Republican Party to "take on the lunatic fringe once and for all."[132] Nixon's letter contained a hint of urgency, "I think it is vitally important that the Republican Party not carry the anchor of the reactionary right into our campaigns this fall."[133] Nixon had reason to worry about his own prospects in the election because Orange County, his home territory, boasted thirty-eight Birch Society chapters.[134] In fact, 300 Birch Society chapters dotted the California countryside.[135] Welch urged local JBS chapters to nominate members for local public offices, or at the very least try to dominate the electoral process, in an attempt to gain tangible political power. This tactic worked in California, allowing the Birch Society to gain significant influence within the California Republican Assembly (CRA).[136]

The 1962 California gubernatorial election indicated the effectiveness of the Birch Society's grassroots organizing. The election featured former Vice President Richard Nixon

---

[131] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 82.

[132] Letter from Richard Nixon to Dwight D. Eisenhower, March 5, 1962 in "Folder - Nixon, Richard M., 1962," Box 14, Special Name Series, PPP, DDEL.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 212.

[135] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 63.

[136] Ibid., 127.

against incumbent Democrat Edmund "Pat" Brown. Nixon defeated hardline conservative Joe Shell for the Republican nomination, but Shell refused to support Nixon because of the former Vice President's moderate platform.[137] Santa Clara County Republican assemblyman George W. Milias revealed, "Birch groups throughout the state [of California] were instructed to vote for Pat Brown for Governor in order to prevent that important job from falling into the hands of a Republican moderate such as Dick Nixon."[138] Nixon made matters worse by upbraiding the Birch Society in front of the CRA. In a speech in March 1962, Nixon declared, "The California Republican Assembly, acting in the great tradition of our party for individual liberties and civil rights, should use this opportunity to once and for all renounce Robert Welch and those who accept his leadership."[139] Nixon's repudiation of far-right conservatism, specifically Welch and the Birch Society, cost him the election; he lost to Pat Brown by just under 400,000 votes.[140]

Despite the fact that the Birch Society remained at the height of its influence after the 1962 California gubernatorial election, the group's downslide started in 1963 when Welch openly published his conspiratorial opus, *The Politician*.[141] The earlier controversy over Welch's book intensified when the Birch Society distributed the book in 1963 through a Birch-supported publishing house. The reaction against *The Politician* and modest sales

---

[137] Ibid., 120.

[138] Letter from George W. Milias to Leonard V. Finder, March 25, 1964, 1-2 in "Folder - Extremist Associations: John Birch Society (2)," Box 16 - Awards & Contests-Calif. Newspaper Publishers Assn., Papers of Leonard V. Finder, 1930-1969, DDEL.

[139] Attached Statement of Richard Nixon, Letter from Richard Nixon to Dwight D. Eisenhower, March 5, 1962, 2 in "Folder - Nixon, Richard M., 1962," Box 14, Special Name Series, PPP, DDEL.

[140] Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 60; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 120.

[141] Robert W. Welch, *The Politician* (Belmont, Mass.: Belmont Publishing Company, 1963).

numbers—the publisher sold roughly 200,000 by the late 1960s—indicated that many Americans rejected Welch's conspiracy theories, especially when those theories targeted a war hero like Eisenhower.[142] A Harris poll in July 1963 asked Americans if they approved or disapproved of the John Birch Society. The survey revealed that forty-two percent of Americans disapproved of the John Birch Society, while fifty-three percent put "Not Sure." Only five percent of the 1,250 adults surveyed approved of the Birch Society in the summer of 1963.[143]

Combined with Buckley's repudiation of Welch, *The Politician* started a conversation about what was permissible, and especially what was truthful, within U.S. politics. Many citizens responded to local press coverage of The John Birch Society and Welch's Eisenhower-as-communist accusations with inquiries ranging from curious to openly hostile. Conservative journalist George Todt attended a few Birch Society meetings and came to believe that the majority of Birchers disavowed Welch's conspiracy theories about Eisenhower. In 1964 Todt wrote a letter to Eisenhower, "I know, also, most of the rank and file of the JBS thoroughly disagree with Welch in his attitude about you."[144] Another individual, Jim Sinclair of Centerville, Florida, confirmed Todt's assessment. Sinclair wrote a letter to Eisenhower, noting, "I just cannot go along with this man [Welch] and his vile tactics." Worried about the potential for political fallout, Sinclair warned, "This man, his group, and others like it, must <u>not</u> be encouraged to believe that the Republican Party offers

---

[142] Griffin, *The Life and Words of Robert Welch*, 244.

[143] Louis Harris & Associates. Harris Survey, July, 1963, "On the whole do you approve or disapprove of the John Birch Society?," USHARRIS.072963.R1, (Louis Harris & Associates. Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 27, 2016.

[144] Letter from George Todt to Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 3, 1964 in "Folder - To (1)," Box 55 - Principal File, 1964, ODDE, DDLE.

hope to their cause. For the very sake of our nation as a whole, it would be far better for the Republican Party to lose the coming election than to make political bed-fellows of this rabid crowd."[145] Politicians also took the opportunity to support Eisenhower and rebuke Welch. U.S. Representative Louis C. Wyman (R-NH) forwarded Eisenhower a copy of his letter to Robert Welch in which Wyman upbraided Welch's conspiratorial views: "This sort of thing from the extreme right hurts the conservative cause rather than helps it."[146] These letters revealed that Welch's attacks against Eisenhower were unpopular, even within the Bircher ranks, which indicated that the American public was moving further away from Welch's conspiratorial rhetoric.

Eisenhower received so much mail regarding the Bircher's accusations that his staff created form letters for citizens who wrote to the White House out of concern about the Birchers accusations and Welch's book *The Politician*. The form letters, written and mailed by Brigadier General Robert L. Schulz on behalf of Eisenhower, dismissed Bircher claims as unhinged and absurd. The form letters also suggested that citizens get involved with other Eisenhower-supported groups like the Freedoms Foundation (Valley Forge, Pennsylvania) and the People-to-People Organization, Inc. (Kansas City, Missouri). According to Schulz's form letters, the Freedoms Foundation's "whole and exclusive purpose is to foster and support programs designed to further our appreciation of American liberty and the preservation of self-government through good citizenship." On the other hand, the People-to-People organization was designed to promote "better understanding between peoples throughout the

[145] Letter from Jim Sinclair to Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 30, 1963 in "Folder - Si (2)," Box 63 - Si to Ste, 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

[146] Letter from Louis C. Wyman to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 25, 1963 in "Folder - Wy," Box 69 - Wi to Y, 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

world through programs of mutual interest." In case the letter recipient was concerned about any latent subversion, Schulz clarified, "Both of these organizations are definitely opposed to Communism and are recognized by our Government and leaders of the free world."[147] Eisenhower intended for these form letters to blunt Welch's criticism, while attempting to redirect conservative voters to other right-wing organizations with less emphasis on conspiratorial thinking.

However, not all inquirers universally supported Eisenhower in the face of Robert Welch's attacks, and some even openly questioned the loyalty of the former General. Albert E. Bassett of Ontario, Canada wrote to General Eisenhower in 1963 after reading Welch's *The Politician*. Apparently seduced by the conspiratorial contentions, Bassett asserted, "If what Mr. Welch says is not true, it is your duty to have him brought to the bar of justice and made to answer for his libelous statements; if what he says is true to any considerable degree it would seem the very least you should do would be to sink into oblivion and forever keep your mouth shut."[148] Eisenhower had little recourse to counter the accusations, and the form letters often failed to placate Welch's true believers. After receiving a form letter response from Eisenhower, Robert W. Friday wrote back to Ike, "In my [original] letter I was quite specific as to the points in question in my own mind—your Communist beliefs. Your reply, however, was general, uninformative, and did not dispel nor reinforce my doubts as to your inner beliefs and philosophies."[149] Welch's conspiracy theories were intoxicating to some citizens

---

[147] Form Letter, Letter signed by Robert L. Schulz in reply to queries on Robert Welch's book, "The Politician," and other pertinent correspondence in "Folder - Memoranda (1)," Box 25 - Messages-3 (A thru Z) Messages-4 (A to G) 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

[148] Letter from Albert E. Bassett to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 31, 1963 in "Folder - Ba (6)," Box 34 - An to Bart, 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

[149] Letter from Robert W. Friday to Dwight D. Eisenhower, August 23, 1965 in "Folder - FRI (1)," Box 28 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

because, as Jonathan Shoenwald pointed out, "*The Politician* fused hundreds of disparate facts and ideas into a coherent whole, giving readers the chance to experience a eureka moment."[150] Welch's conspiracies appealed to far-right conservatives because they provided a sense of self-righteousness and a perceived monopoly on the truth.[151]

On a personal level, Eisenhower was confused and indignant about Welch's allegations of treason in *The Politician*. In a 1963 letter to Representative Ralph R. Harding (D-ID), Eisenhower pondered the mindset of Robert Welch, writing, "It is indeed difficult to understand how a man, who professes himself to be an anti-Communist, can so brazenly accuse another—whose entire life's record has been one of refutation of Communist theory, practice and purposes—of Communist tendencies or leanings."[152] The fact that some individuals wrote to Eisenhower demanding an explanation to Welch's accusations indicated the pervasiveness of conspiratorial delusions in U.S. politics. Additionally, Welch's accusations touched on the disillusion many conservatives felt toward Eisenhower's Modern Republicanism, and *The Politician* broadened the internecine Republican fight between moderates and conservatives.

National journalists added fuel to the controversies engulfing the Birch Society by investigating the organization and characterizing Welch's conspiratorial beliefs as out-of-touch with the American polity. Leonard V. Finder, the editor of the moderate *Sacramento Union*, helped lead the charge against the Birch Society during the 1960s. His newspaper

---

[150] Jonathan Schoenwald, "We Are An Action Group: The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement in the 1960s" in *The Conservative Sixties*, David Farber and Jeff Roche, ed. (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 25.

[151] Broyles, *The John Birch Society*, 153.

[152] Letter from Dwight D. Eisenhower to Congressman Ralph R. Harding, October 7, 1963 in "Folder - Ha (6)," Box 48 - Harr to Hon, 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

produced a study that compared the Birch Society with historical examples of left and right-wing extremism, like the Know-Nothings, the Ku Klux Klan, and even the Communist Party USA. Finder pointed out that the Birch Society used anti-communism as a medium for politically-motivated attacks: "While claiming to fight Communists, the majority of these factions peddle hate in one fashion or another. They are industrious in trying to cause prejudice against particular targets of other Americans, and their battles against Communists is limited usually to lip-service, the excuse for their other activities."[153] Finder contended that Welch's Birch Society detracted from the true dangers of global communism by recklessly insinuating that internal subversion was the real threat. "They raise a phantom specter, so frightening Americans that citizens become relatively indifferent to the present manifestations of the Communists' world program," Finder charged.[154] Other journalists, like Pulitzer-winning editor Thomas M. Storke of the Santa Barbara *News-Press*, led similar crusades against the Birchers, underscoring the mainstream distrust of Welch's conspiratorial anti-communism.

The deluded theories proffered by Welch and the Birch Society led to an FBI investigation concerning subversive behavior. Hoover and the FBI created files for high-profile Birchers, conducted interviews with former employees, and collected examples of Welch's literature throughout the 1950s and 1960s. For example, a report to the Boston Special Agent in Charge (SAC) revealed that the FBI received a copy of *The Politician* as early as 1959.[155] The memo described Welch as "unbalanced" and concluded that Welch's

---

[153] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

[154] Ibid, 21.

[155] *The Politician* by Robert W. Welch in Cable from Acting Chief, Security Division to SAC Boston, Massachusetts, February 11, 1959, FBI File 62-104401-8.

"hate for Communist has obscured his judgment."[156] The FBI's investigation also detailed the inner workings of Welch's headquarters in Belmont. An FBI memo described an interview with Erica Von Manowski, a woman Welch hired to do clerical work in the Birch Society's main office. Manowski's interview revealed that Welch forced her to spend four week reading Birch Society propaganda before starting her job in Belmont.[157] Apparently the indoctrination did not work because Manowski claimed she was "not in sympathy with the Society, and would probably be happy to provide a government agency with any desired information."[158] The FBI's probe of the Birch Society paled in comparison to its response to left-leaning organizations like the Students for a Democratic Society; however, The FBI's investigation, though not available to the public, aligned with the mainstream notion that Welch's conspiratorial anti-communism drifted toward subversive activity.[159]

The continuing controversy over Welch's far-right conspiracy theories again caught the attention of the man who first publically rebuked Welch: William F. Buckley Jr. In 1963 Buckley tried to appeal to the Birchers he alienated in his denunciation of Robert Welch. Buckley's newspaper column sought to differentiate between individual Birchers and Welch's conspiratorial delusions: "I have nothing against . . . the majority of those members of the John Birch Society with whom I have met or corresponded—and I judge them as

---

[156] Ibid.

[157] "Subject: Mrs. Erica Von Manowski," FBI memo from Chief, Security Division to J. Edgar Hoover, May 12, 1961, FBI File 62-104401-1253.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Jonathan Schoenwald's book on modern conservatism has a brief section discussing the FBI's investigations of the John Birch Society and Robert Welch. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 94-96.

individuals, not as members of a society."[160] Eisenhower agreed with this mentality, asserting that it was an error to indict an entire organization based on the views of one person.[161] However, by the mid-1960s Buckley viewed the Society as inseparable from Welch. He vehemently criticized Welch and the Birch Society throughout the mid-1960s, doubling down on his 1962 condemnation of Welch.

Buckley grew to view Welch's conspiratorial ramblings, and the Society's apparent willingness to accept them, as a clear and present danger to the nascent conservative movement.[162] In 1965 Buckley wrote an article criticizing the Society's membership for accepting Welch's unfounded allegations. Buckley questioned, "One continues to wonder how it is that the membership of the John Birch Society tolerates such paranoid and unpatriotic drivel."[163] Though Buckley viewed the Birch Society and Robert Welch as allies in the fight for conservative values during the late 1950s and early 1960s, he eventually conceded that Welch's delusions were inextricably tied to the Birch Society. Welch constituted a threat to the ongoing redefinition of conservatism, especially after the controversy over *The Politician*. Buckley's relationship with the Birch Society mirrored the organization's trajectory in conservative politics from fringe participant to ostracized outcast.[164] The controversies that surrounded Welch forced Buckley to cut ties with the Birch

---

[160] William F. Buckley, Jr., "Goldwater and the Birch Society," *Los Angeles Times*, November 4, 1963; "On the Right: Many Tie Birchites' Worst to Goldwater," *Boston Globe*, November 3, 1963.

[161] Letter from Robert L. Schultz to Mrs. June Wise, November 11, 1963, 1 in "Folder - Wi (6)," Box 69 - Wi to Y, 1963, Principal File, ODDE, DDEL.

[162] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 78.

[163] William F. Buckley, Jr., "Birch Society Drivel," *Boston Globe*, August 5, 1965.

[164] Regarding the Birchers in the late 1950s and early 1960s, D. J. Mulloy noted, "One of the things Buckley and Welch's very public contretemps revealed . . . was that the conservative house contained many rooms, and that, for now, at least, the Birchers were sitting relatively comfortably in one of them." Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 82.

founder. This repudiation of Welch and the Society's membership marked a crucial turning point for the Birch Society as mainstream conservatives and the GOP moved decisively away from anti-communist rhetoric.

The ostracism of the Birch Society even influenced other anti-communist stalwarts, like Fred Schwarz, the leader of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade. Welch and Schwarz shared a similar constituency of anti-communist evangelicals, and Welch encouraged Birch Society members to support Schwarz's anti-communist schools.[165] Yet, according to scholar Kevin Kruse, "Schwarz bristled at any suggestion that his organization had anything in common with the increasingly marginalized Birchers."[166] Eventually Schwarz distanced himself from Robert Welch and the Birch Society's conspiratorial conservatism. The fact that far-right conservatives and leaders of the modern conservative movement, like Schwarz and Buckley, respectively, repudiated Welch and the Birch Society indicated that the conspiratorial views of the Birch Society were increasingly viewed as a political liability by the mid-1960s.

The banishment of Welch and the Birch Society from the conservative movement occurred immediately after the presidential election of 1964.[167] Goldwater's presidential campaign in the 1964 election galvanized the right wing of the GOP, prompting a flurry of ultraconservative activity. Robert Welch characterized Goldwater favorably, writing, "[Goldwater] is absolutely sound in his Americanism, has the political and moral courage to stand by his Americanist principles, and in my opinion can be trusted to stand by them until

---

[165] Kruse, *One Nation Under God*, 155.

[166] Ibid., 155-156.

[167] This is the consensus view among historians that study the Birch Society. McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 218-223; Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 102; Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 98.

hell freezes over."[168] Despite such adulation, Welch instructed the Birch Society to stay out of the election in any official capacity. The Birch Society maintained a façade of neutrality during the election while encouraging Birchers to get involved, as individuals, in Goldwater's 1964 campaign.

The Birch Society maintained its apolitical charade during the 1964 presidential election, but its presence, and especially its members, helped influence the outcome. George Todt marveled at the number of GOP workers present in the John Birch Society. Todt remembered how repudiating the far-right cost Nixon the governor's seat in 1962, and he worried that ostracizing the Birchers during the 1964 election would similarly damage Goldwater's chances. In a letter to Eisenhower Todt wrote, "I don't like to have them read out of the Republican Party. I want our side to win, not lose, at the polls. Dick Nixon ordered these people to go in 1962—and they did—and he lost the race for governor."[169] Goldwater's flirtations with far-right groups—not to mention his "Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice" speech—made him a target for liberal Republicans and Democrats. Additionally, segregationist southern Democrats like George Wallace and Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC) supported Goldwater's candidacy; Thurmond even switched his party allegiance to the GOP to campaign for Goldwater across the South.[170] By the time the Republican convention occurred in the summer of 1964, the most common characterization of Goldwater was that of an extremist.[171]

---

[168] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 109.

[169] Letter from George Todt to Dwight D. Eisenhower, October 3, 1964 in "Folder - To (1)," Box 55 - Principal File, 1964, ODDE, DDEL.

[170] Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012), 3, 166-167.

[171] Claude Sittons, "Goldwater Gets Backing in the South: Govs. Faubus, Wallace, and Johnson to Bolt Ticket—Others Undecided," *New York Times*, August 16, 1964. For a more in depth look at the election of

Goldwater had previously rebuked Welch's accusations against Eisenhower, but his refusal to repudiate the entire Birch Society—Goldwater said he would "welcome their votes"—damaged his political aspirations.[172] Political pressure forced Goldwater into a lukewarm denunciation of the far-right in an attempt to unify the divided Republican Party, yet he still refrained from directly mentioning the Birch Society.[173] While Goldwater turned a blind eye to the Birchers, his fellow Republicans, led by Governors Nelson Rockefeller and Mark Hatfield, officially rebuked the politics of right-wing radicalism at the 1964 Republican National Convention.[174] The Democrats passed a resolution condemning the Birchers at their own convention.[175] Clearly many mainstream politicians from both parties thought the conspiratorial views of the Birch Society, and especially Robert Welch, crossed the line of political propriety. The divided response to the Birch Society at the 1964 GOP convention reflected the national mood. A July 1964 Gallup poll asked voters if the Republicans should or should not have condemned the Birch Society by name. Thirty-three percent agreed with the GOP's condemnation of the Birch Society, thirty-five percent disagreed, and thirty percent were unsure.[176] However, voters turned away from the Birch Society as the election

---

1964, see: Robert David Johnson, *All the Way with LBJ: The 1964 Presidential Election* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Perlstein, *Before the Storm*.

[172] Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 190; "Barry Still Loves the Birchers," *Chicago Daily Defender*, November 1, 1965; "Goldwater Says Birch Society Isn't Dangerous: Calls Robert Welch an Extremist and Doubts He Is True Leader of Group," *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 1961.

[173] Charles Mohrs, "Goldwater, In a Unity Bid, Rejects Extremists' Aid; Eisenhower is 'Satisfied,'" *New York Times*, August 13, 1964.

[174] Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 380, 383.

[175] Leonard V. Finder, "Extremism: Historically and the John Birch Society," *The Sacramento Union*, October-November, 1964, 27 in "Folder - AP-1 Finder, Leonard V., 4-19-65," Box 1 - 1965 Principal File, PPP, DDEL.

[176] Gallup Organization. Gallup Poll (AIPO), July, 1964, "Do you think that the (1964) Republican platform should or should not have condemned the John Birch Society by name?," USGALLUP.64-695.R15C, (Gallup

neared. A poll taken by the Anti-Defamation League in October showed that forty-nine percent of Americans disapproved of the Birch Society, while only fourteen percent approved of the Birchers. Only two percent of the 1,975 people polled claimed to "strongly approve" of the Birch Society.[177]

Goldwater's linkages to the far-right alienated many voters, and the Arizona Senator lost to incumbent Lyndon Johnson by sixteen million votes.[178] However, conservatives turned Lyndon Johnson's landslide victory over Goldwater in 1964 into a rallying point for right-wing activists.[179] Journalist Donald Janson of the *New York Times* observed that ultraconservative groups like the Birch Society and Liberty Lobby were ecstatic about the turnout for Goldwater because over 27 million voters pulled a ballot for a true conservative. Kent Courtney's Conservative Society of America distributed bumper stickers in New Orleans that proclaimed "26,000,000 Americans Can't Be Wrong!"[180] Courtney declared, "The conservatives demonstrated that they could exert enough pressure and they could work

---

Organization. Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 27, 2016.

[177] Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. Anti-Semitism in the United States Survey, 1964, October, 1964, "What is your opinion of the John Birch Society, do you strongly approve of what it stands for, approve somewhat, disapprove somewhat, or strongly disapprove?," USNORC.64BNAI.R09A, (National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago. Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 28, 2016.

[178] Alice V. McGillivray, Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004: John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 22.

[179] Mary J. Brennan argues that divisions within the Republican Party, plus the distaste for social liberalism, prompted a rebellion against the GOP's Eastern Establishment that culminated in Goldwater's nomination, in *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina press, 1995). Robert Alan Goldberg's political biography of Barry Goldwater, *Barry Goldwater*, revealed how the Arizona senator's upbringing instilled conservative ideals, which appealed to Sunbelt conservatives. Rick Perlstein focuses on the grassroots movement that propelled Barry Goldwater to the Republican nomination, in *Before the Storm*.

[180] Donald Janson, "Rightist Buoyed By the Election; Open New Drives" *New York Times*, Monday, November 23, 1964 in "Folder - Ha (1)," Box 38 - Principal File, 1964, ODDE, DDEL.

hard enough to do an education job thorough enough to capture control of Republican nominating convention."[181] Indeed, the election of 1964 helped crystallize the growth of modern conservatism, leading to an ascendance that continued through the rest of the twentieth century. However, the 1964 election was a disaster for the Birch Society because Goldwater lost largely based on his association with extremism. As D.J. Mulloy noted, "Birch Society members had not just been pushed to the margins of the conservative movement; they had become poster boys for a political syndrome, and exemplars of a very particular strain of American political extremism."[182]

Rather than sounding the death knell for conservatism, Goldwater's defeat in 1964 prompted a surge among conservatives. The Birch Society briefly experienced membership growth through its connection to Goldwater's grassroots networks, despite the overwhelming repudiation of extremism at the polls.[183] This surge did not last, however, and by 1968 the Birch Society had hemorrhaged over a third of its membership.[184] The organization limped into the following decades—vestiges of the Birch Society still exist—but it never again achieved the influence of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The 1964 election and the disavowal of Welch and the Birch Society pushed the GOP away from far-right politics, but

---

[181] Ibid.

[182] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 103-104.

[183] Lisa McGirr noted: "By the end of 1965, its estimated membership in California stood at some 12,000 to 15,000 organized into as many as 1,200 chapters, a substantial gain from the estimated 700 chapters and 10,000 members the society could boast before Goldwater's loss." McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 218.

[184] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 184.

it simultaneously galvanized grassroots activism and highlighted the impact of right-wing ideologies.[185]

Robert Welch and the Birch Society led a far-right movement that underscored the disillusion that many conservatives felt toward liberalism and party politics. The Birch Society networked with numerous other right-wingers and organizations, including Fred Schwarz and the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, Kent Courtney and the Conservative Society of America, Willis Carto and the Liberty Lobby, and Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade. These groups coordinated with the Birch Society and identified with Welch's anti-communist, polemical rhetoric. This nationwide network of far-right organizations provided a platform to speak out against party politics and liberalism, which animated a grassroots conservative constituency that continued to impact the political arena even after the Birch Society's decline in the late 1960s.[186]

The strict fiscal conservatism embodied by Robert Welch also linked the Birch Society to the flourishing business conservative movement of the mid-twentieth century. Welch's prominence in the National Association of Manufacturers put him in contact with other like-minded right-wingers, many of whom worked with the Birch Society in some capacity. The members of the Birch Society's national council underscored the close ties

---

[185] Geoffrey M. Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 122.

[186] This is the consensus argument regarding the grassroots impact of the Birch Society. Lisa McGirr argue, "The sentiments, grievances, and ideas the organization helped to define and mobilize, however, lived on and were championed by organizations and political leaders who thrust forth a new populist conservatism," McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 223; D. J. Mulloy noted, "The Birch Society had demonstrated that there was a large, active, and highly motivated constituency for conservatism even in the midst—or perhaps, because of—liberalism's seeming ascendancy," Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 189; Jonathan Schoenwald wrote, "The JBS provided one of the first opportunities for conservatives to join a grassroots movement," Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 98.

between Welch's ultraconservatism and the business activist movement. The Society's national council was dominated by business titans like John T. Brown, Vice President of the Falk Corporation and longtime member of the NAM board of directors, and William J. Grede, former president of NAM and chairman of Grede Foundries, Inc. In fact, sixteen out of the twenty-seven council members listed in *The Blue Book* came from the business community.[187] Concerning the rise of business activism, Kim Phillips-Fein observed, "The free-market movement that had started in the 1930s grew and gained momentum against the backdrop of McCarthyism and the broader climate of anti-Communist politics."[188] Welch epitomized this combination of anti-communism and free market ideologies, and the influence of manufacturers in the Birch Society illustrated how the far-right aligned with the free market economics of the business movement.[189]

The Birch Society's strength in southern and Sunbelt states placed the organization within the geographic center of the rising conservative movement. Aside from its proclivity for conspiracy theory, the Birch Society fit perfectly within this mold of modern Sunbelt conservatism. The Birch Society was particularly strong in states like Texas and California, as indicated by the group's influence on the California gubernatorial election of 1962.[190] The rhetoric and intent of the Impeach Earl Warren campaign mirrored the resistance of southern

---

[187] Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*, 169-172.

[188] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 58.

[189] My conclusion in this paragraph is heavily influenced by Kim Phillips-Fein's scholarship on the rise of business conservatism. Phillips-Fein wrote, "All of the institutions of American society—not just the far right—joined in the anti-Communist purge of the early 1950s. But business conservatives helped drive some of the most extreme parts of the reaction." Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, 58.

[190] Broyles, *The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest*, 3; Epstein and Forster, *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966*, 84

segregationists, and billboards with Confederate flags urged local voters to participate in the Bircher Society's impeachment movement.[191] In the Southwest Sunbelt Welch's association with far-right ministers like Schwarz and Hargis connected the Birch Society with the region's rising tide of evangelical fundamentalism.[192] Welch's anti-liberal, anti-communist, fiscal ultraconservatism held special appeal for the Sunbelt constituency, indicating that Welch and the Birch Society helped shape the region's right-wing ascendance.[193]

Despite the Birch Society's appeal to right-wingers in the Sunbelt, the conservative movement moved decisively away from Welch's anti-communist conspiracy theories after the 1964 election. Welch and the Birch Society served as a foil for mainstream conservatives, which helped legitimize the movement spearheaded by men like Buckley and Ronald Reagan.[194] Buckley rightly viewed the Birch Society as a threat to the legitimacy of the conservative movement, and his columns rejecting Welch's conspiracy theories signaled the desire to separate the far-right from the responsible right. The GOP followed suit, eschewing the conspiratorial radicalism of Robert Welch and adopting a conservatism focused on "law

---

[191] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 116-117.

[192] For example, Darren Dochuk noted that G. Archer Weniger, political activist and pastor of Foothill Boulevard Baptist Church, regularly worked with the John Birch Society despite never officially joining. Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 232.

[193] Sean Cunningham noted that "membership in the John Birch Society grew during the 1950s and early 1960s, especially in fiercely patriotic and defense-oriented Sunbelt states such as California and Texas," Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 62; Lisa McGirr's work, in particular, details the prominence of the John Birch Society and its influence on the politics of California. McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 75-79.

[194] The argument that the Birch Society legitimized mainstream conservatism by acting as a foil or a buffer for the Republican Right represents the consensus historical view. Jonathan Schoenwald pioneered this argument, noting that the presence of extremism "made the [GOP] seem more judicious, since the boundary between the kooks and responsible conservatives was officially delineated," Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 260; D. J. Mulloy wrote, "If the society's ostracism from the mainstream of the conservative movement seemed complete by 1968, this did not mean that Welch and his colleagues had made no contribution to it. On the contrary, they had played an essential role in the revitalization of conservatism both as a political philosophy and as a vehicle for the attainment of practical political power in the United States," Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 189.

and order," family-values issues. Politicians like Reagan championed this new brand of conservatism and rejected the far-right organizations, like the Birch Society, that helped build grassroots conservative constitutencies.

Robert W. Welch and the John Birch Society clearly did not represent mainstream political values, but Welch's ideologies highlighted a strain of conservative dissatisfaction with Republican Party moderation during the mid-twentieth century. The rhetoric and activism of the Birch Society illustrated multiple linkages between the Radical Right and mainstream conservatism, even though the number of official society members was relatively small. The Birch Society highlighted the interconnected nature of the conservative movement by linking business conservatism, the Sunbelt's right wing, and anti-communist radicalism. The Birch Society faded along with the effectiveness of anti-communist rhetoric, but Welch's reliance on conspiracy theories revealed the continued efficacy of fear as a political tool.[195] Though few people openly supported Welch's most extreme conspiracies, Welch and the Birch Society successfully used anti-communist conspiracy theories to create a grassroots movement that galvanized conservative constituencies across the country.

[195] D. J. Mulloy's work highlighted the connections between U.S. political culture and conspiratorial rhetoric: "The Society also made a significant and lasting contribution to America's Cold War and conspiracy cultures, often simply by embodying and exemplifying already-existing tensions in both." Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 189.

Chapter Two

The Crusading Watchman: Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade

"Your attendance, help and prayer are needed to fill each auditorium so that America may be spared a communist grave!"[1] Displayed prominently on the announcement flyer for "Operation: Midnight Ride," this exhortation underscored fundamentalist minister Billy James Hargis's urgency to fight against the perceived dangers of communism. The "Operation: Midnight Ride" speaking tour—named after Paul Revere's famous dash through New England on the eve of the American Revolution—featured Hargis and General Edwin A. Walker, two radical political firebrands of the mid-twentieth century. Hargis encouraged local activists to enlist regional anti-communist groups, such as the John Birch Society, to gather a crowd for each meeting, and he noted that "every local patriotic group and fundamentalist Bible-believing church should . . . promote this rally." Most importantly, Hargis informed his constituency, "something dramatic needs to be done in America today to get people interested in the anti-communist and conservative movements again."[2] That "something dramatic" ended up being a month-long series of far-right rallies in 1963 that emphasized the perceived dangers of communism.

This chapter examines Billy James Hargis as a key figure within both far-right conservatism and Sunbelt fundamentalist evangelicalism. Utilizing a topical approach clarifies Hargis's role because the rigid chronology of presidential elections and electoral

---

[1] "Operation: Midnight Ride" Flyer in "Folder 13 - Operation Midnight Ride 1963," Box 4, Billy James Hargis Papers (BJHP), University of Arkansas Special Collections, Fayetteville, Arkansas (UASC).

[2] Letter from Billy James Hargis to Mrs. Gerald Tanner, February 18, 1963 in "Folder 13 - Operation Midnight Ride 1963," Box 4, BJHP, UASC.

politics did not dominate his activism. Hargis advocated direct political action, like mass mailers or voter canvassing, only in rare instances; instead, he provided ideological arguments against liberalism through his ultraconservative ministry, the Christian Crusade. As a result, this chapter's methodology focuses on topical elements of Hargis's activism like the creation and structure of the Christian Crusade, Hargis's ideological arguments against liberalism, and his infrequent examples of direct activism. Hargis deployed Christianity as his key weapon in the fight against communism and post-war liberalism, which he viewed as the same thing. During a small-town town revival Hargis exhorted, "I am a watchman on the wall, by my choice and by the choice of God."[3] This "watchman" mentality emboldened Hargis to agitate for ultraconservative social and political values because Hargis believed internal communist subversion was gradually poisoning the United States.

Hargis and the Christian Crusade capitalized on anti-communist anxieties during the Cold War to fight against post-war liberalism, and Hargis played a critical role in bringing far-right political and religious values to Sunbelt constituencies.[4] An analysis of his early life illustrates how his rural upbringing in a Protestant fundamentalist family influenced his traditionalist leanings and anti-communist conspiracies. Growing up in the Great Depression imparted lessons of self-reliance and independence, but his educational career floundered and Hargis grew to distrust educators and federal influence in public education. Ordained as a

---

[3] Billy James Hargis, "A Watchman on the Wall," 20 in "Folder 13 - Operation Midnight Ride 1963," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[4] M. J. Heale summarized the history of anti-communism in the United States: "From the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century there have been Americans who have held 'communism' to be not only a foreign ideology but one that has so far invaded the United States as to threaten the unique experiment in republican freedom," in *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), xi. Hargis tapped into this living tradition during the mid-twentieth century as an avenue for fighting against social and political liberalism.

minister in 1943, Hargis joined the growing chorus of right-wing evangelicals concerned about the subversion of traditional social norms and the threat of global communism. In 1947 Hargis formed the Christian Crusade to foment a far-right movement through mass media outreach and ideological activism. The Christian Crusade forged a web of connectivity that coordinated Hargis with other influential figures and groups along the right-wing fringe, like Robert W. Welch and the John Birch Society.

This ultraconservative network increased Hargis's presence within the Radical Right, and by the early 1960s the Christian Crusade played a prominent role in far-right activism. Hargis founded the Christian Crusade as a tax-exempt, education organization, and he focused on ideological arguments in order to maintain the Christian Crusade's apolitical façade. The crusade did less political organizing in favor of producing and disseminating philosophical critiques through the group's internal publishing house. An examination of Hargis's ideologies underscores how the Oklahoma minister conflated communism with any organization or issue on the moderate-to-left side of the political spectrum, including welfare programs, civil rights, Cold War diplomacy with the Soviet Union, and global organizations like the United Nations. Hargis also took direct action to support his beliefs by flying Bibles into East Germany via long-range balloons, leading the charge against sexual education in public schools, and joining the smear campaign against the civil rights movement and the National Council of Churches. Hargis's activism caught the eye of John F. Kennedy and his administration, and the IRS revoked the Christian Crusade's tax exemption the organization's involvement in direct political action. Hargis's crusade limped into the 1970s until a sex scandal destroyed the crumbling remains of the Christian Crusade.

Hargis and the Christian Crusade exemplified the political and religious activism of Sunbelt ultraconservatives during the mid-twentieth century. Hargis networked with right-wing politicians like Congressman James B. Utt (R-CA) and other far-right organizations like the John Birch Society, illustrating that Hargis coordinated with the broad conservative movement during mid-twentieth century. Ultimately, Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade highlighted the rise of ultraconservative advocacy and the persistence of anti-communism and conspiracy theories, which provides an approach through which to view the wider Cold War political spectrum.

Billy James Hargis's early family life and hardscrabble upbringing created the climate for both his religious fundamentalism and ultraconservative political views. Born on August 3, 1925, in Texarkana, a town spanning the Texas-Arkansas border, Billy James was orphaned by his biological family and adopted by J. E. and Louise Fowler Hargis. The family was too poor to afford a radio, but young Billy James embraced the Hargis tradition of "daily Bible reading and [singing] weekly community Gospel songs."[5] Thinking back on his youth, Hargis reminisced, "I can still see my father waiting up for me reading the Bible, sometimes reading aloud while Mother crocheted on the other side of the open gas stove."[6] Billy James Hargis received baptism by immersion at the age of nine, and he thanked his parents for

[5] "Hargis, Billy James," *Current Biography 1972*, 202 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[6] Fernando Penabaz, *"Crusading Preacher from the West:" The Story of Billy James Hargis*, (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publishing, 1965), 40. Penabaz's biography is a friendly account written by a fellow conspiratorial anti-communist. Most of the biographical parts of Penabaz's account come from interviews with Hargis or Hargis's own sermons.

making him "Christ-conscious."[7] Despite his tender age, Hargis recalled, "I knew what I was doing. I really and truly accepted Christ as my Lord and Saviour [sic] at that time."[8]

Undoubtedly Hargis's parents influenced his religious nature, but during his childhood he gained a respect for hard work and self-reliance. The economic hardships of the Great Depression required Hargis to contribute to his family's well-being at a young age. J. E. Hargis worked as a truck driver during the Depression, but Billy James's mother Louise could not work because she was wracked by "the crippling kind" of arthritis.[9] By age ten Hargis tended the family livestock, and at age twelve he took a job as a soda jerk to offset the costs of his education. In later years Hargis noted his childhood disinterest in school; he chalked it up to his "energetic" mind.[10] Hargis graduated high school at age 16, but his family history of bootstrapping and poverty instilled a fierce independence and taught him to value experience over formal education. Years later Hargis proclaimed, "I make no pretense of having a great formal education. What little knowledge I have has come from private study and the college of hard knocks. Many common folks, like me, are familiar with this school."[11]

After graduating high school Hargis eschewed formal education in favor of entering the ministerial ranks. He spent a couple of years at the unaccredited Ozark Bible College in Bentonville, Arkansas, but he failed to finish his degree when his money ran short. He

---

[7] Penabaz, *Crusading Preacher from the West*, 40-42.

[8] Ibid., 42.

[9] Ibid., 40.

[10] Ibid., 41.

[11] Billy James Hargis, "Souvenir Booklet of the Billy James Hargis Revival!" (Sapulpa, Okla.: Christian Echoes National Ministry), 7 in "Folder 13 - Appearances 1960-1983," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

returned to Texarkana where he was ordained in 1943 by the pastors and elders of his childhood place of worship, Rose Christian Church.[12] During his courses to become a minister Hargis claimed, "This was the first time in my life that I was interested in studying."[13] Hargis collected additional degrees over the course of his ministerial career. In the 1950s he wrote a thesis, titled "Communism, American Style," and received a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Theology from Burton Seminary in Colorado Springs, a school often characterized by mainstream educators and theologians as a "degree mill."[14] He also received an honorary doctorate from the Defender Seminary in Puerto Rico, which was "founded by well-known pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic evangelist" Gerald B. Winrod.[15] The subject of Hargis's thesis, an alleged vast communist conspiracy, and his ties to Winrod, a notable far-right conservative, foreshadowed the political tilt in Hargis's ministry.[16]

Hargis's rural, religious upbringing influenced his far-right, anti-communist political ideologies, and his rhetoric epitomized the radical conservatism that permeated the Sunbelt during the mid-twentieth century. Hargis conjured the imagery of the hellfire and brimstone preachers from the Great Awakening, and he employed his sermons as a counterpoint to the socio-political liberalism of the mid-twentieth century.[17] In one radio broadcast, Hargis

---

[12] "Hargis, Billy James," in *Current Biography 1972*, 202 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[13] Penabaz, *Crusading Preacher from the West*, 49.

[14] "Hargis, Billy James," *Current Biography 1972*, 202 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1. BJHP.

[15] Reese Cleghorn, "Turn Ye Radio On! Old Elixirs Are Selling Better Now," *South Today: A Digest of Southern Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1969): 3 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC. For more on Gerald B. Winrod, see: Leo P. Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1983).

[16] Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right.*

[17] Darren Dochuk noted that this anti-liberal sentiment permeated the evangelical right-wing: "Faced with a fragmented culture, in which their beliefs seemed at odds with dominant liberal viewpoints, southern

raged: "I'm very mad. I'm mad at what's happening to my country. I am mad, ladies and gentlemen, because our nation today is bankrupt of political leadership."[18] Utilizing what Oklahomans called "bawl and jump" preaching, Hargis "[used] vigorous gestures and a shouting voice to the point of exhaustion and hoarseness."[19] Hargis cut an imposing figure—he stood over six feet tall—but his used-car-salesman appearance gave his ministry the appearance of both legitimacy and spectacle. Opponents of Hargis frequently mocked his "shaking jowls" and "porcine appearance."[20] Contemporary analyst Reese Cleghorn described Hargis's style as authoritative and emphatic, and he considered Hargis "the most important of the evangelists on the radical right, and therefore one of the most influential voices in the South."[21] A turning point for Hargis occurred when he sought the council of an older pastor, A. B. Reynolds. During the meeting Hargis was "awakened to the curse of communism" as Reynolds told Hargis that he might be "God's man to fight this satanic evil

---

evangelicals began constructing an alternative system of churches and schools, and proclaiming their brand of Christian nationalism as a counterweight to progressive notions of citizenship," in Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), xx.

[18] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, untitled, undated, 2 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC; For more info on the angry populism of the modern right, see: Dominic Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right* (New York: Knopf, 2011).

[19] "Hargis, Billy James" in *Current Biography 1972*, 204 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1; BJHP, UASC.

[20] Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 172.

[21] Reese Cleghorn, "Turn Ye Radio On! Old Elixirs Are Selling Better Now," *South Today: A Digest of Southern Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1969): 3 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC, 3.

that has gotten into our churches!"[22] This pivotal moment transformed Hargis from a rural evangelical pastor to a crusader "concerned about communism and religious apostacy."[23]

Evangelical fundamentalism and anti-communism formed the foundation for Hargis's political ideologies—all other principles were filtered through this prism. Hargis considered liberalism, including religious liberalism an adjunct of communism, and he used anti-communism as a mechanism to stir up the conservative base and de-claw liberal reactions. Hargis, in line with men like Robert Welch, believed that a person not advocating hardline conservatism generally fell into one of these three categories: "Communists, their sympathizers, and uninformed dupes."[24] Hargis's binary worldview, where liberals and moderates were redefined as communists, reduced his willingness to entertain opposing points of view. Accordingly, any opposition to ultraconservatism was viewed as subversive. For example, when President John F. Kennedy admonished the far-right conspiracy theorists in a November 1961 speech, Hargis accused Kennedy of "doing exactly what communist conspirators have urged their followers to pressure him into doing."[25] Anti-communism went beyond a Cold War imperative for Hargis and instead constituted a stringent barometer for judging the U.S. political spectrum.

---

[22] "Hargis, Billy James" in *Current Biography 1972*, 203 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1; BJHP, UASC.

[23] Penabaz, *Crusading Preacher from the West*, 55.

[24] Billy James Hargis, "The Truth About Peaceful Coexistance: An Important Message from Dr. Billy James Hargis (IMBJH)" February 1, 1960, 2 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[25] Proposed Newspaper Article, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: "'Kennedy Raps Rightists,'" December 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against February 1961-January 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

Hargis's entire worldview was a black/white binary, usually seen through the lens of communism versus anti-communism or the Christian world pitted against secularism, atheism, and modernity. Hargis preached traditional fundamentalist tenets. In one pamphlet Hargis explained that his ministry "believes in life after death, in the virgin birth of Christ and in all of the teachings of the Scriptures." Defiantly, Hargis continued, "We practice New Testament Christianity and make no apology for it."[26] When posed a question about the spiritual integrity of U.S. society, Hargis replied, "There are no two ways about this question. We are either pro-Christ or pro-Communist."[27] Hargis further demanded, "All the Liberals in Washington who profess to be Christians must give up their double-faced hypocrisy and take their stand either with Marx or with Jesus Christ. You can't have your cake and eat it too." Hargis also believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, and took a hard line against the ecumenical movement that thrived in the mid-twentieth century. Ecumenical organizations, like the National Council of Churches, promoted greater cooperation and shared beliefs between Christian sects while simultaneously advocating political liberal platforms like human rights and redistributive economics.[28] In contrast, historian Darren Dochuk wrote that "southern evangelicalism . . . moved from the margins of the southern Bible Belt to the mainstream"

---

[26] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "Facts Concerning the Church of the Christian Crusade: A Sincere Effort to Practice New Testament Christianity" (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, undated), 4 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[27] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "The Cross or the Sickle?: Christianity vs. Communism in a Changing World," undated in "Folder 27 - BJH Writings - International Communism, ca. 1966," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[28] For more on the broader ecumenical movement, see: Thomas E. Fitzgerald, *The Ecumenical Movement: An Introductory History* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004); John Nurser, *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005); Nicholas Sagovsky, *Ecumenism, Christian Origins, and the Practice of Communion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Heather A. Warren, *Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920-1948* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

during the Cold War era, allowing Hargis to tap into a constituency immersed in an uncompromising, right-wing zeitgeist.[29]

Paranoia and arrogance were character traits that influenced Hargis's behavior and platforms, especially his conspiratorial leanings. Julian Williams, the Educational Director of the Christian Crusade, recounted a story to the FBI that exemplified Hargis's emotional state. Williams had fetched some reading material for Hargis, which Hargis read and then absent-mindedly placed in his desk. A short while later, Hargis demanded the same material again, insisting that the documents had been re-filed. Williams described the scene, remembering how Hargis "stormed about the filing room, tore through the cabinets, and tongue-lashed everyone within range."[30] Upon discovering the files within his own desk, Hargis insisted that someone had planted them there. Williams finished off the anecdote by noting, "He is incapable of admitting a mistake."[31] Hargis's paranoia contributed to his belief that a grand communist conspiracy was subverting the United States. His fundamentalist evangelical beliefs sharpened these anxieties by casting the struggle against the communist conspiracy as a matter of life or death, both literally and spiritually.

Hargis contended that the threat of communism necessitated the influence of religion in politics because, as he saw it, a decline in morality was one of the reasons why the United States was "losing" the Cold War. This mindset aligned Hargis and the Christian Crusade with right-wing civil liberties groups—like Protestants and Other Americans United—that believed "the First Amendment mandated the separation of church and state but not the

---

[29] Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, xv.

[30] FBI Agent Gordon, "Report No. 10—The Christian Crusade: Billy James Hargis" undated, 2 in "Folder 4 - FBI Files Part 2," Box , BJHP, UASC.

[31] Ibid.

separation of religion and politics."[32] At the 1964 Christian Crusade convention Hargis embraced his religious radicalism, roaring, "God cannot bless a middle-of-the-road moderate. Christ taught us extremism—there is no middle ground."[33] This mindset led Hargis to insist that preachers had a responsibility to delve into politics when necessary. "Ministers must be informed. God expects them to warn people on his behalf," Hargis averred, "If we fail to do so, the blood of the innocent will be upon the hands of the watchman who failed to inform his people."[34] In general terms, Hargis saw ministers as arbiters of both faith and politics. Hargis more explicitly argued that the ministers-cum-watchmen needed to warn their constituents about the communist conspiracy and its fellow-travelling liberals.[35] This combination of fundamentalism and far-right conservatism laid the foundation for Hargis's Christian Crusade ministry and his platform of communism versus anti-communism.

Billy James Hargis believed that God's will led him to create a ministry founded on the principles of fundamentalism and ultraconservatism, which he argued would "fight communism and religious apostasy and lead God's people out of complacence and apathy."[36] Hargis founded Christian Echoes Ministry (CEM) in 1947 while serving his last pastorate in the First Christian Church of Sapulpa, Oklahoma. More popularly known as the Christian Crusade, Christian Echoes served as the umbrella corporation for Hargis's activism—all

---

[32] Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), xvi.

[33] "Gospel According to Billy" *Newsweek*, August 25, 1964 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[34] Radio Script #1, "God Says Warn Them For Me," undated, 2 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[35] Ibid., 4.

[36] Penabaz, *Crusading Preacher from the West*, 56.

publications, radio broadcasts, and speaking tours were funded through CEM. Hargis asserted that the Christian Crusade was "a movement of the American homes . . . [and] not a political or denominational movement."[37] However, Hargis's religious fundamentalism inextricably meshed with his political conservatism. The goals of the Christian Crusade were three-fold: 1) protect the orthodox Christian ideals upon which Hargis believed the United States was founded, 2) "aggressively" oppose any group of person "whose actions or words endorse or aid the philosophies of Leftists, Socialists, or Communists," and 3) "defend and perpetuate the true Gospel of Jesus Christ."[38] The overarching objective of the Crusade was to create a nationwide movement of Christian Crusade chapters that would advocate conservative socio-political platforms, fight against internal subversion, and promote evangelical Protestantism.

In terms of grassroots organizing and publishing, Hargis's Crusade proved successful, if only during the 1950s and 1960s. Hargis used multiple mediums to disseminate his far-right ideologies, notably through print and radio with the occasional television spot. The Crusade received its colloquial moniker from its monthly serial, *The Christian Crusade*, and Hargis also published a newsletter called the *Weekly Crusader*. Christian Crusade Publishing produced a plethora of handbills, pamphlets, and books written by varying far-right authors, but mostly by Hargis himself. Hargis claimed that the Christian Crusade had more than 100,000 steady contributors with 110,000 subscriptions for the periodicals, which he boasted were actually viewed by half a million Americans.[39] Contemporary listeners to Hargis's

---

[37] Billy James Hargis, "Plans for Organizing Christian Crusade Chapters," undated in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[38] "Hargis, Billy James," in *Current Biography 1972*, 202 in "Folder 1 - Biographical Materials," Box 1, BJHP.

[39] Anti-Defamation League, "Rev. Billy James Hargis: The Christian Crusade" *Facts*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (April 1962): 230 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

radio broadcasts heard a "wailing, wheezing, impassioned presence on more than 500 radio stations and 250 television stations at his apex."[40]

Hargis excelled at fundraising—he ended his broadcasts and articles by urging people to pray for America and donate to the Christian Crusade. In one particularly infelicitous radio address Hargis urged listeners to "remember Christian Crusade in your will."[41] Hargis "understood the potential impact of direct address via mass media," and historian Heather Hendershot defined him as a "skillful—if unscrupulous—fundraiser."[42] The vast majority of donations ranged from $1.00 to $10.00, but a few gave $100.00 and there was even the occasional $1,000.00 donation.[43] Hargis emphasized the importance of multiple small donations—a strategy in grassroots activism that mirrored the campaigns of other contemporary far-right organizations.[44] Hendershot underscored that Hargis's fundraising success occurred because he "learned to sell fear to his constituents by honing in on inflammatory political issues."[45] Many of Hargis's publications and broadcasts had salacious, incendiary titles like *Communist America . . . Must it Be?, Is the School House the Proper*

---

[40] Adam Bernstein, "Evangelist Billy James Hargis Dies; Spread Anti-Communist Message," *Washington Post*, November 30, 2004.

[41] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, untitled, 1968 in "Folder 25 - Radio Transcripts (2 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[42] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 186.

[43] FBI Agent Gordon, "Report No. 10—The Christian Crusade: Billy James Hargis" undated, 2 in "Folder 4 - FBI Files Part 2," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[44] Multiple books discuss the rising importance of grassroots activism to the Republican Party, in particular: Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warrior: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

[45] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 192.

Place to Teach Raw Sex?, and the pamphlet "The Death of Freedom of Speech in the U.S.A."[46] Hargis utilized societal fears by painting a McCarthy-esque picture of communism on every street corner, prompting donations from thousands of concerned Crusaders.

Historian Heather Hendershot described Hargis as a "prototelevangelist" who was both "on the bottom floor of religious-political broadcasting and was on the cutting edge when it came to fundraising."[47] Despite Hargis's originality and success as a grassroots fundraiser, he frequently bemoaned the Crusade's financial distress. The organization was at risk financially in part because of Hargis's quixotic spending. In the late 1950s the FBI constructed a profile on Hargis and the Christian Crusade, and the FBI tagged Hargis's files under the classification of "Domestic Security."[48] Interviews between FBI agents and Julian Williams, the Educational Director of the Christian Crusade, detailed Hargis's lavish tastes.[49]

---

[46] Billy James Hargis, *Communist America . . . Must It Be?* (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, 1960); Gordon V. Drake and Billy James Hargis, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?* (Tulsa, Okla: Christian Crusade Publications, 1968); Billy James Hargis, "The Death of Freedom of Speech in the U.S.A.," (Tulsa, Okla: Christian Crusade Publications, 1967).

[47] In Hendershot's estimation the only thing holding Hargis back from greater success was his strict adherence to anti-communism. Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 187.

[48] The classification system of "Domestic Security" harkened back to the anti-communist anxieties of World War I, and those fears intensified with the onset of the Cold War. The FBI used the classification for domestic security issues—Classification Series 100—to focus on communist and suspected communists during the 1950s and 1960s. For more on Classification 100, and FBI files in general, see: Gerald K. Haines and David A. Langbert, *Unlocking the Files of the FBI: A Guide to Its Records and Classification System* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993), 99-101. It is intriguing that Hargis's FBI files, and Robert W. Welch's, too, were classified as "Domestic Security" since both men were ardent anti-communists. The earliest FBI files on Hargis concerned Hargis's inflammatory rhetoric during his radio programs, but a 1962 FBI memorandum illustrated that the FBI's continued interest in Hargis stemmed from Hargis's connection to the extreme elements of the Radical Right. FBI Memo, Special Agent [location redacted] to SAC, Chicago, "Committee for Freedom of the Press Is - C," March 19, 1962, Bureau File 100-6546-62, BJHP, UASC.

[49] The memo is heavily redacted, but the SAC indicated that the FBI inquired about Hargis and that information on the Christian Crusade "should be fully identified." Later documents reveal that the FBI was especially interested in Hargis's political-religious views and his extensive overseas travel to places like the Dominican Republic. FBI Memo, SAC, WFO to Director, FBI, "'American Mercury" Magazine Registration Act," January 24, 1958, Bureau File 100-6546-8, BJHP, UASC; Airtel, SAC Oklahoma City to Director, FBI, "Dominican Activities in the United States, Internal Security - Dominican Republic," February 21, 1958, Bureau File 100-6546-last digits redacted, BJHP, UASC.

Hargis received a base salary of $25,000, but Williams revealed that the Crusade also footed "all bills including a home, utilities, furniture, color television, clothing and cleaning bills, travelling expenses—everything—is paid with Crusade funds."[50] The FBI published an internal report estimating that the true yield of Hargis's yearly salary was actually around $45,000.[51] The Anti-Defamation League also observed Hargis's profligate spending by detailing his luxurious converted Greyhound bus, which was "retrofitted to include living quarters, a drawing room, an office, baths, and a recording studio" at the cost of $50,000.[52] Other detrimental financial ventures included the purchase of the Western Village Motel, which Hargis wanted to repurpose into a retirement home, that internal accounts revealed was money sink and further proof of Hargis's mismanagement of funds.[53] Even individual Christian Crusade organizers suspected Hargis was appropriating money for his own use. A woman, whose name was redacted from an FBI file, referred to Hargis as an "interstate swindler" when she learned that Hargis kept no accounting records for donations."[54] Hargis repeatedly misused Crusade funds for quixotic investments and his own personal gain. This unscrupulous behavior indicated Hargis's willingness to use the Christian Crusade as a vehicle for personal wealth, further casting doubt upon the legitimacy of Hargis's pursuits.

---

[50] FBI Agent Gordon, "Report No. 10—The Christian Crusade: Billy James Hargis" undated, 1 in "Folder 4 - FBI Files Part 2," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.
[51] Ibid.

[52] Anti-Defamation League, "Rev. Billy James Hargis: The Christian Crusade" *Facts*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (April 1962): 229 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[53] FBI Agent Gordon, "Report No. 10—The Christian Crusade: Billy James Hargis" undated, 2 in "Folder 4 - FBI Files Part 2," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[54] Memo, Special Agent in Charge (SAC), Atlanta to SAC, Oklahoma City, BILLIE JAMES HARGIS; CHRISTIAN CRUSADE, Bureau File 100-6546-14.

Hargis was able to afford this kind of largesse because the Christian Crusade was a million-dollar-a-year operation by 1962 through Hargis's direct-mail and radio broadcast fundraising.[55] The Anti-Defamation League speculated that Hargis's Crusade might have eclipsed Welch's Birch Society in terms of grassroots financing.[56] Though the accounting records for the Crusade remain unavailable, the fact that the Crusade grew rapidly in the late 1950s and early 1960s reiterated the power of inflammatory rhetoric and anti-communism. In 1952 the Crusade brought in roughly $25,000, but that total mushroomed to $595,000 by 1960.[57] Every penny donated came from individual Crusaders. The impact of these contributions, along with Hargis's fear-mongering style, helped establish the Christian Crusade as a prominent organization within the burgeoning Radical Right movement on par with the infamous Birch Society.

Hargis's Christian Crusade bore a similar organizational structure to Robert W. Welch's John Birch Society, complete with chapters, monthly meetings, bulletins, and a strict hierarchical nature.[58] Analysts from the Anti-Defamation League, Arnold Forster and Benjamin R. Epstein, referred to the Crusade as a "fundamentalist adjunct to the John Birch Society . . . [that brought] the Birchite line to Hargis' followers with a flavoring more

---

[55] Anti-Defamation League, "Rev. Billy James Hargis: The Christian Crusade" *Facts*, Vol. 14, No. 6, April 1962 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 192.

[58] John Harold Redekop, *The American Far Right: A Case Study of Billy James Hargis and Christian Crusade* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 25-26. It is difficult to know whether or not Hargis and Welch communicated because neither man's personal papers are available to scholars. The staff at the University of Arkansas Special Collections is preparing Hargis's personal collection, but at the time of my visit the archivists could not provide an expected date of availability.

palatable to the true believers in the Bible belt."[59] Hargis took cues from Welch, forming the Crusade around his cult of personality and his authoritarian, impulsive demeanor. FBI documents revealed that Hargis "brooked no interference" as the Crusade's leader, and board meetings were reduced to sycophantic events where Hargis quashed any discussion or disagreement.[60] Such authoritarian methods were not without virtues. Hargis reviewed all Crusade literature before distribution, partially as a way to ensure that publications maintained Hargis's party line. Hargis desperately wanted to avoid unsavory issues, like anti-Semitism, that had the potential to damage the Crusade. The previous generation of far-right Christian ministers, notably Gerald L. K. Smith, were roundly criticized for their virulent anti-Semitism and dismissed as paranoid radicals.[61] Hargis sought to avoid the same fate, so he vetted all pre-production publications to prevent any fractures in the Crusade's Hargis-driven ideology.[62]

Hargis dominated the Christian Crusade's publications, but the organization had other similarities with the John Birch Society, including overlapping ideologies, strategies, leadership, and constituencies. Seven members of the Birch Society's National Council, including U.S. Representative John Rousselot (R-CA) and right-wing broadcaster Clarence Manion, also served on the Christian Crusade's National Advisory Committee.[63]

---

[59] Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *The Radical Right: A Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies* (New York: Random House, 1966), 74.

[60] FBI Agent Gordon, "Report No. 10—The Christian Crusade: Billy James Hargis" undated, 2 in "Folder 4 - FBI Files Part 2," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[61] For more on Gerald L. K. Smith and Christian Right in the early twentieth century, see: Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right*.

[62] Billy James Hargis, "Plans for Organizing Christian Crusade Chapters" in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[63] Anti-Defamation League, "Rev. Billy James Hargis: The Christian Crusade" *Facts*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (April 1962): 234 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

Additionally, Hargis worked for the Birch Society's "Impeach Earl Warren" campaign, and served as a member of the Birch Society advisory board.[64] The political beliefs of the Birch Society and the Christian Crusade were virtually inseparable. Contemporaries in the Anti-Defamation League considered Hargis and Welch ideologically analogous because "neither of them [made] a real distinction between liberals and Communists."[65] The threads connecting the Christian Crusade and the Birch Society signified Hargis's prominent position within the anti-communist movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The fact that Hargis structured the Crusade in a manner similar to Welch's Birch Society indicated Hargis's desire to foment a coordinated conservative movement rather than waging a solo campaign against liberalism.

The connections between the Christian Crusade and the Birch Society underscored the growth of the Radical Right during the 1950s, but Hargis's ties to right-wing extremism go back to the epicenter of the Second Red Scare through his relationship with Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI). In 1951 Hargis penned McCarthy's speech that attacked Methodist Bishop Garfield Bromley Oxnam.[66] Historian Ellen Schrecker observed that anti-communist activists, like McCarthy and Hargis, frequently attacked Oxnam for his ecumenical ministry in Washington, D.C.[67] Hargis was also present in McCarthy's home the day the senator passed away, underscoring his close ties to the senator. Hargis had blind faith in the actions

---

[64] "Background Analysis: Facts You Should Know about the Christian Crusade and Its Leader" *North Dakota Union Farmer*, December 6, 1961, 4 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[65] Anti-Defamation League, "Rev. Billy James Hargis: The Christian Crusade" *Facts*, Vol. 14, No. 6 (April 1962): 235 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[66] "Hargis Discloses He Wrote McCarthy Attack on Oxnam," *The Sunday Times*, March 18, 1967 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[67] Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 350.

of the senator and fully supported McCarthy's anti-communist campaign. Even as late as 1968 Hargis defended McCarthy, arguing that "every single person exposed by Sen. McCarthy as a communist and subversive was guilty according to the evidence."[68] Hargis supported McCarthy's work long after the Senate censured the McCarthy; he depended on anti-communism to justify the Christian Crusade. Indeed, Hargis considered himself a "watchman" against communism and socio-political subversion, continuing McCarthy's legacy of ideological repression. McCarthy's ability to turn "dissent into disloyalty" and contention that "the repressive measures taken against alleged Communists [were] necessary for the survival of the United States" undoubtedly reinforced Hargis's perception of communist infiltration within United States.[69]

The linkage between Welch's Birch Society and Senator McCarthy emboldened Hargis to coordinate a national right-wing movement, and Hargis tapped General Edwin Walker to help him lead the charge. Walker became a far-right celebrity for creating the "Pro-Blue" program, in which he used his military post to distribute Bircher propaganda that instructed soldiers to question the integrity of politicians under the guise of fighting communism.[70] Historian Jonathan Schoenwald argued that Walker's platforms "helped some conservatives band together and reinvigorated the ongoing process of defining conservatives."[71] For Walker, the election of President John F. Kennedy, a United Nations-

---

[68] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, "Guilt By Association," undated, 1 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[69] Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes*, x, xiv.

[70] Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 100.

[71] Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*, 100.

supporting Catholic liberal, was "evidence that the U.S. government had succumbed to communism."[72] Walker believed in a myriad of conspiracy theories, and he was tired of "phony conservatives" that were too timid to oppose obvious leftism like the United Nations.[73] The "Operation: Midnight Ride!" speaking tours with Hargis had a one-two punch of anti-communism: Walker harped against the dangers of international communism and Hargis wove cautionary tales of domestic subversion.[74] If the Birch Society was arguably the most famous organization in the Crusade's network, Walker was undoubtedly the most well-known far-right activist within Hargis's inner circle. Hargis's involvement with these groups and individuals placed him within the inner circle of the radical right of the 1950s and 1960s, but his main goal was creating a conservative national ministry based on anti-communist, anti-liberal views.

The Christian Crusade held annual conventions, created a network of anti-Communist leadership schools, and even tried to build a nationwide youth movement called the Torchbearers to galvanize its national ministry. The Crusade conventions and the Anti-Communist Leadership School, in reality a week-long lecture series, operated in the same manner: people paid to come listen to a coterie of right-wing luminaries like Arkansas governor Orval Faubus, General Edwin Walker, U.S. Representative John R. Rarick (D-LA), Georgia governor Lester Maddox, and Alabama governor and presidential hopeful George Wallace. The conventions and leadership schools published sets of resolutions that served as

---

[72] Lee Roy Chapman, "The Strangelove of Dr. Billy James Hargis: How a Tulsa Preacher and an Army General Created America's Religious Right" *This Land*, Vol. 3, Issue 21 (November 1, 2012).

[73] "General Walker Charges—Kennedy Assassination Part of Red Drive for Power" reprinted in "Highlights, Christian Crusade Third Annual Anti-Communist Leadership School," February 10-14, 1964, 15 in "Folder 1 - Appearances 1960-1983," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[74] "Operation: Midnight Ride" Flyer, Folder 13, Box 4, BJHP, UASC.

marching orders for the Christian Crusade constituents. Such resolutions included reaffirming the United States as a Christian Nation, supporting HUAC's exposure of the vast internal communist conspiracy, and repealing the FCC's Fairness Doctrine.[75] Hargis contested the Fairness Doctrine repealed because he believed, wrongly, that it targeted and censored conservative radio hosts. Historian Heather Hendershot noted that the FCC "did not go out of its way to hunt down right-wing (or left-wing) speech," and that the Fairness Doctrine simply required radio stations to "provide multiple points of view" when covering controversial subjects.[76] Nevertheless, Hargis theorized, "Determined efforts are being made by powerful government forces to harass radio stations into dropping anti-communist and conservative programs."[77] This mistrust of the FCC and the Fairness Doctrine stemmed from Hargis's binary world view in which communism encompassed everything other than strict conservatism, and it illustrated Hargis's inability, or willful ignorance, to separate policy fact from fiction.

The vast majority of Hargis's activism through the Christian Crusade consisted of ideological attacks portraying liberalism as a decoy for communist infiltration. Hargis utilized anti-communist anxieties and employed conspiracy theories to criticize liberalism as an adjunct of communism. In Hargis's view, the Soviets were not only trying to infiltrate and rule the United States, but he believed the communists were actually winning the Cold War

---

[75] "Christian Crusade Convention Resolution: Reaffirmation of the U.S. as a Christian Nation," August 5, 1964; "Resolution from Christian Crusade Convention: The Fairness Doctrine," August 7, 1964; "Resolution of Christian Crusade Convention Support the House Committee on Un-American Activities," August 5, 1962 in "Folder 3 - Christian Crusade Conventions - Resolutions, 1962-1965," Box 3, BJHP, UASC.

[76] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 17.

[77] "Resolution from Christian Crusade Convention: The Fairness Doctrine," August 7, 1964 in "Folder 3 - Christian Crusade Conventions - Resolutions, 1962-1965," Box 3, BJHP, UASC.

through internal subversion. Hargis warned that "while we prepare for a war to be fought on other shores in the distant future, the Communists are winning the war on American shores in 1959."[78] Hargis cited J. Edgar Hoover's statistic—that 500,000 communist sympathizers existed in the U.S.—as evidence that that a communist victory was imminent.[79] Historian Margaret A. Blanchard observed that a 1930s congressional committee, led by notable anti-communist conspiracist Representative Hamilton Fish III (R-NY), stated that 500,000 to 600,000 communists and communist sympathizers existed in the country, but Fish's numbers were questionable since the Fish Committee failed to disclose the source of its statistics.[80] The amount of dues paying members in the Communist Party U.S.A. surged to 82,000 during the economic turmoil of the Great Depression, but by 1958 CPUSA membership had dwindled to a mere 3,000, which cast further doubt on Hoover and Fish's statistics.[81] The numbers were irrelevant to Hargis because he defined liberals as pawns within the communist conspiracy.

Hargis's religious fundamentalism influenced his belief that the United States was losing the Cold War to communist subversion, which became a critical component of his ideological attacks on liberalism. Hargis considered a person "informed about Communism [based on] whether or not he, or she, shows a realization that we are losing this all important

---

[78] Billy James Hargis, "For and Against! We Have Been Invaded!" undated, 1 in "Folder 22 - Newspaper Column For and Against n.d.," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Margaret A. Blanchard, *Revolutionary Sparks: Freedom of Expression in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 160.

[81] Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes*, 14, 20.

struggle."[82] Additionally, because communist countries were ostensibly atheistic, Hargis's ideologies also targeted his fundamentalist constituencies' fear of godless communist infiltrators. Hargis never missed an opportunity to refer to the communist conspiracy as "satanic."[83] He painted an image of a Christian America beset by communist, atheist invaders using charged religious language in an effort to rally people around the banner of the Christian Crusade and the "watchman" at its helm. This fusion of anti-communism and Protestant fundamentalism tapped into the political disillusion felt by many conservatives, which provided Hargis a ready-made base for his attacks against the liberal consensus.

Equating liberalism and communism allowed Hargis to use both anti-communism and Protestant fundamentalism as weapons to fight against the perceived liberal hegemony in America. Simply put, Hargis's crusade was both religious and political. In 1967 Hargis wrote, "Liberalism is a satanic, double-standard hypocrisy . . . [and] the only people worth knowing in this life whom I've met are the solid Bible-believing Christians who love the lord and their country."[84] Hargis traced liberalism back to Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal.[85] He attacked the liberal programs erected by FDR and chastised Roosevelt's decision to diplomatically recognize and ally with the Soviet Union during World War II.[86] One can

---

[82] Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: An Important Phase of the Communist Line," undated in "Folder 22 - Newspaper Column For and Against n.d.," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[83] Billy James Hargis, "Class Warfare - The Heart of Communism: (IMBJH)," Tuesday, August 30, 1960, 2 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1; BJHP, UASC.

[84] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "Washington's Persecution of Fundamentalists," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publication, 1967), 3 in "Folder 33 - BJH Writings - Persecution of Christians-Patriots, ca. 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[85] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, Untitled, Undated 5 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[86] Ibid.

imagine that Hargis considered this to be a literal deal with the devil. Hargis also blamed FDR for creating the United Nations, which he believed communists dominated.[87] FDR's willingness to work with the Soviets during the war proved to Hargis that liberals were dupes within the grand communist conspiracy, and he thought liberal policies inevitably helped communists and eroded the Protestant fabric of the U.S.[88]

The Christian Crusade published critiques of liberalism from authors other than Hargis, some of which made Hargis seem like a fairly even-keeled person by comparison. James B. Utt, a Republican U.S. Representative from California, compared welfare and government expansion to child molestation: "The child molester always entices a child with candy or some other gift before he performs his evil deed. Likewise, governments promise something for nothing in order to extend their control and dominion over the people whom they are supposed to govern by the consent of the governed."[89] Utt also alleged that "liberties are contracted with each extension of dominion and control," and he ended the diatribe by apocalyptically stating, "This is the short road to slavery."[90] Since Hargis tightly controlled the Christian Crusade's publications it stands to reason that Hargis agreed with

---

[87] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: Should We Surrender to Communism Through the UN?," Feb. 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against February 1961-January 1962; Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[88] Billy James Hargis, "Threats to Christian Education" - Commencement Address for Burton College, Colorado Springs, July 1959-1960(?), 4 in "Folder 24 - BJH Writings - Education, 1959-1968," Box 2, BJHP, UASC. For more on liberalism during WWII, see: Alan Brinkley, *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995); Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Nancy Beck Young, *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013).

[89] Congressman James B. Utt (R-CA), "Who are the Real Fright Peddlars?" (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publication), 16 in "Folder 50 - Christian Crusade Miscellaneous Pamphlets," Box 4, BJHP, UASC.

[90] Ibid.

Representative Utt. Not only did Utt use reprehensible analogies for arguing against liberal values, but such commentary coming from an elected congressman illustrated that Hargis was not a lone crusader—political players agreed with his twisted definition of liberal values.

Hargis's distrust of liberalism stemmed from his belief about the fallibility and untrustworthiness of the central government, which undergirded his advocacy for states' rights. He viewed politics through a lens of fundamentalist moralism. Hargis admitted that no government is perfect, but he thought that "the evil perpetuated by an all-powerful federal government will outweigh by far the accumulated evils of the governments of the individual states."[91] Referring to liberal politicians and the expansive federal government as "usurpers," Hargis argued that the Southern states were under attack.[92] Hargis considered Lyndon Johnson's Great Society a failed program and further evidence of government evils because crime had rendered Washington D.C. a "disgrace" rather than a "model for the nation."[93] His pamphlet on Johnson's Great Society barely discussed the nuts and bolts of the program, but instead Hargis used the uptick in crime rates in the nation's capital as evidence that the Great Society was a failure. The increased crime rate in Washington, D.C. proved to Hargis that the

---

[91] Billy James Hargis, "Usurpation - A Weapon Against American Freedom: (IMBJH)" February 14, 1960, 2 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "The Great Society's Home Base," (Tulsa, Okla: Christian Crusade Publications, October 1967), 3-4 in "Folder 26 - BJH Writings - Lyndon B. Johnson and the Great Society, 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC. For more on Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, see: Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Robert A. Divine, *The Johnson Years: Foreign Policy, the Great Society, and the White House* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987); Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

federal government could not handle "law and order" issues as well as the states.[94] Statistics illustrated that crime in Washington, D.C., remained relatively stable until 1967, the same year Hargis's pamphlet was published, when the violent crime rate rose significantly. Hargis's argument failed to account for other potential factors like poverty rates or unemployment figures, plus he ignored that the rest of the nation experienced a similar rise in violent crimes.[95] Regardless, Hargis believed that liberalism eroded the fabric of traditional society and permitted an unconstitutional federal encroachment upon the states.

Hargis and the Christian Crusade targeted liberalism and government expansion in general, but Hargis's ideological denunciations also honed in on more specific issues like economic liberalism. Referring to liberals in the federal government as "bottomless pits," Hargis argued that "Americans have forgotten that basic budget responsibility applies to the government as well as to a family or individual."[96] Hargis contended that individual responsibility constituted a key cog in the American economy, and that citizens eventually learned from foolish spending whereas a politician's profligacy went unchallenged and unabated.[97] He viewed welfare programs with similar suspicion and chastised politicians for using welfare spending as an avenue for accruing votes.[98] Hargis's economic conservatism

---

[94] U.S. Department of Justice, "Estimated Violent Crime in the District of Columbia," in the Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics Online Database, accessed on December 9, 2015. http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/Crime/ State/RunCrimeStatebyState.cfm.

[95] U.S. Department of Justice, "Estimated Violent Crime in the United States—Total" in the "The Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics Online Database, accessed on March 31, 2016. http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/Search/ Crime/State/RunCrimeStatebyState.cfm.

[96] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: The Bottomless Pits," April, 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Proposed Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jen 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[97] Daily Radio Broadcast, "Do Government Spenders Use Your Money Wisely?," Feb. 5, 1961, 4 in "Folder 23 - Radio script Dec 1960-April 1961," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[98] Ibid., 3.

rejected government involvement in favor of "family values" and charity, both of which eventually became cornerstones of conservative values.[99]

Hargis considered economic conservatism a necessary medium to fight against communists because, he argued, they sought to infiltrate and destroy free market capitalism. Similar to other economic conservatives like Leonard Read, Hargis yearned for "mass economic education" that would empower the "leaders of free enterprise . . . [to] get into action on behalf of our nation."[100] Hargis contended that economic liberalism, especially regulatory policies, helped the communists because it inhibited the effectiveness of the free market. Taking this into consideration, Hargis deduced "that the more government takes from those who provide the funds for industries . . . the less there is of expansion of industries which provides more jobs."[101] Hargis coupled this with a mistrust of corporate taxation because he thought companies simply passed the cost of taxes onto the consumer.[102] Hargis's anti-corporate taxation, pro-business platform recalled the Old Guard conservatism of the Republican Party, which historian Kari Frederickson noted favored a "return to a high tariff and cheap government."[103] This ideology also fit in nicely with Hargis's notion that liberals

---

[99] For more on "family values" conservatism, see: Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

[100] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: The Force Which Could Destroy Communism," July 1961, 2 in "Folder 21 - Proposed Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jen 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC; Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 27.

[101] Billy James Hargis, "The Foolish Spenders: (IMBJH)," August 10, 1960, 1 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[102] Daily Radio Broadcast, "Do Government Spenders Use Your Money Wisely?," Feb. 5, 1961, 6 in "Folder 23 - Radio Script Dec 1960-April 1961," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[103] Heather Cox Richardson, *To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 182-183.

were dupes in the grand scheme of international communism. After all, Hargis saw liberalism and economic regulations as mutually inclusive, so logic led Hargis to construe liberalism as an ally of the Marxist conspiracy.

Another element of Hargis's ideological activism was his critique of liberal foreign policies like global aid programs and membership in the United Nations. Hargis frequently stumped against foreign relief on his radio show, especially regarding aid for neutral countries like Ghana and Yugoslavia. Hargis maintained that global assistance programs operated "through some strange and unexplained reasoning," and he chastised Americans for allowing their taxpayer dollars to be spent on "communistic" foreign aid.[104] "It is your money that is being shamefully given to your nation's enemies through the thinly-disguised technique of classing these enemies as being 'neutralist,'" Hargis scolded.[105] This anti-aid platform aligned with Hargis's belief in low taxation and responsible government spending, yet it also revealed Hargis's hypocrisy because he often berated the government for not doing enough to abate the spread of communism. Hargis's criticisms of foreign aid illustrated a major difference between liberal and conservative foreign policies. Historian Terrence Lyons observed, "Liberal policymakers in Washington perceived encouraging economic and political development as an important means to prevent radicalism and opportunities for Soviet or Chinese involvement."[106] Hargis, on the other hand, viewed economic diplomacy

---

[104] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: The Neutrals," October 1960 in "Folder 20 - Newspaper Column For and Against May-November 1960," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[105] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: Does Aid to Ghana Help Defend Freedom?," August 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1962-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[106] Terrence Lyons, "Keeping Africa off the Agenda" in *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968* eds. Warren I. Cohen and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 264.

as aiding the "allies of international communism . . . [and] helping to bring about a final communist victory over America."[107]

Winning the Cold War, Hargis believed, necessitated a rejection of foreign aid in favor of a hyper-aggressive policy of interventionism undergirded by vehement anti-communism. Hargis contended that communism had been allowed to expand by 700 million people under the doctrine of containment, and argued that military aggression was a more suitable policy to stem communist growth.[108] This conspiratorial outlook focused on neutral countries and decolonization efforts where political uprisings were almost certain. For example, when the Congo suffered a series of assassinations and coups that crippled the country and gaining independence in the early 1960s. As the situation deteriorated, Hargis advocated for the overthrow of Patrice Lumumba, the first democratically elected Prime Minister of the Congo, and Hargis supported replacing Lumumba with Joseph-Desiré Mobutu because of Mobutu's strong anti-communist platforms.[109] Similarly, in November 1961 Hargis urged the American government to "free Cuba of [its] communist dictatorship," presumably by means of military action.[110] Both of these platforms were incredibly short-sighted. Hargis disregarded the complex legacies of colonialism in both the Congo and Cuba, and he glossed over the failure of the Bay of Pigs that took place just months earlier in

---

[107] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: The Neutrals," October 1960 in "Folder 20 - Newspaper Column For and Against May-November 1960," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[108] Proposed Newspaper Article, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: Are the Communists Against the U.N.?," October 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column - For and Against, February 1961-January 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[109] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Lumumba and the UN," November 1960 in "Folder 20 - Newspaper Column For and Against May-November 1960," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[110] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Has Communist Propaganda Destroyed the Monroe Doctrine?," November 1961, 2 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1962-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

Cuba.[111] Hargis's foreign policy platforms simply extrapolated his binary perception of U.S. politics to the global theater. Just as Hargis defined liberals as stooges in the great communist conspiracy, his foreign policies cast neutral countries as willing agents or unwilling dupes that helped the spread of global communism.

The belief that the rest of the world was infiltrated by communists underscored Hargis's opposition to U.S. involvement in the United Nations. Like much of the far-right, Hargis saw the U.N. as dominated by anti-American forces that advanced communist causes and platforms.[112] Hargis viewed the United Nations as an atheistic organization, prompting him to proclaim, "We slapped Christ in the face at the setting up of the United Nations . . . just as surely as the Jews slapped Him on the night of His betrayal 2,000 years ago."[113] The lack of Protestant fundamentalism in the United Nations provoked Hargis, and Hargis especially resented the idea that a foreign organization could theoretically influence U.S. judicial and policy decisions.[114] In response, Hargis supported the Connally Reservation, a legislative amendment named after Texas Senator Tom Connally that limited the World Court's authority over matters of domestic jurisprudence.[115] Put simply, the Connally

---

[111] For more on the Congo, Cuba, and the U.S., see: Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Thomas G. Paterson, *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[112] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Should We Surrender to Communism Through the UN?," February 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[113] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "No Room in the Inn - Or in the U.N.," undated in "Folder 39 - BJH Writings - United Nations, 1960-1963," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[114] For more on the creation of the United Nations, see: Stephen C. Schlesinger, *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

[115] Billy James Hargis, "World Court Promoters Move to Scuttle America: (IMBJH)," Tuesday, February 16, 1960 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

Amendment to the Morse Reservation allowed the United States to determine which legal disputes would go before the World Court and which ones remained in the United States.[116] Hargis insisted that the Connally Amendment protected the country because, as he wrote, the World Court was "composed overwhelmingly of foreigners including a goodly proportion of anti-American communists and socialists."[117]

The majority of Hargis's activism constituted ideological critiques through Christian Crusade publications and radio broadcasts, but, at times, Hargis involved himself in direct actions to fight communism at home and abroad. The Balloon Project of the 1950s, spearheaded by Hargis and fundamentalist minister and right-wing radio host Carl McIntire, provided the best example of Hargis's willingness to take on international communism directly.[118] The project sought to deliver Bibles across the Iron Curtain by using long-range balloons, and Carl McIntire appointed Hargis as the international chairman of the project.[119] The members of Bibles by Balloons first met in Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1952, and from there Hargis created the blueprint for attacking communism through evangelicalism. Hargis urged his Christian Crusade constituency to donate $2.00 per balloon to jump start the program, and he then traveled to West Germany to help launch the balloons personally.[120] Roughly 50,000 balloons were dispatched from West Germany in 1953 and the crusade publications

---

[116] Howard H. Boyle, Jr., "Proposed Repeal of Connally Reservation: A Matter for Concern," *Marquette Law Review*, Vol. 43, Issue 3 (Winter 1960): 317.

[117] Billy James Hargis, "World Court Promoters Move to Scuttle America: (IMBJH)," Tuesday, February 16, 1960 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[118] Historian Heather Hendershot called Carl McIntire "God's Angriest Man." Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 102.

[119] Billy James Hargis, "Challenge of the Sky," in Booklet "The Bible Balloon Story," ed. Richard Briley, III, undated in "Folder 14 - Bibles by Balloons ca. 1953-1954," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[120] Booklet, "The Christian Way to Conquer Communism," undated in "Folder 14 - Bibles by Balloons ca. 1953-1954," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

sensationalized the effort by claiming that balloons were being shot down at the Iron Curtain; however, Hargis quickly noted that the "majority made it across to Leningrad, the Black Sea, and elsewhere."[121] Hargis proclaimed the project a success, "Reports from refugees slipping into West Germany say a wave of religious feeling is now sweeping Poland, Czechoslovakia and the western fringes of Russia itself!"[122]

The growth of Bibles by Balloons increased Hargis's outreach in the United States and illustrated how Hargis's activism reflected the combination of evangelical fundamentalism and ultraconservative values. The balloon project continued for another three years, and the number of balloons sent over the Iron Curtain increased each year. Each balloon had a maximum range of 4,000 miles, and over 100,000 were sent in 1954. By 1955, 250,000 balloons passed over the Iron Curtain. The Bibles floating into Soviet territory were printed in Czech, Slovak, Polish, Russian, and German to ensure that the recipients could read God's good word. While it is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of the Bibles by Balloons campaign, it was undoubtedly the event that brought Hargis and the Christian Crusade into American homes. Multiple major newspapers, like the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*, covered the Balloon Project.[123] Not only did Bibles by Balloons increase the national presence of Hargis's Crusade, it epitomized Hargis's foreign policy platforms. Hargis advocated direct confrontation in foreign policy, which he achieved by floating Bibles

---

[121] Richard Briley III, ed., "The Bible Balloon Story," undated in "Folder 14 - Bibles by Balloons ca. 1953-1954," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[122] Booklet, "The Christian Way to Conquer Communism," undated in "Folder 14 - Bibles by Balloons ca. 1953-1954," Box 1, BJHP.

[123] Associated Press (AP), "Bibles Due to Float Over Iron Curtain," *The Christian Science Monitor*, June 10, 1953; "Russia Faces Bombardment with Bibles: Evangelist Will Send Books Via Balloons," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 15, 1957; "Balloon-Lift Set for 10,000 Bibles to Soviet World," *The Washington Post*, September 10, 1953; "Balloons to Carry Bibles to Reds," *New York Times*, April 25, 1955.

to those he saw as suffering under the yoke of international communism. Bibles by Balloons additionally underscored Hargis's belief that conservative action, in this case by bombarding the Soviet Union with evangelical literature, was the key to peeling back the communist advance.

While the Bibles by Balloons project illustrate Hargis's foreign policy activism, the controversies over sex education and the teaching of evolution animated Hargis's fight with the public education system. Hargis used red-baiting rhetoric to charge that the education system, from grade school through college, was poisoned by liberalism and federal intrusion. As with economic liberalism, Hargis traced the problems in education back to Franklin Roosevelt's administration, specifically citing the diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union during World War II.[124] Hargis reasoned that the wartime alliance "opened the doors of our nation to a flood tide of subversive elements that has played havoc with America in general and Christian education in particular."[125] Hargis advocated reactionary education policies by opposing centralized control of education and programs that developed "international understanding," and he maintained that states should control education rather than the federal government. These principles put Hargis at odds with the general zeitgeist of education reform that was a staple of liberal platforms, notably Johnson's Great Society and the War on Poverty.[126]

---

[124] Billy James Hargis, "Threats to Christian Education" - Commencement Address for Burton College, Colorado Springs, July 1959-1960(?) 4 in "Folder 24 - BJH Writings - Education, 1959-1968," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Dallek, *Flawed Giant*, 330. Dallek noted that a major component of Johnson's Great Society and the War on Poverty was increased federal funding for education.

The idea of federally funded public schools inflamed Hargis's distrust of the federal government. Hargis alluded to "dictators" controlling education and warned that federal aid for public schools implied "more and more brainwashing of your children."[127] One example of supposed liberal indoctrination was the teaching of evolution in public schools. Controversies concerning education and evolution crystallized during the Scopes Trial in the 1920s, and by the 1960s "creationists," those who believed the universe was divinely inspired, argued that evolution and creationism should be taught side-by-side.[128] Patently against the teaching of evolution, Hargis implored, "Certainly, schools which teach the false evolutionary theory of creation should also teach the Biblical account."[129] Hargis's implication, that pro-evolution teachers sought to indoctrinate students, aligned with a common concern of many parents; however, scholar Jerry Bergman pointed out that fears of biased teaching existed across the entire ideological spectrum.[130]

One way creationists, including Hargis, contested the teaching of evolution was by misrepresenting the meaning of the term "theory." Scientists use the term to describe a speculative, expendable model based on empirical observation and logical deduction.[131] In

---

[127] Newsletter, Billy James Hargis, "An Important Message from BJH: The Federal Government and Your Schools," August 13, 1961, 4 in "Folder 24 - BJH Writings - Education, 1959-1968," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[128] For more on the Scopes Trial and evolution in public schools, see: Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Jeffrey P. Moran, *American Genesis: The Antievolution Controversies from Scopes to Creation Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); J. Peter Zetterberg, ed. *Evolution Versus Creationism: The Public Education Controversy* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, 1983).

[129] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "Does the First Amendment Ban God from American Schools?," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, undated), 18 in "Folder 33 - BJH Writings - Persecution of Christians-Patriots, ca. 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[130] Jerry Bergman, *Teaching About the Creation/Evolution Controversy* (Bloomington, Indiana: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation), 27.

[131] Bergman, *Teaching About the Creation/Evolution Controversy*, 16.

short, as biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky articulated, scientists accept theories as an "accurate representation of reality."[132] Biologist Malcolm Jay Kottler averred that creationists, on the other hand, "capitalized on scientific disputes among biologists by pretending that serious students of the subjects are themselves in doubt about evolution.[133] Hargis typified this argumentation by asserting that evolutionary theory should "be taught strictly as an unproven theory and not as a fact."[134] In the fight against the teaching of evolution, Hargis again intertwined religion and politics. He equated federal funding to brainwashing because national standards supported the teaching of evolution, which Hargis took as a slight against Christian doctrine. However, the line of demarcation between evolutionists and creationists trumpeted by Hargis is actually more of an ideological gradient as opposed to a strict binary, which illustrated that the simplified debate often depicted in the public realm represented a false reality.[135] Hargis's religiously-infused states' rights arguments mirrored later anti-evolution rhetoric, suggesting that Hargis was, at the very least, on the early front lines of conservative actions against evolution in the classroom during the Cold War.

Hargis also took issue with "academic freedom" and the perceived leftist tilt of American universities, especially in conjunction with the raging counter-culture and anti-war

---

[132] Theodosius Dobzhansky, "Nothing In Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution," in J. Peter Zetterberg, ed. *Evolution Versus Creationism: The Public Education Controversy* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, 1983), 18.

[133] Malcolm Jay Kottler, "Evolution: Fact? Theory? . . . Or Just a Theory?" in J. Peter Zetterberg, ed. *Evolution Versus Creationism: The Public Education Controversy* (Phoenix, Ariz.: Oryx Press, 1983), 31.

[134] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "Does the First Amendment Ban God from American Schools?," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, undated), 18 in "Folder 33 - BJH Writings - Persecution of Christians-Patriots, ca. 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[135] Bergman, *Teaching About the Creation/Evolution Controversy*, 9.

movements of the 1960s. Hargis tied all discontent inside universities to the communist conspiracy, with or without proof. In one televised address, Hargis asserted that all protests against HUAC on college campuses were linked to communist agents or leftist professors stirring up trouble.[136] Tellingly, Hargis mentioned no names and provided no proof to support his accusations. Rather than reinforce his conjecture, Hargis shot broadsides: "College professors poison the minds of our college students under a covering cloak called 'academic freedom.'"[137] His undying devotion to the ideals of HUAC and McCarthy prevented him from acknowledging the validity of any campus protest.[138] He was perfectly content to denounce all the protesters and professors as subversives. Hargis also believed, however, that the U.S. education system was not beyond saving if schools began adhering to the principles of strict anti-communism. In a televised Crusade address, Hargis suggested a two-fold method for attacking communism in the schools: 1) Take your children out of leftist schools and enroll them in, what Hargis called, a "pro-American school," and 2) demand legislation that would investigate communism at the high school and college level and remove instructors with suspected leftist leanings.[139] Historian Ellen Schrecker argued that such rhetoric portrayed individuals and institutions that "offered a left-wing alternative to

---

[136] Billy James Hargis, "Our Youth—Their Enemies and Their Friends: (IMBJH)" from "Christian Crusade TV-25," undated, 2 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.
[137] Billy James Hargis, "Words are a Weapon," Wednesday, August 31, 1960, 2 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[138] The historiography of McCarthyism was covered in Chapter One, but a few books examine the relationship between anti-communism and the student movement: Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Seth Rosenfeld, *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2012).

[139] Billy James Hargis, "Our Youth—Their Enemies and Their Friends: (IMBJH)" from "Christian Crusade TV-25," undated, 3 in "Folder 18 - Messages from BJH 1960-1962, 1966, 1968," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

mainstream politics and culture . . . [as] members of an illegal conspiracy that somehow threatened America's very existence."[140] Hargis used the Crusade's communication mediums to advocate reactionary, censorial education policies, and he urged conservatives to actively fight for the removal of teachers that strayed, even if only a little, from Hargis's stringent ideological parameters.

Perhaps the best example of Hargis's direct action against public education was his protracted battle over sex education in public schools. Sex education in the U.S. public school system started at the turn of the twentieth century, but it existed in a disconnected manner at the local level until the advent of formalized "sex ed" classes in the 1940s and 1950s.[141] The creation of formal sexual education classes, according to historian Susan K. Freeman, led to greater parental scrutiny that was often "mobilized by anticommunist organizations and the early beginnings of an organized religious right."[142] To conservatives like Hargis, the sexual revolution of the 1960s, and the fruit it bore, upended his idea of normal family life and social decorum, and he viewed the increased push for sex education in public schools as a menace to society.

Hargis and the Christian Crusade were at the forefront of the religious response to "sex ed" programs by launching an all-out attack on the idea of public school teachers supplanting parents as the gatekeepers of sex education. In a radio broadcast on Tuesday, September 24, 1968, Hargis averred, "Teachers or public school cannot interpret sex according to religious convictions . . . The teaching of sex belongs in the church and in the

---

[140] Schrecker, *Many are the Crimes*, x, xiii.

[141] Susan K. Freeman, *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education Before the 1960s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), x.

[142] Freeman, *Sex Goes to School*, 147.

home."[143] Sociologist Kristin Luker pointed out that this form of moralizing was "shorthand for the norms that once ruled American sexual behavior—that the only moral sex was between a man and a woman within holy wedlock."[144] Hargis considered copulation to be a religious, rather than secular, topic. As Christian Crusade author and stalwart David Noble articulated, "We do not believe sex can be divorced from love and morality."[145]

Hargis adopted the Supreme Court decision to ban school prayer in 1962 as an avnue to contest sex education in public schools because, as Hargis viewed it, sex was a religious, rather than secular, topic. the Supreme Court rendered the *Engel v. Vitale* decision in 1962, which "determined that the long-standing practice of school prayer violated the First Amendment's establishment clause."[146] The First Amendment guaranteed the freedom of religion, but it also prohibited the government from establishing a state religion. Historian Bruce J. Dierenfield noted that the issue of school prayer was contested ground, especially because Protestant Christian culture dominated "major institutions from government to education to culture."[147] Hargis wielded the Supreme Court's decision as a weapon to fight against sex education while reinforcing traditional (ie. Protestant Christian) social norms within the United States. In one radio address Hargis recalled, "The Supreme Court said a few years back that they wouldn't allow prayer and Bible reading in public schools even on a

---

[143] Radio Broadcast, "Radio Script #2," Tuesday, Sept. 24, 1968, 1 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[144] Kristin Luker, *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex—and Sex Education—Since the Sixties* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 8-9.

[145] "'Biblical Morality' Stressed in Christian Crusade Drive," *Tulsa Daily World*, April 1, 1969 in "Folder 16 - Appearances, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[146] Bruce J. Dierenfield, *The Battle over School Prayer: How* Engel v. Vitale *Changed America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 4.

[147] Dierenfield, *The Battle over School Prayer*, 4.

voluntary basis because teachers were not qualified to teach religion."[148] Hargis took that premise and rationalized, "Well, if teachers in the public schools are not qualified to teach religion, they are certainly not qualified to teach sex." Sex and religion were inseparable to Hargis, and he perverted the Supreme Court's decisions to support his own belief that sex education was the domain of parents and ministers.

Despite Hargis's cynical interpretation of the Supreme Court's ruling on religion in school, he believed the *real* provocateurs behind the push for sex education were communist activists. In the same 1968 radio address Hargis contended that sex education in public schools was "part of a giant communist conspiracy to demoralize the youth, repudiate New Testament morality in the land, and drive a cleavage between students and parents."[149] Hargis painted images of the innocent "little red school house" in order to demonize sex education as perverted and unsuitable for children, something in which only communists would allow their children to participate. Additionally, Hargis's salaciously-titled book, *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?*, soared to 250,000 sales as the debate over sex education raged.[150] The battle against sex education encompassed all of Hargis's philosophies: religious moralism, political conservatism, and anti-communist conspiracism.

Significantly, Hargis did not fight alone—the Birch Society and other conservative groups helped—and his efforts ultimately played a key role in the smear campaign against the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States (SIECUS) curriculum. Historian Heather Hendershot noted that ultraconservatives like Hargis lambasted the

---

[148] Radio Broadcast, "Radio Script #2," Tuesday, Sept. 24, 1968, 1 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[149] Ibid.

[150] "The Sins of Billy James" *TIME*, Vol. 107, No. 7 (February 16, 1976): 68.

curriculum creators as communists and spread false rumors "that liberal sex educators had actually demonstrated the sex act in the classroom."[151] This fear mongering galvanized a socially conservative constituency that felt sex should remain the inside the home.[152] Hargis's view of sex education mirrored his economic conservatism: he believed in a local, family-oriented structure for U.S. society rather than one dictated by federal guidance and regulations. According to Hargis, it was better to keep many facets of society, like sex education and fiscal responsibility, inside the walls of the church and the family unit and out of the hands of the government. This position placed Hargis and the Crusade within the vanguard of religious conservatives that wanted to erase the legacies of the 1960s Sexual Revolution, a battle which continues into the modern era.[153]

While Hargis viewed the battle over sex education through a lens of fundamentalist moralism, his activism against the civil rights movement displayed his conspiracism, emphasis on states' rights, and racist underpinnings. Hargis saw the civil rights movement as a communist-inspired plot to take over the United States, but Hargis's racial ideologies were also driven by a discriminatory undertone. In a 1961 newspaper column, Hargis declared, "[The communists] are not interested in the Southern Negro, but only in stirring up a more favorable situation for advancement of the communist plot to enslave the South and our entire nation."[154] Akin to the "liberal dupes," Hargis viewed civil rights activists as cogs, either

---

[151] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 195.

[152] For more on the broader battle over sex education, see: Freeman, *Sex Goes to School*; Nancy Kendall, *The Sex Education Debates* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Luker, *When Sex Goes to School*.

[153] Luker, *When Sex Goes to School*, 243.

[154] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Communists Intensify War on South," April 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Proposed Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

willing or unwilling, in the grand scheme of communist infiltration. This thinking led Hargis to support the John Birch Society's campaign against the Supreme Court, illustrated by the "Impeach Earl Warren" bumper stickers that permeated the 1961 Christian Crusade convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma.[155] In another newspaper column Hargis condemned a purported "Red plan for bringing the South to its knees calls for the election of Negro officials to office through means of an NAACP controlled Negro bloc vote."[156]

However, Hargis misread both the success of the communists within the black community and African Americans' interest in joining the Communist Party. In 1951 historian Wilson Record argued that African Americans used communism when it suited them as an avenue for equality, notably during the Great Depression of the 1930s.[157] Modern historian Robin D. G. Kelley complicated Record's observation, noting "The [Communist] Party and its various auxiliaries served as vehicles for black working-class opposition on a variety of different levels ranging from antiracist activities to intraracial class conflict."[158] Kelley argued that the southern black communists influenced later civil rights campaigns like the "Double V" and the Southern Negro Youth Congress.[159] The paradox Kelley and Record confronted is that communism, at times, existed as a vehicle for achieving democratic goals

---

[155] "Background Analysis: Facts You Should Know about the Christian Crusade and Its Leader," *North Dakota Union Farmer*, December 6, 1961 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[156] Proposed newspaper column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against: Communism Plots Against Dixiecrats," May 31, 1960, 1 in "Folder 20 - Newspaper Column For and Against May-November 1960," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[157] Wilson Record, *The Negro and the Communist Party* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951).

[158] Robin D. G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xiii.

[159] Ibid., 221.

for blacks. Despite the cooperation between black activists and communists, most African Americans did not join the communist party.[160] Nevertheless, Hargis viewed any friendly contact between the communists, and he argued that the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was rife with Marxist infiltrators.

Moderate groups and individuals, like the NAACP and Martin Luther King, Jr., also came under fire from Hargis for supposed communist leanings. In 1956 Hargis criticized the NAACP as a "Communist outfit headed by renegade whites," while also referring to MLK as a "Pied Piper to lead the American Negro into the camp of communism."[161] Former Arkansas Supreme Court Associate Justice Jim Johnson sounded off against "the NAACP's campaign of hate, distrust, and division" in a Christian Crusade publication, arguing that the policies advocated by the NAACP "set back harmonious race relations in the South a generation."[162] Modern historians like Carol Anderson illustrated that interpretations like the one promoted by Hargis and the Christian Crusade were misguided because the NAACP constituted a moderate, hedging on conservative, organization by the time of the modern civil rights

---

[160] Mark I. Solomon, *The Cry Was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917-1936* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998).

[161] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "Integration By Force Is NOT A Christian Crusade," 1956 in "Folder 36 - BJH Writings - Race, 1963-1969," Box 2, BJHP, UASC; Reese Cleghorn, "Turn Ye Radio On! Old Elixirs Are Selling Better Now," *South Today: A Digest of Southern Affairs*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (July 1969): 3 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1950-1969, 1970," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[162] Senator Jim Johnson, "Chapter Three: The Nefarious Record of the NAACP" in Billy James Hargis's "The Truth About Segregation: A Resume of the Best on the Subject," 9 in "Folder 10 - *The Total Revolution*; "*Wait on the Lord*"; *Walter Reuther's Secret Memo*; *The Truth About Segregation*," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

movement.[163] Additionally, Johnson's assertion of historical "harmonious race relations" seemed absurd amid a decade rife with racial conflagrations.[164]

Throughout the 1960s racial violence broke out in major cities across America as tensions mounted about civil rights, and in response Hargis started stumping for "law & order" politics, an ideology that combined anxiety over social issues with concern regarding the uptick in crime during the 1960s.[165] Hargis also relied on heavy doses of conspiracy theory to cast doubt on the integrity of the civil rights activists. During an interview with retired General Edwin Walker on his radio show Hargis mentioned, "I think these riots are part of a design." Walker, a committed conspiracy theorist himself, responded, "They couldn't possibly be spontaneous at all. They are too large . . . [they] have to be planned."[166] As Hargis and Walker meandered through this interview they made it clear who they believed was responsible for the riots: "the communists, the trained revolutionaries."[167] Pushing this conspiratorial narrative further, Hargis argued that President Johnson had previously convened with civil rights leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr., to stop riots between the Republican National Convention and the 1964 presidential election. In the

---

[163] Carol Anderson, *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

[164] Senator Jim Johnson, "Chapter Three: The Nefarious Record of the NAACP" in Billy James Hargis's "The Truth About Segregation: A Resume of the Best on the Subject," 9 in "Folder 10 - *The Total Revolution*; "*Wait on the Lord"*; *Walter Reuther's Secret Memo*; *The Truth About Segregation*," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[165] Two books, in particular, point out the genesis and effectiveness of "law and order" politics: Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008).

[166] Radio Broadcast, "Christian Crusade Broadcast," Sunday August 27, 1968, 8 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[167] Ibid., 10.

interview with Walker Hargis pondered, "Now, if these things were spontaneous were there no Watts, Clevelands and Detroits between that conference at the White House and the November elections?" Hargis failed to remember that the infamous Harlem Riots erupted just after Goldwater's nomination at the GOP Convention.[168] This illustrated that, at times, Hargis willingly revised history to confirm his own preconceived world view. Additionally, the interview with Walker reinforced that Hargis thought communism was the tail that wagged dog of liberalism and the civil rights movement.

Politicians joined the Christian Crusade's red-baiting fight against the civil rights movement, which brought Hargis's antipathy toward civil rights in-line with Republican right-wingers. Congressman James B. Utt produced a diatribe in a Christian Crusade publication: "The administration's effort, to promote civil rights by riot, strife, and revolution, is doing much to implement the communist manifesto of 1848."[169] Similarly, during a 1968 radio broadcast Hargis declared, "The lawless elements and anarchists are encouraged by the leftwing revolutionary forces in our country, and are aided and inspired additionally by the television networks and their constant emphasis on violence."[170] Hargis and other right-wingers employed the language of "law and order" politics to truncate civil rights, and its liberal supporters, by criminalizing protest movements. Historian Michael W. Flamm noted, "At a popular level, 'law and order' resonated both as a social ideal and political slogan because it combined an understandable concern over the rising number of traditional crimes .

---

[168] For more on the Harlem Riot, see: Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

[169] Congressman James B. Utt (R-CA), "Who are the Real Fright Peddlars?," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publication, undated), 15 in "Folder 50 - Christian Crusade Miscellaneous Pamphlets," Box 4, BJHP, UASC.

[170] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, "Where I Was Blind, Now I See," Nov. 6, 1968, 19 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

. . with implicit and explicit unease about civil rights, civil liberties, urban riots, antiwar protests, moral values, an drug use."[171] The rhetoric used by the Christian Crusade mirrored the national conservative trend toward "law and order" politics, a trend that exposed cracks within the liberal consensus and provided right-wingers an avenue for winning elections by playing on fear and anxiety.[172] A 1968 Harris poll indicated that an overwhelming majority of Americans favored "law and order" policies, which aligned Hargis and the Christian Crusade with the mainstream conservative movement.[173]

While anti-communism underscored Hargis's aversion to the civil rights movement, segregationist racism also factored into his racial ideologies. Hargis favored segregation based on the perception that blacks and whites were different species. In one particularly telling passage, Hargis referred to segregation as "one of natures [sic] universal laws."[174] Hargis further wrote, "Animals by instinct mate only with their own kind. No inter-mingling or cross-breeding with animals of a widely different characteristic takes place except under abnormal or artificial circumstances.[175] Though perhaps not intentionally, Hargis implied that

---

[171] Michael W. Flamm, "The Politics of 'Law and Order'" in *The Conservative Sixties* eds. David Farber and Jeff Roche, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), 145.

[172] Ibid., 142.

[173] Louis Harris & Associates, December 1968, "(Let me read you some things that some people have said will make 1969 a better year. For each, tell me if you think in the end it will really help a lot, some but not a lot, or hardly at all) . . . A firmer hand will be controlling law and order." USHARRIS.123168.RC2, (Cornell, University, Ithaca, New York: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via IPOLL on April 25, 2016. An incredible sixty-one percent responded that a "firmer hand" will help "a lot."

[174] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "The Truth About Segregation: A Resume of the Best on the Subject," 1 in "Folder 10 - *The Total Revolution*; *"Wait on the Lord"*; *Walter Reuther's Secret Memo*; *The Truth About Segregation*," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[175] Ibid.

black people are a completely separate "animal" from white people. This passage also indicated that racism informed his opposition to interracial marriage.

Hargis's antipathy toward interracial relationships provided a stark example of his racist philosophies. Hargis fretted about racial mixing, pejoratively referring to it as "mongrelization." He saw interracial relationships as a communist plot to "build a world race, by gradually wearing down the resistance between the races."[176] In a particularly visceral booklet Hargis declared that "racial intermarriage is not a Christian Crusade" and that allowing interracial relationships would "abolish" the black race.[177] Hargis attempted to shame the white people that wanted to permit interracial dating: "Those promoting this racial mongrelization propaganda are actually telling the Negro that he is an inferior race—to marry a white person and improve his stock."[178] In another pamphlet, Hargis targeted the racial pride of blacks, asserting, "The Negroes favoring integration by force are admitting that the white man is superior and that they are dissatisfied with associating with their own people, members of an 'inferior race.'"[179] Hargis's perversion of black racial pride undergirded his segregationism. This was an inversion of the Black Power movement because groups like the Black Panthers saw racial pride as a way to fight back against years of white oppression, whereas Hargis used race pride as a way to solidify racial boundaries.[180] Hargis did not see

---

[176] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "Communism Exposed!," undated, 14 in "Folder 2 - *Communist America*; *Communist Threat to Southern Africa*; *Communism in America Exposed!*," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.
[177] Billy James Hargis, "National Council of Churches and Its Racial Agitation Program," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publication, 1958 or 1959), 2 in "Folder 30 - BJH Writings - National Council of Churches 1958-1960," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "Integration By Force Is NOT A Christian Crusade," 1956 in "Folder 36 - BJH Writings - Race, 1963-1969," Box 2," BJHP, UASC.

[180] For more on Black Power, see: Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Peniel E. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight*

integration of the races as a move toward racial equality, but rather he viewed it as a communist conspiracy to ruin Biblically mandated segregation. Additionally, noting that animals only mated with "their own kind" and referring to interracial relationships as "mongrelization" betrayed the fact that Hargis clearly saw blacks as inferior to whites.

Race constituted one of Hargis's most paradoxical viewpoints because he vehemently denied a belief in "superior" and "inferior" races, but his rhetoric suggested otherwise. In a twisted take on race relations, he argued against integration because he thought it implied that the black community needed the white community to advance. In a Crusade pamphlet Hargis declared, "There is no such thing as an inferior race," but in another booklet Hargis proudly proclaimed, "Nowhere in history has there been a case of a more backward people of another race being uplifted so rapidly and so greatly benefited by the dominant race as has the American Negro."[181] Hargis's racial ideologies frequently contradicted one another. It seemed that Hargis truly believed in the inferiority of blacks, but often tried to state otherwise in an effort to ward off criticisms of bigotry.

Hargis used the Bible to support his segregationist views and deflect criticisms of bigotry. According to Hargis's Biblical interpretation, the Jews had God's favor while they remained segregated from the world. Hargis attributed the "genius behind the

---

Hour: A Narrative History of Black power in America (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006); Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011); Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); William L. Van DeBurg, *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[181] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "Racial Strife . . . And America's Future," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, undated), 4 in "Folder 36 - BJH Writings - Race, 1963-1969," Box 2, BJHP, UASC; Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "Integration By Force Is NOT A Christian Crusade," 1956 in "Folder 36 - BJH Writings - Race, 1963-1969," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

accomplishments and conquests of ancient Israel" to segregationist policies.[182] Based on the idea of racial purity, Hargis argued that racial separation was part of God's grand design: "God's plan is for each race to live to itself, the members segregated to themselves and to marry within the bonds of their race in order to keep the blood pure."[183] Hargis cherry-picked segments of the Old Testament to support his beliefs on segregation and interracial relationships. If Hargis believed in blood purity, then logically he saw mixed-race individuals as a lesser sort of person, which further implied some sort of hierarchical racial views.

The arguments against integration indicated a willingness to use religion to shape U.S. politics and society, but Hargis also targeted perceived subversion within Protestant organizations. Hargis's fight against the National Council of Churches (NCC) best illustrated his fusion of fundamentalism and conservative politics. The National Council of Churches—a loose coalition of worship centers—was an ecumenical organization formed in 1950 that represented the fusion of political and religious liberalism by advocating for redistributive economic policies and civil rights.[184] Hargis excoriated the NCC for "pushing . . . extravagant and freedom-destroying socialistic measures," but the only real evidence Hargis provided was that the Council's president, Edwin T. Dahlberg, advocated for the release of Communist Party leader Earl Browder and the repeal of the McCarran Internal Security

---

[182] Booklet, Billy James Hargis, "The Truth About Segregation: A Resume of the Best on the Subject," 2 in "Folder 10 - *The Total Revolution*; *"Wait on the Lord"*; *Walter Reuther's Secret Memo*; *The Truth About Segregation*," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[183] Ibid.

[184] For more on the NCC, see: James F. Findlay, *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993; Jill K. Gill, *Embattled Ecumenism: The National Council of Churches, the Vietnam War, and the Trials of the Protestant Left* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011). The NCC's "Social Creed for the Twenty-First Century" (2008) can be found here: http://www.ncccusa.org/news/ga2007.socialcreed.html.

Act.[185] Alongside accusations of communist subversion, Hargis targeted the NCC for its "modernist" religious viewpoints. Hargis cited Dr. John Sutherland Bonnel, the liberal pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, as an example, stating, "Presbyterians do not believe in the literal inerrancy of the Scriptures . . . [or] in a material heaven and hell."[186] This characterization failed to account for the conservative factions within the Presbyterian denomination, but it illustrated that Hargis considered anything straying from a fundamentalist, anti-communist approach to religion constituted "modernism."[187]

When the National Council of Churches started advocating political views, Hargis demonized the NCC as a communist front. Hargis construed the NCC's push for the diplomatic recognition of China and advocacy for policies of non-aggression and disarmament as communist propaganda.[188] In 1961 Hargis criticized the NCC-influenced Walks for Peace movement by referring to disarmament as a "stupid demand" that would "put the American people completely helpless at the hands of the international communist conspiracy."[189] The NCC advocated de-escalation in Vietnam, and in response Hargis encouraged increased bombings and referred to the NCC's platforms as a domestic "second

---

[185] Newsletter, Billy James Hargis, "An Important Message from BJH: Fronts and the Party Line Prosper in the National Council," Wednesday, February 24, 1960, 2 in "Folder 30 - BJH Writings - National Council of Churches, 1958-1960," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[186] Newsletter, Billy James Hargis, "An Important Message from BJH: Modernism in the National Council of Churches," Thursday, February 25, 1960, 2 in "Folder 30 - National Council of Churches 1958-1960," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[187] For more on the history of Presbyterianism, see: Bradley J. Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2013); Sean Michael Lucas, *For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2015).

[188] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: The National Council's Peace Propaganda," May 27, 1960, 1 in "Folder 20 - Newspaper Column For and Against May-November 1960," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[189] Proposed Newspaper Column, Billy James Hargis, "For and Against!: Walks for Peace," April 1961, 1 in "Folder 21 - Newspaper Column For and Against Feb 1961-Jan 1962," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

front" against American soldiers overseas.[190] However, Hargis never successfully linked the National Council of Churches to communism, and clearly Hargis's attacks against the NCC were equal parts political and religious. Hargis's distaste for the NCC was partially the result of religious interpretational differences. Hargis accused council ministers of no longer believing in the Bible because some NCC ministers rejected Biblical inerrancy, and he offered a place of worship to followers who formerly associated with NCC churches.[191] The NCC represented, in some ways, the polar opposite of Hargis and the Christian Crusade: a liberal-left religious organization that used the pulpit to advocate political and societal change in the United States.

By the early 1960s the Christian Crusade had grown into a million-dollar-a-year operation, and Hargis's inflammatory, politically-driven radio broadcasts caught the attention of John F. Kennedy's administration and the Internal Revenue Service. At its founding in 1947, Hargis's Crusade was classified as an educational organization, which qualified it for tax-exempt status from the IRS. Concerns about the prevalence and influence of far-right tax-exempt societies led JFK's administration to create the Ideological Organizations Project (IOP), a branch within the IRS that targeted political opposition groups.[192] Using tax audits to obfuscate the project's true intentions, the IOP investigated numerous groups along the right-wing fringe, including Hargis's Christian Crusade. The IOP reviewed and sustained the

---

[190] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "The National Council of Churches Allies with North Viet Nam," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publication, undated) in "Folder 30 - BJH Writings - National Council of Churches 1958-1960," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

[191] Pamphlet, Billy James Hargis, "Facts Concerning the Church of the Christian Crusade: A Sincere Effort to Practice New Testament Christianity" (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications), 3 in "Folder 19 - Billy James Hargis Miscellaneous Materials," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[192] John A. Andrews III, *Power to Destroy: The Political Uses of the IRS from Kennedy to Nixon* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 27.

Christian Crusade's tax exemption multiple times in the early 1960s, but political pressures from the national IRS office in 1964 led to the revocation of the Crusade's exempt status.[193] The IRS accused Hargis of attempting to influence legislation like the Becker Amendment, which was a proposed Constitutional amendment protecting the right to practice religion in public school submitted by New York Congressman Frank Becker (R-NY).[194] The IRS concluded that Hargis advocated specific views on numerous topics, ranging from agriculture to urban renewal, and that Hargis used the Crusade's media platforms to support or criticize specific political candidates.[195]

Hargis viewed the revocation of the Christian Crusade's tax exemption as politically-motivated harassment. Incensed by the IRS's ruling, Hargis retorted, "This is clearly an attack upon religious liberty and free exercise of religion as guaranteed in the First Amendment."[196] Hargis pointed out that the liberal National Council of Churches was not scrutinized by the IRS despite the NCC's political advocacy. The Crusade issued a pamphlet to fight the IRS's charges in which Hargis argued that this disparity indicated "liberty for religious liberals but no religious liberty for conservatives or fundamentalists."[197] Furthermore, Hargis accused the government of playing favorites when it came to tax exemptions, even going so far as labeling Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, "America's first dictator."[198] He also

---

[193] Ibid., 48-49.

[194] Dierenfeld, *The Battle over School Prayer*, 181-182.

[195] Billy James Hargis, "Internal Revenue Service Package," (Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade Publications, 1966), 4 in "Folder 7 - Tax Exempt Status - US v Christian Echoes National Ministry," Box 4, BJHP, UASC. Andrews III, *Power to Destroy*, 51.

[196] Ibid., 2.

[197] Ibid.

[198] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, "Free Speech for Conservatives is Dying in LBJ's U.S.A.," 1968, 1 in "Folder 16 - BJH Clippings, 1968 (2 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

inaccurately accosted the FCC for censoring the political views of far-right conservatives by noting the disparity in radio and television time offered to presidential candidates in 1968.[199] The major news networks, NBC, ABC, and CBS, donated $6 million in free time to Republican and Democratic candidates, but did not donate any airtime to Wallace's third party campaign.[200] To Hargis, this represented a smoking gun of liberal media bias.

The IRS in the 1960s struggled to delineate the dividing line between political commentary and political activism—an issue at the heart of its accusations against Hargis's Christian Crusade. Historian John A. Andrews III asked, "Was [the IOP] really aimed at tax-exempt organizations that had violated the Internal Revenue Code? Or was it an effort that used any pretext to crack down on right-wing organizations in order to muzzle their opposition to government policies?"[201] The IRS contended that Hargis's organization had indeed flouted tax policies, and its decision to revoke the Crusade's tax-exempt status in 1964 was easily defensible. Hargis used the Crusade as a platform for attacking multiple political issues, like sex education, and politicians despite making claims to the contrary; plus, Hargis actively tried to foster a nationwide, grassroots conservative political movement through the crusade's media outlets and activist base. In one radio address Hargis dissembled, "No matter how much I would want to endorse Gov. Wallace or Richard Nixon or Sen. Goldwater or any other candidate, I wouldn't dare subvert our present litigation

---

[199] Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*, 19-20.

[200] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, "Right is Right," August 15, 1968, 1 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[201] Andrews, *Power to Destroy*, 50.

against the Internal Revenue Service."[202] Such a statement amounted to an implicit endorsement of conservative candidates, but Hargis maintained that the Christian Crusade had done nothing to "justify the government's cruel and oppressive punishment."[203] In one way Hargis was correct: the IRS probed right-wing groups at a higher rate than leftist organizations. However, John A. Andrews III revealed that ultraconservative groups were often guilty of violating IRS laws.[204] Hargis maintained his innocence, but Heather Hendershot agreed with the IRS's decision, noting that the Christian Crusade was a "blatantly political organization" following a politically and religiously conservative agenda.[205]

Conservative politicians agreed with Hargis's contention that conservative groups, and especially the Christian Crusade, were unfairly targeted by the federal government. Speaking on the House floor in 1967, U.S. Representative M. G. (Gene) Snyder (R-KY) observed, "I suspect the problem is that Dr. Hargis' [sic] organization is on the wrong side of the center line of the highway to suit the Federal Government."[206] One year later, James B. Utt made a similar argument, noting that the IRS found Walter Knott of Knott's Berry Farm liable for tax deductions for contributions Knott made to the conservative California Free Enterprise Association. Utt linked Hargis's fight against the IRS to the Knott's Berry Farm

---

[202] Radio Script, Billy James Hargis, "Guilt By Association," undated, 4 in "Folder 24 - Radio Scripts 1968 (1 of 2)," Box 1, BJHP, UASC.

[203] Billy James Hargis, *Why I Fight for a Christian America* (New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1974), 98.

[204] Andrews, *Power to Destroy*, 28, 30.

[205] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 193.

[206] Congressional Record—Appendix, "The Double Standard of tax Exemption" Hon. M. G. (Gene) Snyder of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives, October 18, 1967, A5140 in "Folder 46 - Christian Crusade Articles, *Congressional Record*, 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

issue, both of which Utt considered blatant liberal hypocrisy that hinted at communist subversion. Utt marveled, "It is amazing how easy it is to deduct money for . . . left-wing organizations which support the socialistic Communist ideology, but when you attempt to educate people on the free enterprise capitalist system, you are then dispensing political propaganda."[207] Both Utt and Snyder were hardline conservatives, especially regarding racial issues, but, significantly, neither hailed from a southern state nor carried the Democrat standard. Utt and Snyder indicated the ongoing reorientation of U.S. politics as conservatives increasingly gathered under the Republican banner, but their views also illustrated that Hargis's fight against the IRS captured the attention and sympathies of like-minded, mainstream politicians.

For a man that built his anti-communist empire on the foundation of religion, it was ironic that a sexual scandal destroyed his million dollar Christian Crusade ministry. In the late 1960s Hargis founded the American Christian College in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to serve as an institution of higher education within Hargis's sprawling ministry. The purpose of American Christian College was to offer an education based on anti-communism and patriotic Americanism, and as president of the college Hargis maintained close contact with the student body. In 1974 a male student revealed Hargis's sexual predation to the college's Vice President and long-time Crusader David Noebel. According to Noebel, the student married another student in a wedding conducted by Hargis. Then, as *Time* magazine reported, "on the honeymoon, the groom and his bride discovered that both of them had slept with

[207] Congressional Record—Extension of Remarks, "Double Standard: U.S. Style," Hon. James B. Utt of California, April 24, 1968, E3262 in "Folder 46 - Christian Crusade Articles, *Congressional Record*, 1967," Box 2, BJHP, UASC.

Hargis."[208] Ultimately five students, including four men, accused Hargis of having sexual relations with them.

Perhaps most shocking was the revelation that Hargis used the Bible to support his secretive homosexual acts. According to the students, Hargis detailed the "friendship between David and Jonathan" as Biblical evidence supporting homosexuality, and he further "threatened to blacklist the youths for life if they talked."[209] When pressed for a response by *Time* interviewers, Hargis meekly replied, "I have made more than my share of mistakes. I'm not proud of them."[210] Hargis's statement did not satisfy the curiosities of contemporaries. When confronted with the accusations by David Noebel, Hargis admitted to his actions and nebulously blamed it on "genes and chromosomes."[211] This led to Hargis's removal from the presidency of the college, and signaled the downfall of Hargis and the Christian Crusade. The crusade limped into the 1980s, but Hargis never again regained his fame or integrity as a crusader for fundamentalist Protestantism and far-right conservatism.

Even before the sex scandals destroyed Hargis's empire, he failed to reach the respectability of other conservative evangelists. One modern commentator noted that "if Oral Roberts never quite achieved the respectability of Billy Graham, Billy Hargis never quite achieved the respectability of Oral Roberts."[212] As a result, when the Religious Right coalesced under evangelical preachers like Billy Graham, Hargis was ostracized from the

---

[208] "The Sins of Billy James," *Time*, Vol. 107, No. 7 (February 16, 1976): 68.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Stanton Doyle, "The Watchman on the Wall," *This Land*, Vol. 3, No. 21 (November 1, 2012).

inner circle.[213] This could partially be attributed to Hargis's reputation as an obstinate hardliner or the lingering damage from the sex scandal, but it also signaled that the conservative movement was outgrowing the vehement anti-communism upon which it was partially built. However, being on the outside looking in meant that Hargis's Crusade did not need to abide by the same rules of decorum as Graham's ministry, and Hargis refused to drop his anti-communistic rhetoric. As the conservatism of the late 1960s and 1970s moved away from anti-communism and toward the language of liberty, "law and order," and individual rights, Hargis's platforms proved increasingly out-of-touch.

The expansion of Hargis's Christian Crusade ministry throughout the 1960s highlighted the connections between far-right anti-communism and modern conservatism. Contemporary critics castigated Hargis and the Christian Crusade as a fringe movement, but his writings and speeches mirrored the platforms and thoughts of many mainstream conservative citizens and politicians. Conservative leaders like William Buckley and evangelicals like Billy Graham had a more reputable national standing, but Hargis helped energize new constituencies of conservatives during the 1950s and 1960s, especially throughout the Sunbelt. Hargis used the Christian Crusade as a platform to promote far-right religious and political values, resembling an early prototype of the right-wing evangelical movement that exploded with Billy Graham and the Religious Right.[214]

---

[213] The literature on the Religious Right is broad. For more, see: Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*; Kruse, *One Nation Under God*; *God's Own Party*.

[214] My work aligns with Heather Hendershot's definition of Hargis as a "prototelevangelist." Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 173.

Hargis highlighted the ties between modern conservatism and Christian fundamentalism by combining far-right activism with evangelical principles. Hargis was an early pioneer of grassroots fundraising, especially via direct mailers, which the Republican Party would later use to great effect. He also moved away from overt racial rhetoric to conversations involving states' rights and "law and order," mirroring a similar conservative evolution toward social conservatism and anti-welfarism.[215] Hargis's Balloon Project illustrated how Protestant evangelicals could confront international communism, and political issues in general, through church-based action. The fight against sex education transpired in a similar manner with Hargis arguing that socio-political traditionalism and religious doctrine should determine public school curricula. Even Hargis's battles against the civil rights movement were laced with a combination of Biblical and race-baiting rhetoric. While Hargis did not create the blueprint for fusing political conservatism and religious fundamentalism, the Christian Crusade presented a radical reinterpretation of American history, especially regarding the influence of religion, that appealed to his Sunbelt constituency.[216] This group of crusaders eventually funneled into the more palatable Religious Right movement, bolstering the number of hardened, ideological warriors.

Perhaps Hargis's greatest achievement was that he was an early advocate for greater coordination among conservatives, regardless of his failure to create a lasting, "coherent conservative *movement*."[217] Through the Crusade's donation drives, media platforms, and speaking tours, Hargis focused conservatives on the perceived ubiquitous communist dangers

---

[215] Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement*, 235-243; Self, *All in the Family*, 399-420.

[216] Daniel K. Williams wrote that Hargis and the Christian Crusade proffered a "conservative interpretation of America's religious heritage." Williams, *God's Own Party*, 41.

[217] Hendershot, *What's Fair*, 174.

in the United States. This put him in contact with other like-minded far-rightists, like General Walker and Robert Welch, who fought the same enemies with equal vehemence. Hargis's conventions, anti-communist schools, and Christian Crusade publications were all efforts to foment a grassroots conservative counter-revolution to fight liberalism. Though the Christian Crusade eventually fizzled under the weight of its anti-communist platforms and Hargis's sex scandal, Hargis and the Christian Crusade highlighted the role of anti-communism, conspiracy, and Protestant fundamentalism within midcentury conservatism.

Chapter Three

Divided Loyalty: Protestants and Other Americans United and Anti-Catholicism

"I can understand the desire of some preachers and editors to avoid a religious controversy," proclaimed Dr. Glenn Archer just before the presidential election in 1960, "But real patriots do not dodge issues merely because they are explosive."[1] Archer, the executive director of Protestants and Other Americans United (POAU), was speaking to a gathering of over 1,000 members and supporters of the Baltimore POAU chapter about the "religion issue" in the 1960 campaign. The upcoming presidential election signified a seminal moment for Archer and POAU because John F. Kennedy, a Roman Catholic, was running for the nation's highest office. Within an atmosphere of intrigue and conspiracy, Archer argued, "if [high-level politicians] subscribe to authoritarianism of any kind—clerical or communistic—American democracy and religious freedom are in real jeopardy."[2] Archer's speech condemned Roman clericalism and delineated his suspicion of Catholic subversion within American politics, which epitomized the anti-Catholicism that energized many right-wing Protestants during the election.

Protestants and Other Americans United represented the political and religious anxieties of many conservative evangelicals during the Cold War. Kennedy's candidacy, in particular, alarmed Protestant fundamentalists. The junior senator from Massachusetts advocated for parochial schools and stumped for liberal planks like urban renewal, increasing

---

[1] Charles Whiteford, "'Bigotry' Is Denied in Lyric Talk: Dr. Archer Refers to Kennedy in Attack On 'Roman Clericalism,'" *The Sun*, Nov. 2, 1960.

[2] Ibid.

the welfare safety net, and civil rights.[3] Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) described JFK's Democratic platform as a "blueprint for socialism" after withdrawing his name from the Republican nomination.[4] Kennedy's liberalism was not the only source of anxiety among right-leaning Americans—many also feared JFK's Catholic roots. Archer never mentioned Kennedy directly in his address to the POAU faithful, but his fear-mongering about "authoritarianism" highlighted the reservations many Protestants held toward Catholic politicians. Another POAU stalwart, Paul Blanshard, summarized the fears of anti-Catholic activists by questioning, "What will become of American democracy if the United States is captured by the Papists?"[5] Many fundamentalist evangelicals, especially within the Sunbelt, believed Protestant Christianity defined American culture and contended that a Catholic president would undermine the very fabric of society.[6] As a result, John F. Kennedy dealt with the "religion issue" throughout the entirety of his presidential campaign, and the anti-Catholicism stemming from POAU provided a gateway for criticizing both Catholicism and liberalism.

An analysis of POAU's organizational and activist history illustrates how hardline evangelicals viewed the Catholic Church as an opponent of church-state separation, which

---

[3] Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963*, (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown, and Co., 2003), 146-147. Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 18-21.

[4] Associated Press, "Goldwater Nominated, But Quickly Withdraws: Sen. Goldwater," *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1960. Mary C. Brennan wrote that Goldwater "painted a frightening portrait of JFK." Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 36.

[5] Paul Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1950), 266.

[6] Darren Dochuk details how fundamentalist evangelicalism moved from a localized, Bible Belt religious philosophy to a national brand of conservative politics in *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2011), xv.

inflamed Protestant anxieties toward Catholicism and catalyzed anti-Catholic political crusades. Utilizing a chronological approach to study POAU illustrates how the organization transformed from a civil liberties organization focused on strict Constitutionalism to a lodestone for anti-Catholic activism. POAU formed in 1947 to contest the perceived encroachment of Catholicism in the United States. The founders of POAU represented a mixture of Protestant ideologies and denominations, ranging from ecumenical evangelicals to hardline fundamentalists. Similarly, at its inception POAU housed a broad array of political views, including liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans.[7]

What tied this disparate group together was a fear that the Catholic Church, and Catholic politicians, were determined to erode the barrier separating church and state. As Blanshard noted, "The Catholic problem as I see it is not primarily a religious problem: it is an institutional and political problem."[8] An examination of POAU's ideologies reveals that the anxiety toward Catholicism often took the form of conspiracy theories and reflected the anti-communism of the mid-twentieth century. POAU likened the Catholic Church to communism because of the Church's strict hierarchy and governmental influence in nations like Spain and Italy, but this linkage to communism represented delusional thinking rather

---

[7] The Catholic Church received criticism from both sides of the political aisle, but this dissertation focuses primarily on the right-wing Protestant response to midcentury Catholicism. Religious scholar Philip Jenkins contended that the anti-Catholic response emerged from the left: "American anti-Catholicism of the mid-twentieth century foreshadowed its modern counterpart in important respects, in often being a middle-class and elite movement that was generally associated with leftist or liberal political opinions. As so often in the past, Catholicism symbolized the forces opposing Americanism, but this time progressives were attacking the Church for its repressiveness and anti-modernity, and its alleged sympathy for totalitarianism," in *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 32. This chapter assesses the other side of Jenkins's argument because the emergent anti-Catholicism of the mid-twentieth century displayed a notable conservative bent, especially regarding Catholic politicians like John F. Kennedy. Religious liberals indeed criticized the Catholic Church's hierarchical nature and inflexibility, but this chapter examines how right-wingers harnessed anti-Catholicism as a political weapon during the Cold War.

[8] Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 3.

than logical reasoning.[9] Nevertheless, anti-Catholic fears animated POAU's crusade against the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, the potential influence of Catholicism in public schools, and John F. Kennedy's candidacy during the 1960 presidential campaign.

From its inception in 1947 to the election in 1960, POAU evolved from a civil liberties organization concerned about church-state separation to a bastion of anti-Catholic thought and propaganda. POAU pounced on President Harry Truman's nomination of General Mark W. Clark to serve as the U.S. government's first official Vatican ambassador. Numerous Protestant organizations, including POAU, viewed Clark's nomination as a dangerous precedent that would allow the Catholic Church to influence the government.[10] The controversy roared until Clark withdrew his name in 1951, and POAU viewed the failed appointment as a victory for church-state separation. Another integral facet of POAU's activism concerned the debate over public funding for private schools in the late 1940s through the 1950s. C. Stanley Lowell pontificated, "Priests of the Roman Catholic Church insist that they have been appointed by God to control education," and referred to nun teachers as "strangers to the concepts and practices of American democracy."[11] POAU supported a strict interpretation of the Constitution's Establishment Clause to prevent tax dollars from supporting private education, particularly Catholic schools, in any way. An analysis of the successful litigation tactics used by POAU to attack the poorly-defined line

---

[9] Ibid., 6; Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "The Last Best Hope: Insurance Against Holocaust," in "Folder - Religious Literature: Protestants and Other Americans United," Series - Issues: Religious Issue Files of James Wine, 1960, Collection - Presidential Campaign Files 1960, Pre-Presidential papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Retrieved from the JFK Digital Library: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKCAMP1960-1021-032.aspx. Future entries from this box will be shortened to POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[10] "Naming of Clark as Vatican Envoy Stirs Protest," *Daily Boston Globe*, October 21, 1951.

[11] Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "Captive Schools: An American Tragedy," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

separating parochial and public education indicates that POAU emerged as a prominent organization within the Protestant right wing.

Despite these political and legal victories, POAU's overarching philosophies—anti-clericalism and strict church-state separation—veiled an undercurrent of anti-Catholicism that manifested when Kennedy declared his candidacy. During the 1960 election POAU took on a decidedly sectarian character. POAU's leaders and local chapters used conspiratorial, anti-Catholic rhetoric and publications to evoke suspicion about Kennedy's Catholicism. Other right-wing ministers like W. A. Criswell and Vincent Norman Peale contributed to POAU's crusade against Kennedy. The campaign against Kennedy flourished in the Protestant-dominated Sunbelt, especially in states like Texas.[12] The overt political campaigning of POAU led the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to revoke POAU's tax exemption, underscoring that POAU frequently intertwined religion and politics despite stumping for church-state separation. Ultimately, the history of POAU illustrates how Cold War anxieties, especially anti-communism, abetted the rise of anti-Catholicism, which provides a lens through which to view the political and religious shifts during the mid-twentieth century.

Protestants and Other Americans United formed on November 20, 1947, to promote a strict separation between religion and the state, but this primary goal obscured an undercurrent of anti-Catholicism within the organization. At the time of its founding, POAU

[12] Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible Belt State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 10.

included Protestant ministers from a variety of denominations, including Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians, and Lutherans, as well as a consort of politicians, lawyers, and educators.[13] The ultraconservative, anti-Catholic bent remained veiled during POAU's early years as mainstream ministers, like Dr. Edwin McNeill and John Mackay, of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and Princeton Theological Seminary, led the organization into the political fray.[14] C. Stanley Lowell, who later became the associate director of POAU, wrote, "The year 1947 was critical for church-state relations in the United States."[15] That year, the same year of POAU's founding, Archbishop John Hughes's attempted to secure tax funding for parochial schools in the state of New York, which POAU's leadership viewed as a direct violation of church-state separation.[16] This event, among others, fostered an anxiety among Protestants that the Catholic Church wanted to alter the traditional socio-political norms of American society.

According to its 1947 manifesto, POAU's "single and only purpose" was to "assure the maintenance of the American principle of separation of church and state."[17] The overarching goal of Americans United was to "build a resistance movement designed to prevent the hierarchy from imposing its social policies upon our schools, hospitals, and family organization."[18] Even though POAU's name hinted that the organization theoretically

---

[13] Sarah Barringer Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools: Protestants, Catholics, and Education, 1945-1965," *DePaul Law Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Summer 2007): 1193.

[14] Ibid.

[15] C. Stanley Lowell, *Embattled Wall - Americans United: An Idea and a Man* (Washington, D.C.: Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1966), 1.

[16] Ibid., 1-2.

[17] Protestants and Other Americans United (POAU), "Separation of Church and State: A Manifesto by 'Protestants and Other Americans United,'" *The Christian Century*, Vol. 65, Issue 1 (January 21, 1948): 79.

[18] Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 303.

included non-Protestant "Other Americans," Protestant anxiety toward Catholic subversion dominated POAU's strict separatist ideology. Refusing to refer to the Catholic Church by name, POAU leaders asserted that "a powerful church . . . [had] committed itself in authoritarian declarations and by positive acts to a policy plainly subversive of religious liberty."[19] POAU denied any attempts to "propagandize for the Protestant faith" and disclaimed all forms of sectarianism, but the manifesto read as an anti-Catholic mission statement.[20]

POAU's belief in church-state separation was founded in a strict interpretation of the First Amendment, which garnered a dedicated following among conservative Protestants and politicians. By 1956 POAU chapters existed in all 50 states, mostly supported by fundamentalist Baptist membership, and in 1960 the organization claimed around 100,000 members.[21] POAU's monthly periodical, *Church and State*, had an estimated subscription base of 70,000 by 1959.[22] Circulation of *Church and State* doubled as religious anxieties increased during the buildup to Kennedy's campaign in 1960, with typical print runs ranging from 160,000 to 250,000.[23] Though POAU positioned itself as an apolitical, constitutional advocacy group, its ambitions stretched beyond the maintenance of American traditions and into the realm of political activism. POAU networked with many politicians, including

---

[19] Ibid., 79.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Mary Anne Boylan, "The Origins and Ideological Developments of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1945-1969," (master's thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1970), 56.

[22] Lawrence P. Creedon and William D. Falcon, *United for Separation: An Analysis of POAU Assaults on Catholicism*, (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Bruce, 1959), 13-14.

[23] Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 147.

Senators Tom Connally of Texas and Robert Kerr of Oklahoma.[24] U.S. Representative Tom Steed (D-OK) spoke at POAU's Sixth Annual Banquet, and Representative Eugene Siler (R-KY) once performed legal work for POAU.[25] These connections helped thrust POAU onto the national stage, where it epitomized the anti-Catholic anxieties of the mid-twentieth century far-right.

Three voices dominated Americans United by 1960: executive director Glenn L. Archer, associate director C. Stanley Lowell, and Congregationalist minister Paul Blanshard. These men tilted POAU's ideological direction toward conspiratorial anti-Catholicism. Archer worked as a professional educator and the Dean of Washburn University Law School. A GOP stalwart, Archer stumped for Alf Landon during the Kansas governor's 1936 presidential campaign, and he did a great deal of the writing and public relations work for POAU.[26] Lowell was a Methodist clergyman and the editor of *Church State Review*, and he wrote or edited most of POAU's propaganda.[27] He also penned a significant amount of POAU's anti-Catholic pamphlets during the 1960 presidential election. Blanshard spent years as a union activist and Congregationalist minister, and he even had ties to Norman Thomas of the Socialist Party.[28] Despite his ties to leftist politics, Blanshard endeavored as POAU's main propagandist. His book, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, was a conspiratorial treatise on the perceived dangers of the Catholic Church, selling over 300,000 copies by

---

[24] Creedon and Falcon, *United for Separation*, 11.

[25] Ibid., 17.

[26] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and Captive Schools," 1196.

[27] Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "Protestants, Catholics, & Politics," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[28] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and Captive Schools," 1197.

1966.[29] With over 100,000 supporters by 1960, POAU represented both the widespread suspicion of Catholicism within Protestant ranks as well as the continuation of historical anti-Catholic ideologies.[30] Not all members were far-right political conservatives, but the church-state separatist views proffered by POAU's leadership inflamed anti-Catholic anxieties and influenced conservative arguments against liberal Catholic politicians.

The overarching concern for Americans United was the perceived encroachment of clericalism in the United States and around the world. Lowell defined clericalism as "the political use of religious influence by a church for the purpose of its own aggrandizement," and he declared that the wariness of clericalism "inspired" the founding of POAU.[31] In a speech at the 1952 POAU Annual Meeting Dr. John Mackay, POAU vice president and president of Princeton Theological Seminary, articulated, "clericalism is the pursuit of power, especially political power, by a religious hierarchy, carried on by secular methods and for the purpose of social domination."[32] POAU contended that the anxiety regarding clericalism did not apply to Protestantism because Protestant denominations lacked a strict hierarchy comparable to the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, this fear of clericalism undergirded POAU's antipathy toward other interrelated issues like the potential appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican and public support for parochial schools.[33] According to Lowell,

---

[29] Boylan, "The Origins and Ideological Developments," 21; Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1198; Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 45.

[30] Boylan, "Origins and Ideological Development" 56.

[31] Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 8.

[32] "Constructive Opposition Urged Church-State Tie," *The Christian Science Monitor*, May 1, 1952.

[33] Mary Anne Boylan argued that POAU's major focus was preventing tax money from financing parochial schools and fighting against an appointment of a Vatican ambassador. I argue that these are crucial elements of POAU's ideology that fall under the larger umbrella of anti-clerical anxiety. Boylan, "The Origins and Ideological Developments," 1.

the push for tax-payer funded parochial schools and an ambassador to the Vatican were "merely a phase in [the Catholic hierarchy's] larger program of clerical domination."[34]

The perceived encroachment of clericalism led POAU leaders and members to see most, if not all, of the activities of the Catholic Church as nefarious and subversive.[35] Protestants like Lowell and Blanshard considered the Catholic hierarchy a dangerous actor seeking to erode the Constitutional foundation of church and state through clerical control. Lowell believed "that the outer defenses of church-state separation have been overrun by the enemy and that we shall be battling now in defense of the inner citadel."[36] Blanshard warned that Rome had a "master plan" for installing "the Roman Catholic Church in a unique position of privilege" in the United States.[37] Blanshard even speculated that the Roman Catholic Church would make amendments to the U.S. Constitution in order to create a more amenable society for Catholic control. He assumed the first alteration would be the installation of Catholicism as the official religion of the United States.[38]

Protestants and Other Americans United attacked Catholicism by likening the Roman Catholic Church to international communism because the Church had a strict hierarchy and centralized control. This illustrated a deep mistrust of Catholicism and POAU's willingness to harness Cold War anxieties as a weapon of religious intolerance. Dick Houston Hall—

---

[34] Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 9.

[35] Philip Jenkins argued that this mentality stretches back to colonial times: "The concept of anti-clericalism is particularly important in the United States because it reflects a potent strand of American Protestant culture, with its roots in colonial times. Americans have often shown themselves resentful of clergy and clerical attempts to influence politics, and the most successful religious movements have often been those that entrusted most power to the laity." Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism*, 12.

[36] Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 149.

[37] Blanshard, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, 270.

[38] Ibid., 267.

minister of First Baptist Church in Decatur, Georgia, and member of POAU's national advisory council— compared the defeat of Nazi Germany and the Cold War struggle against Soviet communism to POAU's fight against Catholicism in America. He viewed the Roman Catholic Church as a predominant threat, accusing the Church of "constantly trying to undermine the fundamental bulwark of our way of life."[39] Hall's pamphlet, titled "Many Faiths, One Freedom," asserted that Roman Catholicism permeated every facet of society, used public money to fund its subversive activities, and eventually eroded a country's political and religious freedom once in power.[40]

This suspicion of Catholicism was not limited to POAU members; it flourished among the Protestant right-wing.[41] Dr. Dennis J. Brown, a Baptist minister unaffiliated with POAU, wrote a handbill that contained similar themes. Brown's pamphlet, titled "Catholic Political Power vs. Religious Liberty," equated Catholicism with communism and asserted that Catholic politicians, JFK specifically, lacked the ability to separate religion from public office.[42] Many Protestants viewed the Catholic hierarchy as analogous to communist dictatorships, which abetted the conspiratorial anti-communism in POAU's pamphlets. Men like Blanshard and Lowell, alongside POAU's membership, viewed the Catholic Church as a global leviathan bent on infiltrating and controlling American politics.

---

[39] Pamphlet, Dick Houston Hall, "Many Faiths, One Freedom," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Darren Dochuk noted how evangelical Protestants "recoiled when any formal religious body (Catholicism especially) seemed to acquire special access to power." Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 16. Mark Massa argued that Protestantism is characterized as the "civil religion," which relegated Catholics, among others, as aliens within American Society. This "othering" enabled nativist fears of Catholic subversion. Mark J. Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 2003), 3.

[42] Pamphlet, "Catholic Political Power vs. Religious Liberty," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

POAU's arguments about Catholic subversion skewed toward conspiracy rather than credible caution because no mechanism allowed a politician to institute a Catholic theocracy in the United States. Catholic politicians like Al Smith and John F. Kennedy—the two most famous Catholics that ran for president in the twentieth century— repeatedly disavowed the influence of Catholicism in their political life.[43] Furthermore, POAU's philosophy disregarded the fact that the Catholic conservatives, like William F. Buckley Jr., contributed to the midcentury conservative movement.[44] The conspiratorial warnings of POAU disregarded these facts and alleged that the Catholic Church was bent on dominating American society. The anxiety regarding Catholic influence arose in the mid-twentieth century for a number of reasons: the potential appointment of a U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, the fuzzily defined line separating public and private schools, and John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign in 1960. Cold War conspiracy theories and concerns about internal communist subversion provided additional ammunition for Protestants who viewed the Catholic Church as anathema to American values.[45] POAU positioned itself, in the minds of its leaders and members, as the final barricade between Catholic tyranny and democratic religious freedom.

---

[43] Al Smith wrote a public letter to New York attorney Charles C. Marshall denying a conflict of loyalty between the Catholic Church and U.S. politics and affirmed his belief in church-state separation. In the letter Smith noted, "I should be a poor American and a poor Catholic alike if I injected religious discussions into a political campaign." "Al Smith Tells How He Stands As A Catholic: New York Governor Says He Recognizes No Power In Church Over Law—Holds Constitution Must Be Inviolate," *The Sun*, April 18, 1927. Similarly, throughout the 1960 presidential campaign John F. Kennedy reiterated his belief in firm church-state separation. This issue will be tackled in the latter half of this chapter.

[44] Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), x.

[45] Ellen Schrecker noted that the hysterical language used to spread anti-communist anxieties resembled the anti-Catholic language of the nineteenth century, in *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1998), 47-48. POAU and other Protestants used this same language to demonize Catholics during the mid-twentieth century.

When President Harry Truman nominated General Mark W. Clark, a Protestant, to be the first official U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican in 1951, POAU claimed the appointment represented a dangerous mixture of church and state. Truman selected Clark partially because Pope Pius XII had lightly pressured the president to appoint an ambassador as a way to normalize relations, but Truman was aware of the potential for a religious debacle.[46] Despite favorable coverage from the secular press and some liberal Protestants, many conservative fundamentalist ministers rallied their congregations to defeat Clark's nomination.[47] Numerous popular Protestant groups and individuals led the attack against Clark's appointment, among them POAU and Carl McIntire. McIntire's radio show, 20th Century Reformation Hour—a prominent hub for anti-modernism, anti-liberal, and anti-Catholic thought—was carried by over 600 stations by 1967, and his weekly publication, *Christian Beacon*, had a subscription base of 84,700.[48] Regarding the appointment of a Vatican ambassador, McIntire argued that President Truman "drove a sword deep into the heart of Protestant America."[49] He further denounced Clark's appointment by declaring it unconstitutional and in danger of unifying church and state. POAU agreed with McIntire,

---

[46] George J. Gill, "The Truman Administration and Vatican Relations," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (July 198): 418-419.

[47] Father William O'Brien, "General Clark's Nomination as Ambassador to the Vatican: American Reaction," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (January, 1959): 422.

[48] Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster, *The Radical Right: A Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies* (New York: Random House, 1966), 6, 25. Numerous studies examine McIntire's radio programs and their political leanings. For more, see: Patrick Farabaugh, "Carl McIntire and His Crusade Against the Fairness Doctrine," (PhD Diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2010); Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?: Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 102-136.

[49] Pamphlet, Reverend Carl McIntire, "Shall the U.S. Have an Ambassador to the Vatican?" in "Folder 17," Box 547, Subseries 4:3 Publications by Carl McIntire and Others, The Carl McIntire Manuscript Collection, Princeton Theological Seminary Library.

stating in its manifesto that such an appointment "constitute[d] an interlocking of the functions of church and state."[50]

Father William O'Brien, a Catholic historian, noted that the "incendiarism" stemming from a few Protestant groups galvanized the reaction against Clark's appointment, but O'Brien failed to acknowledge the political opposition to the creation of a Vatican ambassador.[51] Indeed, Protestant fundamentalists opposed the idea of a Vatican ambassador, but conservative politicians like Texan Tom Connally (D-TX), a U.S. senator and the chair of the Foreign Relations Committee, spearheaded the political opposition to a Vatican ambassador. Though a moderate on economic policy, Connally supported the xenophobic Smith Act—controversial legislation passed in 1940 that targeted radicals encouraging a revolution the United States—and opposed the anti-lynching bill. Less of a fiery public leader, Connally "instead operated with the cover of secrecy in the Senate cloak room."[52] Connally's opposition to Clark's appointment was not simply conservative posturing—his position in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee allowed Connally to place Truman's appointment on permanent hold.

Connally opposed the appointment of an emissary to the Vatican, regardless of the person nominated, but he held special contempt for Clark. In January 1944 Clark ordered the Thirty-sixth "Texas" Infantry Division to cross the Rapido River into the teeth of the German defense, which resulted in one of the worst defeats dealt to the U.S. military during World

---

[50] POAU, "Separation of Church and State," 80.

[51] O'Brien, "General Clark's," 439.

[52] Nancy Beck Young, *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 181.

War II. Connally blamed Clark, rightly so, for the reckless attack.[53] When announcing his opposition to the Vatican ambassador, Connally declared that Clark's actions in the war proved that the general was "unfit" for any office.[54] Beholden to his conservative Protestant constituency, Connally noted that he received twenty telegrams in opposition to the Clark appointment based on religious grounds, and multiple other southern senators received similar complaints.[55]

Protestants and Other Americans United tapped into the political and religious discontent created by Truman's nomination of Clark as an ambassador to the Vatican. Glenn Archer insisted POAU's opposition to Clark stemmed from a desire to maintain church-state separation.[56] A statement from Archer read, "The Vatican cannot eat its cake and have it, too. It can't be a church one minute and a state the next."[57] Archer called the nomination a "national emergency," and Paul Blanshard embarked on a ten-week tour to encourage

---

[53] General Fred L. Walker, Clark's subordinate in 1944 that was ordered to carry out the attack, later described the action: "It was a tragedy that this fine Division had to be wrecked later in an attempt to do the impossible. It was ordered to cross the Rapido River directly in front of the strongest German positions under conditions that violated sound tactical principles . . . The Division did not have one single advantage in its favor. Everything favored the Germans. I pointed out the difficulties and tried to have the order changed so the crossing could be made further north. My superiors were adamant." Fred L. Walker, "The 36th Was a Great Fighting Division," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (July 1968): 42-43. Historians have judged General Clark culpable for the massacre at Rapido River. For more, see: Martin Blumenson, *Bloody River: The Real Tragedy of the Rapido* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1970); Lee Carraway Smith, *A River Swift and Deadly: The 36th "Texas" Infantry Division at the Rapido River* (Asutin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1989).

[54] "Opposition to Vatican Envoy Stirs Doubt of Confirmation," *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1951. Chicago Tribune Press Services, "Connally Says He'll Oppose Envoy to Pope: Certain Clark Can't Win Senate Approval," *Chicago Sunday Tribune*, Jan. 13, 1952; William S. White, "Senate Fight on Vatican Envoy Set With Delay in Committees Planned," *New York Times*, Oct. 30, 1951.

[55] "Opposition to Vatican Envoy Stirs Doubt of Confirmation," *New York Times*, Oct. 23, 1951.

[56] "Naming of Clark as Vatican Envoy Stirs Protest," *Daily Boston Globe*, October 21, 1951.

[57] Chicago Tribune Press Service, "Clark's Vatican Post Snagged By His Army Status," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 23, 1951.

Protestants and Congress to reject the nomination.[58] POAU and Archer also referred to the controversy as a "betrayal" and "an effort to revolutionize the American government" based on "dubious constitutionality."[59] Other major figures in the Protestant community joined POAU's denunciation of Clark's nomination, from reform-minded Methodist minister G. Bromley Oxnam to hardline fundamentalist Carl McIntire.[60] Historian Darren Dochuk postulated that the controversy over appointing an ambassador to the Vatican resulted from competition between Catholics and Protestants, especially regarding religious conversion efforts. Dochuk argued that this turf war fostered a distrust of Catholics, which evolved "into anxiety about Rome's rise in national affairs."[61] Ultimately, in the face of both grassroots and high-profile criticism, Clark removed his name from consideration and the United States did not have an official representative to the Holy See until 1968.[62]

The anti-Catholic anxieties that animated the attack against Clark's appointment also propelled POAU's midcentury fight against parochial schools. POAU believed the Catholic Church sought to transform public schools into private Catholic institutions, an idea informed by POAU's conspiratorial anti-clericalism. The modern push for creating parochial schools started in 1829 when the first provincial council of bishops declared it was "absolutely

---

[58] "Protestants Join in Assailing Step: Leaders Call Naming Envoy to Vatican Unconstitutional and Blow to U.S. Unity," *New York Times*, October 21, 1951; Chicago Tribune Press Service, "Clark's Vatican Post Snagged By His Army Status," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 23, 1951; Paul Blanshard, "One-Sided Diplomacy," *Atlantic* 189 (January 1952): 52-54.

[59] "Vatican Envoy Called Breach of Constitution: Protestant Group Blasts Truman Move," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 22, 1951; "Naming of Clark as Vatican Envoy Stirs Protest," *Daily Boston Globe*, October 21, 1951.

[60] "Protestants Join in Assailing Step: Leaders Call Naming Envoy to Vatican Unconstitutional and Blow to U.S. Unity," *New York Times*, October 21, 1951.

[61] Dochuk, *From the Bible Belt*, 105.

[62] O'Brien, "General Clark's," 439.

necessary that schools should be established in which the young may be taught the principles of faith and morality while being instructed in letters."[63] Then, in 1864, Pope Pius IX criticized Catholic parents who enrolled their children in public schooling if a parochial school was available. The Catholic Church's educational mission to create a network of parochial schools flourished in the late nineteenth century while Protestants abandoned their own plans for erecting private schools. As CQ Press writer H. B. Shaffer observed, "Three major denominations—Baptist, Congregational, and Methodist—made little effort to keep denominational schools going," which, in turn, led to greater Protestant support for the expansion of a public school system.[64] By the mid-twentieth century Catholic schools were the primary form of private education in the United States with roughly 12 percent of all elementary and secondary students enrolled in a Catholic school by 1957.[65] However, the theoretically stark division between public and private school was misleading. As scholar Sarah Barringer Gordon pointed out, public school officials "relied on local Catholic priests and women religious to staff public schools, and often used church buildings as public elementary and secondary schools in the 1940s and 1950s."[66] This Catholic influence was especially noticeable in small towns that lacked the tax base to support both a Catholic

---

[63] H. B. Shaffer, "Church-Related Education," *Editorial Research Reports 1958*, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1958), Retrieved from http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre1958032600 on March 8, 2016; N. I. Gelman, "Religion in Politics," *Editorial Research Reports 1959*, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1959), Retrieved from http://library.cqpress.com/cqresearcher/cqresrre1959090900 on March 9, 2015; Clearly a much longer history of parochial schooling exists in the United States, particularly in the Spanish missions in the Southwest. However, delving into that rich history would detract from constructing an overview of Catholicism's influence on the modern public education system of the 1940s and 1950s.

[64] Shaffer, "Church-Related Education."

[65] Ibid.

[66] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1177.

school and a public school, which prompted districts to incorporate parochial schools, and the religious faculty, into the public system.[67]

This intermingling of public and private school expanded between 1925 and 1950, which enraged conservative Protestants who believed the Establishment Clause—the section of the First Amendment that prohibited the federal government from establishing a religion or preventing the free exercise of religion—necessitated a strict separation between church and state.[68] Protestants and Other Americans United adhered to this interpretation and referred to these "Catholic-public" schools as "captive" schools. POAU claimed that the fight against parochial schools represented a facet of the organization's larger fight against clericalism, but it also reflected the broader Protestant desire to maintain its preponderant influence in the public school system.[69] Historian Kevin Kruse noted, "In general, these civil liberties groups accepted the then-common claim that the First Amendment mandated the separation of church and state but not the separation of religion and politics."[70] The controversy over parochial schooling also illustrated how the Cold War shaped battles over education. After World War II education took on new importance to combat the Soviet menace, and Catholics and Protestants viewed their schooling system—private or public—as the best defense against communist subversion.[71] When a 1947 court case, *Everson v. Board*

---

[67] Ibid., 1202.

[68] Ibid., 1177-1178.

[69] Shaffer, "Church-Related Education."

[70] Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), xvi.

[71] Sarah Barringer Gordon noted, "In the late 1940s, the combatants were divided Christians, particularly conservative Catholics and Protestants, each convinced that their own vision of education was the only valid and sustainable one for American schoolchildren," Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1178; Shaffer, "Church-Related Education."

of Education, applied the Establishment Clause to individual states, POAU unleashed a flurry of litigation efforts in the late 1940s and into through 1950s to force the judiciary to delineate a strict church-state division.[72]

The fight against public funding for Catholic schools was constitutionally well-founded, and POAU won multiple legal victories throughout the mid-twentieth century. For example, in Dixon, New Mexico, an extreme admixture of parochial and secular schooling occurred at the local public elementary school. Public school students were forced to attend Catholic mass and the faculty wore traditional Catholic garb and provided religious instruction based on strict Catholic morals.[73] Glenn Archer and POAU directed litigation against the New Mexico Board of Education in 1948, which resulted in the *Zellers v. Huff* decision. The *Zellers* decision forced New Mexico schools to close public schools on Church property, deemed unconstitutional the provision of public funds for private school busing, banned religious instruction, and "permanently debarred one hundred thirty-seven religious found guilty of such instruction from further employment in the state's schools."[74] POAU established an investigative arm, the "POAU Remedial Program," to pursue this type of litigation throughout the 1950s, and the organization waged legal efforts in multiple states like Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and Texas.[75]

---

[72] Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "Captive Schools: An American Tragedy," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive; For more on the *Everson* case, see: Philip Hamburger *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 454-478.

[73] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1205.

[74] Ibid; Kathleen A. Holscher, "Habits in the Classroom: A Court Case Regarding Catholic Sisters in New Mexico," Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 2008, 288-289. For more on the Dixon case and the "captive schools" controversy, see: Kathleen A. Holscher, *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[75] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1207; C. Stanley Lowell, "If America Becomes 51% Catholic!" POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

The victory in Dixon increased the stature of POAU as a bulwark of strict constitutionalism and conservative Protestantism, but POAU's rhetoric often strayed from the acceptable realm of constitutional legality and toward the conspiratorial. In its manifesto POAU asserted that the long-term goal of the Catholic Church was to "secure total support for its extensive system of parochial schools" via public funding, often by violating Constitutional strictures or through subterfuge.[76] C. Stanley Lowell wrote a pamphlet in 1959, "Captive Schools: An American Tragedy," claiming that "hundreds" of "captive schools" existed in twenty-two states; however, Lowell gives no evidence or context for such a statement. Were all of these schools, which Lowell failed to list, similar to the severe example in Dixon, or did these hundreds of "captive" schools simply represent the slight Catholic influence of a predominantly Catholic area? Though never stated directly, Lowell implied that Catholics intended to usurp authority in the public school system on the direct order of the Vatican.[77] Catholic schools, in reality, operated like "disconnected individual enterprises" with no national hierarchy for elementary or secondary education.[78] Lowell neglected to note that parochial schools were required to meet state standards and that public school systems often incorporated Catholic schools rather than the other way around.[79] Regardless of the constitutionality of POAU's position, Lowell's rhetoric reflected the conspiratorial, suspicious populism that lurked within POAU throughout the 1950s, which

[76] POAU, "Separation of Church and State," 79.

[77] Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "Captive Schools: An American Tragedy," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[78] Shaffer, "Church-Related Education."

[79] Creedon and Falcon, *United for Separation*, 72-73, 80.

rightly engendered accusations of anti-Catholic bigotry and alienated POAU from potential allies like the American Civil Liberties Union.[80]

The belief that Catholicism muddled the separation between church and state was a driving force behind the "captive" school controversy, and POAU employed this conviction to target opponents in the political realm as well. Harold Fey, the editor of *The Christian Century*, gave a speech at the Eleventh National Conference of POAU, which was turned into a pamphlet titled "Can Catholicism Win America?"[81] Fey contended that a Catholic president would harm religious freedom in America and the separation between church and state. This argument foreshadowed the bitter struggle waged by POAU in 1960 to prevent John F. Kennedy's election. Lowell agreed with Fey; he defined Catholicism as an "alien" subculture and argued that religious freedom and Catholic doctrine represented a "conflict of interest."[82] In a POAU pamphlet titled "Protestants, Catholics, and Politics," Lowell presumed that Catholic politicians lacked the ability to withstand pressures from the Vatican, which, he contended, represented a dangerous blurring of the division between church and state. Legal scholar Sarah Barringer Gordon observed, "The Catholic Church painted by POAU rhetoric was rigidly hierarchical, monolithic, and secret. By contrast, and almost always through innuendo rather than direct argument, Protestants were portrayed as open, free, and public-spirited."[83] POAU's black-or-white binary did not represent reality because the American

---

[80] Sarah Barringer Gordon noted, "Archer and Blanshard, although both trained as lawyers, never developed a particular regard for legal craftsmanship nor did they attend prestigious law schools. The AJC and the ACLU, both older and more scholarly in their outlook, often disagreed with POAU's tactics and arguments," in Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1208.

[81] Pamphlet, Harold Fey, "Can Catholicism Win America?," undated in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[82] Pamphlet, C. Stanley Lowell, "Protestants, Catholics, and Politics" in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[83] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1204.

Catholic Church did not always adhere to the statutes of Rome. For example, in 1947 a critic asked John F. Kennedy if he was a "legal subject of the pope," to which John F. Kennedy responded, "There is an old saying in Boston that we get our religion from Rome and our politics from home."[84] JFK refuted the notion that his Catholic upbringing compromised the divide between church and state. Paradoxically, and perhaps hypocritically, many Protestants supported facets of religion in education, like school prayer and Bible readings.[85] In its literature and public statements POAU claimed its mission was "education and action," but in many ways the organization worked to maintain Protestant hegemony by fighting against Catholic influence in U.S. society.[86]

The rhetoric and activism of Protestants and Other Americans United during the 1950s tapped into a network of other conservative evangelicals that shared the anti-Catholic views of POAU, which coordinated an anti-Catholic movement against JFK during the 1960 presidential election. The rhetoric of POAU's leadership—especially Lowell, Blanshard, and Archer—increasingly pushed the organization further to the right. Gordon noted that "a whiff of bigotry hung in the air, despite POAU's disclaimers."[87] By the time the 1960 presidential election arrived POAU occupied a position on staunch anti-Catholic right-wing. A similar transition took place within the rank and file of the Southern Baptist Convention that

---

[84] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 146.

[85] According to Bruce J. Dierenfield more than eighty percent of school teachers in the South and East, thirty-eight percent in the Midwest, and fourteen percent in the West participated in morning prayers. Additionally, forty-one percent of schools across the nation had Bible reading, and one-third held morning devotionals. Bruce J. Dierenfeld, *The Battle over School Prayer: How* Engel v. Vitale *Changed America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 66.

[86] Pamphlet, "Truth Series No. 12 - A Strategy of Action: The Story of P. O. A. U.," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive; Casey, *Making*, 111.

[87] Gordon, "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools," 1200.

eventually ostracized moderates in favor of evangelical fundamentalists.[88] W. A. Criswell, a prominent fundamentalist, segregationist, and pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, served as a two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention in the late 1960s.[89] Before his heady days as the leader of the SBC, Criswell's ministry underscored his fusion of anti-Catholicism and Protestantism.

Criswell worked with POAU during the 1960 election to combat Kennedy's candidacy, and his sermons served as rallying points for JFK's religious detractors. Criswell warned that the Catholic Church constituted "a political system . . . that covers the entire world and threatens those basic freedoms and those constitutional rights for which our forefathers died in generations past."[90] He cited the constitutional separation between church and state to cast doubt upon Kennedy's Catholicism and regurgitated the faulty argument that Protestants believed in religious liberty while depicting the Catholic Church as monolithic and oppressive.[91] Most importantly, Criswell addressed the 1960 election by warning that the Catholic hierarchy controlled all Catholic actions, a widely-held belief of many Protestants. This statement ignored Kennedy's willingness to discuss his personal religious views,

---

[88] James C. Hefley, *The Truth in Crisis: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Dallas, Tex.: Criterion Publications, 1986), and Rob B. James, *The Fundamentalist Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention:A Brief History* (Timisoara, Romania: Impact Media, 1999). These two books give context to both sides of the conservative transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention.

[89] Timothy George, "The 'Baptist Pope'" *Christianity Today*, March 11, 2002; Wuthnow, *Rough Country*, 258-259.

[90] Pamphlet, W. A. Criswell, "Religious Freedom, the Church, the State, and Senator Kennedy," 3 in "Folder - Religious Literature: Criswell, Dr. W. A.," Series - Issues: Religious Issue Files of James Wine, 1960, Collection - Presidential Campaign Files 1960, Pre-Presidential papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Retrieved from the JFK Digital Library: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKCAMP1960-1019-007.aspx. Future entries from this box will be shortened to Criswell Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[91] W. A. Criswell, "Religious Freedom, the Church, the State, and Senator Kennedy," in Criswell Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

specifically his advocacy of church-state separation.[92] In a 1960 radio address Criswell summarized his thoughts, "Roman Catholicism is not only a religion, it is a political tyranny."[93] Criswell's overarching argument—that electing one Catholic set a dangerous precedent that threatened to breach America's valued tradition of religious freedom—mirrored the rhetoric of POAU.

Though Criswell's sermon used argumentative fallacies like the "slippery slope" and provided no context for examples, his speech was immensely influential for Protestants in the United States, particularly in the South. W. O. Vaught, the first vice-president of the SBC and pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, gave a similar address to his congregation. Vaught's sermon, "The Issue of a Roman Catholic President," bore many similarities to Criswell's address: Kennedy's supposed subservience to the Catholic hierarchy and Papal authority, foreign examples of Catholic repression, misuse of public funds, and the problematic relationship between the Catholic Church and religious freedom.[94] Multiple Protestant publications, such as the *Baptist Witness*, the *Evangelical Mennonite*, the *Virginia Methodist Advocate*, and the *Watchmen-Examiner*, reprinted and disseminated Criswell and Vaught's speeches, which illustrated how deeply this suspicion of anti-Catholicism permeated the South.[95] The rhetoric of POAU and ministers like Criswell and Vaught

---

[92] Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country*, 264.

[93] John Wicklein, "Anti-Catholic View Found Widespread in Parts of South," *New York Times*, Sept. 4, 1960.

[94] W. O. Vaught, "The Issue of a Roman Catholic President," in "Folder - Religious Literature: Vaught, W. O.," Series - Issues: Religious Issue Files of James Wine, 1960, Collection - Presidential Campaign Files 1960, Pre-Presidential papers, Papers of John F. Kennedy. Retrieved from the JFK Digital Library: http://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKCAMP1960-1022-034.aspx. Future entries from this box will be shortened to Vaught Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[95] W. A. Criswell, "Catholic President? Religious Freedom, the Church, the State, and Senator Kennedy," *Evangelical Mennonite*, Sept. 15, 1960 in Criswell Folder, JFK Digital Archive; W. A. Criswell, "Religious Freedom - the Church - The State and Senator Kennedy" *Baptist Witness*, September, 1960 in Criswell Folder,

capitalized on Sunbelt anti-Catholicism by framing the potential for a Catholic president as an apocalyptic scenario.[96] Many fundamentalist Protestants viewed Kennedy's candidacy in 1960 as evidence that the Catholic Church desired political power.

The anti-Catholic themes articulated by POAU and southern ministers found their way into the political discourse during John F. Kennedy's run for the White House in 1960.[97] The most critical issue for anti-Catholic Protestants was the belief that the election of a Catholic president undermined the separation between church and state, thereby subverting traditional (ie. Protestant-dominated) society. According to an analysis from CQ Press, "The anti-Catholic response in politics is related in part to prejudice and in part to supposed political attitudes of the Roman Catholic Church, which Catholic laymen are presumed to share."[98] This suspicion was not exclusive to right-wing Protestants. Historian Robert Dallek pointed out, "The Church frightened progressive Democrats, who regarded it as an authoritarian institution intolerant of ideas at odds with its teachings."[99] Even Catholic Democrats worried that Kennedy's religion would incur a backlash from an important constituency: southern, Bible Belt Protestants.[100]

JFK Digital Archive; "Temporal Power: The Issue of a Roman Catholic President of the United States," *Virginia Methodist Advocate*, August 25, 1960 in Vaught Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[96] Historian Kevin Kruse argued that the revolution of religion in public life took place during the 1930s and 1940s, while scholars Darren Dochuk and Daniel K. Williams asserted that the politicization of fundamentalist Protestantism occurred in the early twentieth century before crystallizing in the 1940s. Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*; Kruse, *One Nation Under God*; Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Modern Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[97] The anti-Catholicism aimed at Kennedy during his Senatorial campaign paled in comparison to the attacks during the 1960 campaign. As a result, this chapter focuses on the Presidential campaign of 1960. For more on Kennedy's senate campaign and the impact of religion, see: Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, Chapter Five.

[98] Gelman, "Religion in Politics."

[99] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 232.

[100] W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 45.

As John F. Kennedy geared up for the campaign trail in early 1960, he recognized that winning primaries provided the only sure avenue to convince the Democratic Party brass of his electability.[101] Older party bosses considered Kennedy too young and inexperienced, and many remembered the anti-Catholicism that bludgeoned Al Smith in 1928 and did not want to experience a repeat scenario.[102] Journalist G. Scott Thomas articulated that the Democratic leadership deemed JFK "much too young and much too Catholic."[103] These fears proved prescient as the backlash to Kennedy's candidacy emerged, partially because of the anti-Catholic rhetoric of groups like POAU. Contemporary newspapers noted the rising tide of fundamentalist evangelicalism within the Sunbelt's conservative constituency, and political observers argued that southern states would prove problematic for JFK.[104] Indeed, the "religion issue" dominated the early primaries as Protestants tapped into a tradition of politically-charged anti-Catholicism.

Anti-Catholicism emerged during the 1960 campaign when the Wisconsin and West Virginia primaries were inundated with anti-Catholic propaganda.[105] Kennedy won both states despite the anti-Catholic crusades, but the primaries ignited the "religion issue."

---

[101] Dallek, *An Unfinished Life*, 251. Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1960* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1961), 59-63.

[102] For more on the anti-Catholicism that confronted Al Smith in the 1928 election, see: Allan J. Lichtman, *Prejudice and the Old Politics: The Presidential Election of 1928* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 57-70.

[103] G. Scott Thomas, *A New World to be Won: John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and the Tumultuous Year of 1960* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011), 36.

[104] Claude Sitton, "Political Observers Say Dems Face Trouble in Six Southern States," *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 7, 1960.

[105] Damon Stetson, "Religious Issue Stirs Wisconsin: Newspaper Ad on Kennedy's Catholicism Denounced by Both Candidates," *New York Times*, Apr. 1, 1960; Rorabaugh, *Real Making*, 50; Chalmers M. Roberts, "W. Va. Vote Seen as Deciding Point in Kennedy's Political Ambition," *The Washington Post*, May 6, 1960.

Kennedy tried to fend off religion questions by citing his Senate record and military credentials, and he used televised debates against Senator Hubert Humphrey (D-MN) to separate himself from the issue of religion.[106] Many of these arguments became integral parts of Kennedy's stump speeches as a way to counter the anti-Catholic undercurrent. Even POAU stalwart C. Stanley Lowell admitted that Kennedy's press coverage did "much to reassure Protestants who [had] honest doubts about the possible conflict of interest involving a presidential . . . candidate of Catholic faith.[107] Kennedy won the Democratic nomination through his efforts in the primaries, but this did little to temper the anti-Catholic criticisms of fundamentalist Protestants.

In early September 1960, Paul Blanshard and Americans United released a measured statement disowning sectarianism while simultaneously cautioning against Kennedy's candidacy. Blanshard disclaimed "literature expressing religious bigotry and scandal" while also noting the bipartisan makeup of POAU.[108] He reiterated that the "educational" mission of POAU was dedicated to "the preservation of the American tradition of the separation of church and state."[109] The announcement noted POAU's praise for Kennedy's rejection of a Vatican ambassador and federal funding for parochial schools, but it expressed concern about JFK's non-committal position on birth control and, more globally, the "denial of religious liberty to non-Catholics in some Roman Catholic countries." Most importantly, Blanshard argued, "It is not bigotry or prejudice to examine [Kennedy's] credential with the utmost care

---

[106] James Reston, "West Virginia Debate: Humphrey-Kennedy TV Session Is Seen Aiding New-Englander," *New York Times*, May 5, 1960.

[107] Gelman, "Religion in Politics."

[108] "Protestant Groups' Statements," *New York Times*, Sept. 8, 1960.

[109] Ibid.

and frankness."[110] Blanshard's declaration attempted to separate POAU from accusations of religious bigotry by adopting unprejudiced language, but the undercurrent of anti-Catholicism ran deep within the organization. POAU's propaganda continued to circulate in the months leading up to the election with the help of local POAU chapters and other allies within fundamentalist ministries.

On the same day as Blanshard's press release, September 8, Norman Vincent Peale and the Citizens for Religious Freedom (CFR, Peale Group), a group of 150 conservative Protestant ministers, issued a statement opposing Kennedy as a presidential candidate based on JFK's religious affiliation. Peale was a prominent Protestant minister with a syndicated column in dozens of national newspapers, and he helped establish the CFR in 1960. The name "Citizens for Religious Freedom" obfuscated the group's anti-Catholic bias, and the court of public opinion equated CFR's rhetoric and disdain for Kennedy with the activism of POAU. Peale questioned Kennedy's adherence to equal rights for all religions, as well as his stance on papal authority and parochial schools. Many national and local publications covered the statement, illustrating that the Peale Group's anxiety regarding a Catholic president held national interests.[111] Though speakers at the Peale Group's conference never mentioned Kennedy by name, the implications were clear. Dr. L. Nelson Bell, a Presbyterian layman from Montreat, NC, gave a speech asserting that a religious issue confronted America "because of a system to which he belongs and of which he is a part – unless he repudiates that system, and this he has not done and cannot do."[112] Bell never directly

---

[110] Ibid.

[111] "Protestants Claim Catholic 'Pressure' on President," *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 8, 1960.

[112] "Churchmen Meet, Issue Statement - Protestant Group Takes Stand Against a Catholic as President," *Boston Globe*, Sept. 8, 1960.

accused Kennedy, but his address indicated that the members of the Peale Group strongly opposed a Catholic president on purely religious grounds.

The media linked the statements by the Peale Group and POAU together since both groups advocated anti-Catholic ideologies. However, C. Stanley Lowell lamented that POAU's message was published alongside Peale's. Lowell referred to the juxtaposition as "most unfortunate since Americans United had no connection with the Peale committee," and he worried that POAU concerns about a Catholic candidate would be drowned by accusations of bigotry.[113] Lowell proclaimed, "We were caught between the brotherhooders on the one hand, and the fanatics on the other."[114] In other words, Lowell meant that the "brotherhooders," a slang term for dedicated Catholics, attacked POAU with claims of bigotry while the "fanatics," religious bigots like Peale, sullied POAU's platform by proxy. POAU saw themselves as occupying the middle ground of American politics, beset on either side by religious radicals.

Lowell's repudiation of Peale's group was actually an implicit admission of bigotry rather than a factual representation of POAU's position. Men like Blanshard and Lowell characterized anyone who attacked POAU, defended JFK's positions, or criticized Kennedy as either a "brotherhooder," an apologist, or a "fanatic," respectively. Contemporaries noted a political angle to POAU's message: Dean John C. Bennett and Dr. Reinhold Neibuhr of the Union Theological Seminary, a religiously liberal, ecumenical school, declared the two groups did not match the wider Protestant sentiment, and that POAU and Peale members

[113] Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 54.

[114] Ibid.

"would oppose any liberal Democrat regardless of his religion."[115] Similar to the binary views of other far-right organizations, POAU left little room for moderation, especially ecumenicalism, within their religious or political views.

The statements by POAU and Peale Group, both of which were covered by nationally syndicated newspapers, forced a response from Kennedy. Blanshard and Peale, the most famous among a chorus of Catholic critics, tried to paint Kennedy into a corner: either JFK had to publicly accept a strict interpretation of Catholic orthodoxy and risk losing the election in an overwhelmingly Protestant country, or Kennedy needed to repudiate Catholicism and potentially appear less faithful to fellow Catholics.[116] Rejecting some views of his own religion could have damaged Kennedy's credibility with American Catholics, and Republican and anti-Catholic opposition could have claimed it as evidence of Kennedy's lack of character and moral integrity. Additionally, journalist John Wicklein noted that POAU "materials appear[ed] in tract racks of Baptist and other churches and across the South, and its films [were] widely . . . used by church people opposed to the election of a Catholic."[117]

Campaign manager Robert Kennedy hired James Wine, a lawyer from the National Council of Churches in Washington, D.C., to help JFK deal with anti-Catholic rhetoric, and Wine saw the Greater Houston Ministerial Association's (GHMA) speaking invitation as a pivotal opportunity for Kennedy's campaign.[118] GHMA offered Kennedy the chance to

---

[115] "Religious Issue—Stirs Controversy," *New York Times*, September 11, 1960.

[116] Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America*, 79.

[117] John Wicklein, "Anti-Catholic View Found Widespread in Parts of South," *New York Times*, September 4, 1960.

[118] James Wine's advice convinced Kennedy that speaking in front of the Houston Greater Ministerial Association was the best avenue for engaging the "religion issue." Shaun A. Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 163.

address its membership in September, 1960, but the stakes were high because of location and audience; Texas had a fundamentalist bent, a deep history of anti-Catholicism, and the all-white, mostly Baptist composition of GHMA represented an additional ideological hurdle for Kennedy.[119] Nevertheless, Wine believed the risks were worth taking since Kennedy could address the "religion issue" in front of a national audience.[120] The hope: to silence anti-Catholic criticisms with one well-received television address. Wine urged JFK to disavow parochial groups while reasserting a belief in strict church-state separation.[121] In response to Kennedy's trip to Texas, anti-Catholic literature flooded the state, much of which stemmed from Protestant clergy and anti-Catholic advocacy groups.

Kennedy's campaign trip to Texas, and his speech in front of the GHMA, led to a statewide battle between Nixon and Kennedy through the new medium of television. Nixon's campaign fought against Kennedy by booking the time slot to show a taped Nixon telecast just before JFK's appearance, hoping to influence voters tuning in to watch Kennedy address the GHMA.[122] Kennedy's campaign sought to capitalize on the GHMA address to bolster support for Kennedy in the South. National polls showed Nixon and Kennedy in a dead heat in September, though the surveys taken in the South indicated that JFK lagged behind Nixon

---

[119] Texas, and especially Houston, was a hotbed of anti-Catholic activity during the 1920s through the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. This legacy continued to shape Texas culture into the election of 1960. Charles C. Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 14, 17, 28-29, 255; Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President*, 143; Wuthnow, *Rough Country*, 10, 115-116.

[120] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 163.

[121] Ibid, 153, 154.

[122] "Ministers Invite Kennedy to Talk - Nixon Forces Maneuver Into Earlier TV Time," *Houston Chronicle*, September 9, 1960.

despite Texas's own Lyndon Johnson on the Democratic ticket.[123] As one of Kennedy's top aides noted, "This could be the beginning or the end of the line for the Democratic ticket's success in the South."[124] Kennedy's trip to Houston received more media coverage than any other political event since Al Smith's 1928 Democratic National Convention, which provided Kennedy with the opportunity to confront historical and contemporary anti-Catholicism.[125]

While Kennedy's campaign managers prepared for the meeting with the ministerial association, local Houston organizations attempted to influence voters in the days leading up to JFK's address. POAU mobilized to attack Kennedy, while more moderate politicians and organizations countered the anti-Catholic onslaught. Three days before Kennedy's scheduled appearance the Houston chapter of POAU announced a plan to distribute anti-JFK literature during the GHMA address. Attorney Kelly James, the president of the Houston Chapter, said POAU members would place handbills titled "Why the Religion Issue?" on the windshield of every car at the GHMA conference.[126] Kelly pledged to defeat Kennedy's presidential bid "rather than to engage in further debate on what [POAU] considers a settled question."[127] Kelly's mindset mirrored the opinions of national POAU leaders like Blanshard and Lowell that Catholicism represented an internal threat to the political culture of the United States. This attitude underscored that hardline, conservative Protestants considered it impossible for

---

[123] Roper Organization, Roper Commercial Survey, Sep, 1960, (Storrs, Conn.: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research), accessed via iPOLL on March 7, 2016; Claude Sitton, "Political Observers Say Dems Face Trouble in Six Southern States," *Houston Chronicle*, September 7, 1960.

[124] "Kennedy Here Tonight for First Big Test in Dixie," *Houston Chronicle*, September 12, 1960.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Vernon Fewell, "Anti-Catholic Handbills To Be Distributed Here," *Houston Chronicle*, Sept. 9, 1960.

[127] Ibid.

a Roman Catholic to separate politics from religion, regardless of what Kennedy said during the GHMA speech.

On the other hand, Kelly's anti-Catholic rhetoric prompted a progressive response from local Protestants and politicians to contest POAU's religious bigotry. Gerald Mann, the Democratic state campaign manager, noted that JFK's visit "stirred a small hate group into possible actions unbecoming to our hospitable state." Mann encouraged Texans to remember "the common decency of showing courtesy to our out-of-state visitors."[128] Some activists took Mann's advice to heart and mobilized. When the POAU threatened to distributed anti-Catholic handbills at the Coliseum, twenty-five local Houstonians formed the Christian Protestant Organization. The first order of business for this group, declared Mrs. W. I. Dillman, Jr., was to remove the POAU handbills from the cars during Kennedy's speech.[129] The issue of potential handbill distribution and censorship proved controversial as both political parties weighed in on the matter. The Harris County Republicans denied any intent to pass out literature, while John H. Crooker and Woodrow Seals, the co-chairmen of JFK's campaign, urged Houstonians to permit the distribution of handbills.[130] Crooker and Seals's statement read, "We anticipate that some of the literature may attack the right of a Catholic to hold the presidency. Even though such a view is a direct violation of the Constitution, and deplorable, we still defend the right of any citizen to express that view."[131] This press release,

---

[128] "The Presidential Campaign: Kennedy Will Sweep Into Houston Monday," *Houston Chronicle*, September 11, 1960.

[129] "25 Citizens Form Anti-Bigotry Group," *Houston Chronicle*, September 11, 1960.

[130] "GOP, Church Group Deny Handbill Intent," *Houston Post*, September 12, 1960.

[131] Ibid.

which was covered in the major local papers, put the spotlight on POAU's efforts to disseminate anti-Catholic propaganda.

POAU canceled the open distribution of leaflets the day of Kennedy's speech. The POAU board of directors voted down the idea of passing out handbills, and Houston POAU president James Kelly claimed, "It would be a waste of time."[132] Because of the increasing negative publicity toward anti-Catholic groups, POAU felt that dispensing handbills would result in further bad press. Dr. Ralph H. Langley, the pastor of Willow Meadows Baptist Church and a prominent member of Houston's POAU chapter, instead promised to distribute the handbills at church on Sunday. Langley quipped, "I'll probably have some in my pocket tonight [at the GHMA conference] if anyone asks for one."[133] He contended that the handbills were not anti-Catholic but were instead "anti-Catholic hierarchy." The handbill controversy underscored that anti-Catholic groups like POAU were sensitive to criticisms of bigotry, and often feigned tolerance through their public actions. Yet their pamphlets, which were distributed surreptitiously after the GHMA address, argued against Kennedy's presidency based on religious criteria. In reality, POAU members like Langley and Kelly had no interest in giving Kennedy a fair shake.

Around eight in the evening on September 12, 1960, John F. Kennedy walked to the podium to confront the religious issue in front of an ideologically hostile crowd. Kennedy's speech succinctly rebuked many of the arguments used by anti-Catholic activists while underscoring JFK's loyalty to the United States and the Constitution. Much of the anti-

---

[132] "GOP, Church Group Deny Handbill Intent," *Houston Post*, September 12, 1960; "Leaflets at Kennedy Rally Here Cancelled," *Houston Chronicle*, September 12, 1960.

[133] Ibid.

Catholic propaganda augured that Catholicism would permeate church-state separation, so, as scholar Mark Massa noted, "Kennedy's speech simply reiterated the hard-line separationist position … that marked his political career from its inception."[134] JFK neutered POAU's religious-separatist criticisms by adopting them. Kennedy's speech strongly rebutted the idea that he would allow America to be "ruled from Rome," plus he rejected, as he had in the past, federal funding for parochial schools. By denying that the Pope and the Catholic hierarchy would influence his political opinion, Kennedy separated himself from the crux of the "religious issue." Kennedy's also used imagery that situated his ideologies with that of the Founding Fathers, a tactic with great appeal in the Protestant-dominated Sunbelt.[135] Historian Shaun Casey noted that Kennedy identified attacks against Catholicism as un-American, which turned the tables on traditional anti-Catholic arguments that depicted Catholics as "alien outsiders."[136]

The "religion issue" did not disappear from the 1960 presidential campaign despite Kennedy's speech in front of the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, and POAU played a key role in maintaining the controversy.[137] POAU continued publishing anti-Catholic

---

[134] Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America*, 82.

[135] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 167. Dochuk, *From Bible Belt*, 26.

[136] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 165, 170.

[137] The traditional view is that Kennedy nullified the "religion issue" in Houston. Mark Massa noted that JFK "removed religion as an appropriate topic from the Oval Office," and W. J. Rorabaugh argued that the religious voting offset, producing no net favorability. Rorabaugh also contended that liberalism, rather than Catholicism, was the main target. Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America*, 83; Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President*, 182. However, other historians contend that anti-Catholicism persisted through grassroots efforts, especially in the South. Shaun Casey and G. Scott Thomas demonstrated how anti-Catholicism persisted through pan-Protestant efforts to defeat Kennedy. Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 177; Thomas, *A New World to be Won*, 227. My argument falls in line with the latter—I contend that an undercurrent of anti-Catholicism remained in southern society, Texas included; however, I also argue that Kennedy's liberalism constituted a significant target for anti-Catholic activists.

propaganda after Kennedy's GHMA speech. A question and answer session with Glenn L. Archer revealed that POAU was under fire from contemporary critics for religious bigotry.[138] Archer lamented being linked to nineteenth century nativism and denied that religious prejudice factored into political decisions, yet he also hypocritically stated that questions aimed at a Catholic candidate might not apply to candidates of other denominations.[139]

Kennedy's speech did not alter the opinion of radical anti-Catholics like Glenn Archer, nor did the proclamations from American Catholic priests that asserted "American Catholics endorse the separation of church and state because they have absorbed the national ideals of their country."[140] POAU sustained the attack on Roman Catholics, especially Catholic politicians, as an "alien subculture" trying to institute a theocratic hierarchy. Blanshard's previous attempts to claim the middle ground were subverted by POAU's own ads in national newspapers that attacked Kennedy: "Have you heard that a president who is an avowed Roman Catholic is forever committed to the Pope in everything he says and does? Have you been informed that the social policy of a Catholic president would be dictated by the American hierarchy?"[141] In October POAU issued propaganda that argued JFK remained "subservient to the bishops," essentially calling Kennedy a liar.[142] The continuation of anti-Catholic rhetoric indicated a profound distrust of Catholicism, plus it reiterated that POAU's activism extended well into the realm of politics.

---

[138] Pamphlet, POAU, "Catholicism, the White House, and POAU," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[139] Ibid.

[140] "Faith, Constitution In Accord, Priest Says," *Houston Chronicle*, September 17, 1960.

[141] "POAU Display Ad 12—No Title," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *New York Times*, Sept. 26, 1960.

[142] Pamphlet, POAU, "Catholicism, the White House, and POAU," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

After Kennedy's speech a pan-Protestant movement coalesced to defeat Kennedy by harnessing the language of anti-Catholicism and anti-liberalism.[143] Dr. Dess Moody, a Texas transplant leading a Baptist church in Kansas, remarked that the anti-Catholic publicity campaign received financing from outside interests. Moody believed these interests wanted "to defeat Kennedy's liberal economic policies as much as . . . his religion."[144] Ministers touched on these political issues during the question and answer session after Kennedy's speech, notably when Canon Reichbahr of the Christ Church Cathedral complained that Kennedy did not support "right to work" laws and might abolish open shop statutes.[145] Conservative Protestants intertwined religion and politics despite criticizing the Catholic Church for fusing church and state. As historian Darren Dochuk noted, "At no point did [evangelicals and fundamentalists] ever allow for the separation of Protestant faith from the public or political realm."[146] This hypocrisy illustrated why the anti-Catholic rhetoric used by groups like POAU classified as religious bigotry, which led the Fair Campaign Practices Committee to threaten the revocation of tax-exempt status of churches circulating anti-Catholic propaganda.[147] Nevertheless, Kennedy's Catholicism provided an angle to attack both JFK's religious upbringing as well as his liberal platforms.

The "religion issue" took on a decidedly political character by late September. Donald H. Black, a Hollywood broker and Republican campaign worker, circulated POAU

---

[143] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 177.

[144] James Reston, "Kennedy Faces Powerful Church-Economic Team," *Houston Chronicle*, September 14, 1960.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Dochuk, *From the Bible Belt*, 16.

[147] "Anti-Catholic Campaigning May Jeopardize Churches," *Houston Chronicle*, September 18, 1960.

literature to over 10,000 people in the Los Angeles area. Black declared "I have to be honest with you; I'm opposing Mr. Kennedy primarily because of the religious issue."[148] In a telling move, Lowell stopped the mailings to Black's constituency to prevent POAU's complicity in an overtly political action. The national POAU headquarters strove to avoid political controversies, but POAU's propaganda appeared in other Republican offices around the nation. Kennedy T. Hill, a student at Yale and self-proclaimed Protestant Republican, claimed to find POAU pamphlets at the Republican headquarters in Darien, Connecticut. Writing to a weekly newspaper, the *Darien Review*, Hill "challenged the consistency, sincerity, and integrity of the Republican Party" if POAU brochures were disseminated at the local level despite Nixon's disavowal of the religious issue.[149] Darien Republican leaders issued denials while Hill's mother claimed to receive intimidating phone calls, one that threatened her son's expulsion from Yale University.

Religious right-wing organizations, including POAU, coordinated multiple campaigns to defeat Kennedy's presidential bid as election day approached in early November. One such movement urged ministers to deliver anti-Catholic sermons on Reformation Sunday—a religious holiday on October 30 that celebrated the Protestant split with the Catholic Church—to galvanize a national movement against Kennedy.[150] POAU, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) spearheaded the Reformation Sunday campaign, and the crusade created local groups across

---

[148] John Wicklein, "Anti-Catholic Groups Closely Cooperate in Mail Campaign to Defeat Kennedy," *New York Times*, October 17, 1960.

[149] Richard H. Parke, "Anti-Catholic Tracts Reported in Darien G.O.P. Headquarters," *New York Times*, September 23, 1960.

[150] John Wicklein, "Vast Anti-Catholic Drive Is Slated Before Election," *New York Times*, October 16, 1960.

the nation to distribute anti-Catholic propaganda. Historian Shaun Casey noted that the Southern Baptist elite, like W. A. Criswell, were generally the most vocal anti-Catholic group.[151] Criswell called Kennedy's speech the "biggest farce" he had ever witnessed, and argued that JFK was either a liar or a "sorry Catholic."[152] Criswell organized a propaganda campaign within the Reformation Day movement, distributing over 200,000 copies of his anti-Kennedy speech before election day.[153] Local groups like Citizens United for a Free America, based out of Criswell's home of Dallas-Fort Worth, supported the distribution effort.

The propaganda circulation was aided by right-wing publishers like Osterhus Publishing House of Minneapolis, which was controlled by Cyrus Osterhus, the son of an evangelical Lutheran minister.[154] Osterhus Publishing claimed distribution of over 25 million tracts nationwide and was the "largest producer of anti-Catholic tracts being circulated in the campaign."[155] Overall, the Fair Campaign Practices Committee estimated "the number of pieces [in circulation] in the tens of millions and the cost of distribution at hundreds of thousands of dollars."[156] Like many of the other groups involved, Osterhus disclaimed any

---

[151] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 177-178.

[152] "Dallas Baptist Minister Says Kennedy Liar," *Waco News Tribune*, undated in Criswell Folder, JFK Digital Archive.

[153] John Wicklein, "Anti-Catholic Groups Closely Cooperate in Mail Campaign to Defeat Kennedy," *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1960.

[154] The organizational history of the family-owned and operated Osterhus Publishing can be found on the company's website: A Short History of Osterhus Publishing Company," accessed on March 7, 2016, https://www.osterhuspub.com/aboutus.asp.

[155] John Wicklein, "Anti-Catholic Groups Closely Cooperate in Mail Campaign to Defeat Kennedy," *New York Times*, Oct. 17, 1960.

[156] John Wicklein, "Vast Anti-Catholic Drive Is Slated Before Election," *New York Times*, October 16, 1960.

pretense of political leanings, but the fact that he openly distributed and supported anti-Catholic tracts belied his assertion. Osterhus was but one example of the 144 producers of anti-liberal and anti-Catholic campaign materials, and the mailing lists for such propaganda derived largely from church membership rolls and directories.[157] This effort by wealthy conservative laymen like Osterhus, ministers like Criswell, and anti-Catholic groups like POAU underscored the religious and political nature of Kennedy's opposition.

The "religion issue" and Kennedy's Catholicism dominated the headlines, but racial issues also damaged Kennedy's credibility among conservative voters. JFK embraced the civil rights movement throughout the campaign in an attempt to solidify his liberal credentials and appeal to African American voters.[158] This plan had the potential to backfire because, as Allan J. Lichtman noted, "the [twentieth century] conservative tradition is white and Protestant" with a side of racial nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-ecumenicalism.[159] White Protestant ministers were not the only critics of JFK's religious beliefs: Martin Luther King, Sr. and the Atlanta Baptist Ministers Union signed a letter of support for Nixon. The declaration indicated the continuation of black support for the Republican Party, but it also represented an undercurrent of anti-Catholicism among some black Protestant ministers.[160] Nevertheless, Kennedy's phone call to Loretta Scott King after Martin Luther King's arrest

---

[157] Ibid.

[158] Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, 18-21.

[159] Allan J. Lichtman, *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008), 4.

[160] Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 349-350.

in Atlanta delivered the Democratic ticket hundreds of thousands of black votes on election day.[161]

The controversy over Catholicism did not extend to the Mexican American population living in Texas because Kennedy's religious upbringing actually inspired grassroots efforts through the "Viva Kennedy" clubs.[162] Many Mexican Americans used the "Viva Kennedy" clubs as a gateway to the American political process, and historian Ignacio Garcia noted that "Kennedy's religious affiliation represented a cultural bridge to the Mexican American community."[163] Garcia illustrated that Kennedy's Catholic upbringing "meant he understood religious and cultural prejudices . . . [and that] Kennedy could communicate with Mexican Americans and understand their needs."[164] While Mexican Americans viewed JFK favorably because of his Catholicism, the "religion issue" further muddled racial issues in the South. Kennedy's Catholicism netted a significant amount of Mexican American votes, but the divisions over Catholicism, plus the added pressure of the civil rights movement, made it more difficult to appeal to both white and black Protestants in the South.

On the national stage Kennedy absolved Nixon of any sort of "religion baiting," but Robert Kennedy and Senator Henry M. Jackson, the Democratic National chairman, "charged that some local Republican leaders . . . abetted the distribution of anti-Catholic

---

[161] White, *The Making of the President 1960*, 350-353.

[162] Ignacio M. Garcia, *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000), 4-8. Garcia notes that Catholicism was a crucial component of Mexican American support for Kennedy, but Garcia also argues that such political activism was part of a larger effort to galvanize political participation amongst the Mexican American population.

[163] Ibid., 59.

[164] Ibid.

literature."[165] These accusations and events did not constitute a "smoking gun" implicating the Republicans of using religion as an overt political bludgeon, but local Republican leaders used the religious issue when it appealed to their own views and constituency. Moreover, the literature published by POAU found its way into the broader political arena. Left leaning, traditional African American publications like the *Daily Defender* frankly criticized the political agenda of the religious right: "Dixie racists are using the religious question as a smoke-screen to hide their resentment and their machination against the Democratic platform and [Kennedy]."[166] Lowell characterized the accusation that POAU helped organize a campaign to defeat Kennedy as "definitely not factual," but the group's actions proved otherwise. POAU's literature and activism helped catalyze the anti-Catholicism and conservative Protestantism that emerged as a political force during the 1960 election.[167]

In the end, Kennedy emerged from the 1960 campaign victorious over Richard Nixon, largely due to Kennedy's effective use of mass media and Nixon's refusal to capitalize on the "religion issue." Beginning with Kennedy's so-called "triumph" in Houston, JFK's campaign broadcast the GHMA speech at least 193 times in 40 states.[168] Kennedy capitalized on his privatization of religion, but Nixon ignored Kennedy's Catholicism and the parochial school issue, which might have cost him Texas on election day.[169] Contemporary

---

[165] Leo Egan, "Religion: U.S. Campaign: Issue of Church-State Separation Continues to Plague Both Sides in Presidential Race," *New York Times*, October 30, 1960.

[166] "Is the Issue Religion or Race?," *Daily Defender*, October 5, 1960.

[167] "Bias on Kennedy Denied: Protestant Group Challenges Anti-Catholic Designation" *New York Times*, November 3, 1960.

[168] Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President*, 185.

[169] Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 185.

political analyst Oliver Douglas Weeks argued that the constant hammering of the religious issue actually alienated Protestant followers and produced a "fatigue" surrounding the issue.[170] As a result, even though Protestants remained divided on Kennedy's religion, they failed to unite behind Nixon. Nixon captured more Protestant ballots, but Kennedy negated that by receiving a vast percentage of the Catholic bloc vote.[171] When the dust settled, the "religion issue" actually favored Kennedy because, despite losing eleven Southern and Western states worth 110 electoral votes, his Catholicism helped him win five Eastern and Midwestern states and New Mexico worth 132 electoral votes.[172] As Richard Nixon feared, Kennedy's Catholicism provided a decisive electoral boost—a result vastly different from Al Smith's failed presidential bid of 1928.

The "religion issue" sharpened divisions within the ranks of Protestant evangelicals throughout the election process in 1960. Some Protestants clung to anti-Catholic beliefs while others moved forward with more tolerant religious ideologies. Protestants and Other Americans United represented the former group, doubling down on their conspiratorial views over the course of the 1960s. Global and domestic events provided POAU multiple opportunities to adopt a more progressive mindset alongside Catholicism, but in each instance POAU rejected taking up the mantle of inclusiveness and ecumenicalism. An internal investigation, conducted in 1964 by John M. Swomley at the behest of the POAU executive board, blasted POAU's "use of anti-Catholicism, overstatement, and polemical

---

[170] Oliver Douglas Weeks, *Texas in the 1960 Presidential Election* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 70.

[171] Weeks, *Texas in the 1960 Presidential Election*, 69; Rorabaugh, *The Real*, 181; Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President*, 185.

[172] Thomas, *A New World to be Won*, 257.

language" because it ostracized moderates and produced a more extremist membership.[173] Swomley made a number of suggestions, such as changing the name and tightening up the philosophical platforms, in order to prepare Americans United for the growing climate of ecumenical Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism. The Second Vatican Council, held from 1962-1965, opened up an ecumenical dialogue between the Catholic Church and other Protestant denominations, ultimately challenging POAU's beliefs regarding the monolithic nature of Catholicism.[174] These domestic and global shifts "pushed [POAU] further and further from the center of the dialogue," as historian Mary Anne Boylan noted, "[and] its constituency became more exclusively fundamentalist Protestant."[175] For instance, the only member of the POAU executive board to take Swomley's report seriously, co-founder Ellis H. Dana, found himself isolated and he eventually resigned under pressure from fundamentalist hardliners.[176] The organization dropped the "other Americans" from its name in 1964, changing it to Americans United for the Separation of Church and State (AU), a reflection of POAU's rightward shift.[177]

During the early 1960s the membership demographic of Americans United favored the fundamentalist ideologies of its hardline members, and its years of religious-based political activism incurred the wrath of the federal government. Formed as a non-profit

---

[173] "The Swomley Report," quote in Boylan, "Origins and Ideological Development," 73.

[174] Boylan, "Origins and Ideological Development," 79.

[175] Ibid., 79.

[176] Ibid., 74-76.

[177] Harold Fey, "Separationists Confer," *Christian Century*, Vol. 81 (February 5, 1964): 166-167. Fey noted that he did not see any "Other Americans" at the Sixteenth National POAU Conference. The June, 1964, issue of *Church & State* marked the first time POAU referred to itself as "Americans United;" Boylan, "Origins and Ideological Development," 84n.

organization, Americans United avoided taxation by proclaiming to be an educational group rather than an activist organization. The Kennedy administration targeted the tax-exempt status of Americans United through the Ideological Organizations Project (IOP), a branch of Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that targeted political opposition groups like Americans United and Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade.[178] In the early 1960s the IRS struggled to revoke AU's tax exemption because the Internal Revenue Code's educational regulations were "ill-defined," according to scholar John A. Andrews III.[179] The IRS acknowledged that Americans United participated in political activities, but reaching a consensus regarding whether or not these activities were covered under the auspice of "education activities" proved difficult.[180] Years later, on April 25, 1969, the IRS formally revoked AU's tax-exempt status for operating as "an active advocate of a political doctrine."[181] In its appeals brief to the United States Court of Appeals, Americans United argued that "the clause disqualifying organizations which devote a substantial part of their activities to political propaganda and lobbying should be elided as unconstitutional."[182] Despite a protracted legal battle, Americans United eventually lost its appeal. Though Americans United maintained tax exemptions in other areas, the U.S. Court of Appeals and the IRS "determined the organization devoted a substantial part of its activities to congressional lobbying."[183] The

---

[178] John A. Andrews III, *Power to Destroy: The Political Uses of the IRS from Kennedy to Nixon* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 41, 48-49.

[179] Ibid., 61.

[180] Ibid., 62.

[181] William R. MacKaye, "Law on Tax Exempt Status Murky: A View of Religion," *The Washington Post*, May 31, 1969.

[182] *"Americans United" Inc. v. Walters*, 155 U.S. App. D.C. 284, 477 F.2d 1169 (1973).

[183] C. Robert Zelnick, "High-Court Tax Rulings: Bob Jones University, Church-State Group Receive Setbacks," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 16, 1974.

legal defeat constituted damning evidence countering American United's claims "that POAU is not a partisan, political organization."[184]

On the other hand, Peale's Citizens for Religious Freedom represented the most remarkable transformation from anti-Catholicism to religious tolerance. Peale famously criticized Kennedy's religion before the Houston speech, and his anti-Catholic message received condemnation from many parts of the press. The negative coverage displeased ultraconservative Protestants, but it was enough to force Peale's resignation and cause the group to disavow bigoted rhetoric.[185] After Kennedy's Houston address the Citizens for Religious Freedom released a statement praising the speech. The announcement described the speech as "the most complete, unequivocal, and reassuring statement which could be expected of any person in his position."[186] In the wake of Kennedy's speech the CFR officially reversed course and lauded JFK's explication of his stance on church-state separation. The transformation took less than a week. Unlike the hardline sentiment epitomized by Americans United, the Citizens for Religious Freedom represented an alternative path of religious toleration by urging further dialogue between Protestants and Catholics.

Kennedy emerged from the campaign gauntlet as the president of the United States, but POAU's activism underscored the legacy of religious xenophobia and anti-Catholicism

---

[184] POAU, "Catholicism, The White House, and POAU," in POAU Folder, JFK Digital Library.

[185] John Wicklein, "Vast Anti-Catholic Drive Is Slated Before Election," *New York Times*, October 16, 1960; Lowell, *Embattled Wall*, 54.

[186] "Protestant Group Calls Kennedy Talk Sincere," *Houston Chronicle*, September 14, 1960.

bigotry in U.S. politics. Protestant fears of papal authority, clericalism, and parochial schools sparked a grassroots movement, led by fundamentalist evangelical ministers and national Protestant organizations like POAU. Protestants and Other Americans United formed to prevent the potential erosion of church-state separation by targeting the Catholic Church as a subversive organization. Truman's nomination of General Clark to the position of Vatican ambassador animated POAU's activism against Catholicism in 1951. POAU also targeted the fuzzy divide between public and private education by strictly interpreting the Establishment Clause and defining any Catholic influence in public education as a threat to the separation between church and state. The legal strategy of POAU netted many victories, but the early successes obscured the anti-Catholic undercurrents that lurked within the organization. Over the course of the 1950s POAU transformed from a conservative civil liberties organization into a stronghold for conspiratorial anti-Catholic rhetoric and fundamentalist political activism.

The 1960 presidential election illustrated POAU's shift to the right because POAU played a role in exacerbating the debate over the "religion issue" and Kennedy's Catholicism. POAU disseminated anti-Catholic propaganda, employed rhetoric that appealed to the religious and political anxieties of Sunbelt evangelicals, and networked with other fundamentalist leaders, like W. A. Criswell to defeat Kennedy's candidacy. The organization also helped organize broad movements, like the Reformation Day campaign, in an effort to demonize Catholicism as a subversive, alien ideology. Kennedy's election challenged this fundamentalist Protestant interpretation of Catholicism. JFK "privatized" religion by delineating a clear separation between a politician's religious beliefs and his ability to serve the public, which ironically brought Catholicism into the American mainstream and debased

support for radical anti-Catholicism.[187] Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s Americans United continued fighting for a strict separation between church and state, especially regarding public funding for private schools, but the organization quietly dropped the anti-Catholic rhetoric that dominated the headlines in 1960. By the 1980s Americans United leaders disavowed the anti-Catholicism of its early years. An interviewer asked Reverend Gene Puckett, the executive director of Americans United in 1982, about POAU's prior connections to anti-Catholicism. Puckett replied, "We have very definitively, both by philosophy and by conviction, gotten away from that."[188]

The rhetoric of Americans United situated easily within the tradition of anti-Catholicism in America, but just as significant was the political activism created by concerns of religious subversion. Kennedy's liberalism, not just his religion, challenged Sunbelt Protestants' view of U.S. society.[189] The vehemence and prevalence of anti-Catholic propaganda during the 1960 election illustrated that religion factored heavily into many fundamentalist Protestants' political beliefs. While not traditionally characterized as part of the Religious Right, POAU mirrored the Religious Right's goals of trying to "exert strong influence over the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the United States government."[190] POAU, alongside many other religious organizations and individuals, fought

---

[187] Massa, *Anti-Catholicism in America*, 83, 84.

[188] Marjorie Hyer, "Americans United's Role in Church-State Separation," *The Washington Post*, January 16, 1982.

[189] W. J. Rorabaugh contended that liberalism was the predominant enemy for Protestants, in Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President*, 182.

[190] William Martin, *With God On Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*, (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 371.

to maintain the preponderant societal and political influence of Protestantism.[191] When viewed in this light POAU emerges as a far-right adjunct for the political activism of Protestant right-wingers during the 1950s and 1960s. Cold War conspiracy theories and anti-communism exacerbated POAU's anti-Catholic language, which contributed to the historical legacy of religious-based attacks within the political arena. POAU's propaganda distribution, bigoted rhetoric, conspiratorial language, and grassroots organizing situated the organization within the Cold War conservative movement that fought political battles with far-right religious values.

[191] Williams, *God's Own Party*, 50.

Chapter Four

The Voice of Many Hatreds: J. Evetts Haley and Texas Ultraconservatism

During the 1956 Texas gubernatorial election, fringe candidate J. Evetts Haley was campaigning in Houston when two men from the Congress of Industrial Organizations confronted him about his opinion on organized labor. A far-right conservative, Haley responded, "I believe that you have the same right to organize that anybody else has, big business or little. I believe you have a right to quit work whenever you want to." This answer contained the strappings of right-to-work business conservatism, but Haley was not finished. Worried about labor organizers spoiling his own ranch hands, Haley threatened, "If on my ranch a bunch of my hands quit and you fellows come up there trying to interfere with the people I then hire to flank a bunch of yearlings on my land, I'll meet you at the fence with a .32, and, if necessary, I'll draw a bead on you and rim a shell and leave you lying on the fence line." Adding emphasis for the shocked CIO men, Haley growled, "And if that isn't plain enough, I'll make it plainer."[1] As a cowpuncher and prominent figure on Texas's far-right, James Evetts Haley forged a career out of his fierce individualism, which combined the folksy charm of cowboy caricatures with the rhetoric of anti-communism and segregation.

This chapter examines the life and activism of J. Evetts Haley because Haley epitomized the paranoid nature and sectional appeal of far-right conservatism during the mid-twentieth century. As an ultraconservative activist and occasional political candidate, Haley registered few victories; however, his agitations revealed the right-wing discontent in the

---

[1] Lynn Landrum, "Thinking Out Loud: What About J. Evetts Haley for Governor?," *The Dallas News*, June 10, 1956 in "Folder - Haley Clippings," Box 4, Series III-C - Governor's Campaign (Series III-C), J. Evetts Haley Collection (JEH), Haley Memorial Museum and Library, Midland, Texas (HML).

Democratic Party and delineated the contours of the fringe right-wing in the Lone Star State. Haley's grassroots fundraising and mass mailing campaigns mirrored the strategies of other Sunbelt far-right organizations like Billy James Hargis and local John Birch Society chapters. Additionally, Haley's combination of segregationism, communist conspiracy theories, fiscal conservatism, and rugged individualism reflected the tenets of Sunbelt ultraconservatives. Viewing Haley through a chronological lens highlights how Haley's radicalism served as a foil for mainstream politicians. Liberals portrayed Haley as an unhinged reactionary while moderate conservatives disavowed Haley's explicit racism. Ultimately, Haley organized multiple far-right crusades and produced many publications that helped define the shape and activism of the Texas far-right during the 1950s and 1960s.

Haley's spent his formative years on the "giant side of Texas," the Llano Estacado of West Texas.[2] The arid, rough environment of West Texas forged Haley's radical views, especially his distrust of the federal government. This suspicion manifested in multiple ways: Haley argued for states' rights, promoted segregationist policies, and viewed liberalism as an avenue to communist infiltration. Despite hailing from the most racially homogenous region of the states, Haley harbored segregationist ideologies that aligned with the politics of the Deep South. Political analysts Rowland Evans and Robert Novak defined Haley as the "voice of many hatreds," and observed that Haley was an "extreme right-winger even by Texas standards."[3] For example, in 1936 Haley chaired the state chapter of the Jeffersonian Democrats, an organization that harnessed anti-communism and grassroots strategies to

---

[2] Paul H. Carlson and Bruce A. Glasrud, eds. *West Texas: A History of the Giant Side of the State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 1.

[3] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "GOP Basing Coming Campaign On Books Written in Texas?," *The Daily Oklahoman*, July 30, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E - Misc (Series III-E), JEH, HML.

mobilize against Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal. The Texas Jeffersonians bolted away from the Democratic Party—the dominant force in Texas politics—to support the Republican candidate in an effort to defeat FDR. Roosevelt carried the state without difficulty and won the election in a landslide, providing an early harbinger of the electoral inefficacy, but grassroots appeal, of far-right strategies.

Haley's activism revealed the electoral possibilities of anti-communism and conspiratorial rhetoric in Texas, and crusades helped legitimize mainstream conservatism while simultaneously forging a constituency of far-right activists.[4] In 1956 Haley ran as a fringe candidate in the Texas gubernatorial election on a platform of segregation and interposition, but his campaign foundered as Texans moved away from overt racial politics. However, Haley's movement served as a foil for mainstream conservative Democrats like Price Daniel. This helped legitimize mainstream conservatism by marginalizing ultraconservatives—a theme of Haley's activism. After the election Haley fostered a small movement among the right-wing fringe through Texans For America (TFA), a group dedicated to strict constitutionalism and anti-communism. TFA pioneered mass mailing campaigns to fight against perceived liberal legislation and public school textbooks. The time spent with Texans for America elicited Haley's most fruitful activism, but it was his attacks against Lyndon Johnson in 1964 that made him a national figure.

---

[4] Jonathan M. Schoenwald argued that the Birch Society, and right-wing extremism in general, made the GOP appear "judicious" in *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 257. Sean P. Cunningham referred to Haley as a "seminal figure of the Texas postwar far right," but he cautiously articulated that the "wealth and paranoia of the Texas Far Right might very well have contributed" to modern conservatism, in "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits: The Power, Influence, and Failure of the Postwar Texas Far Right," in *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*, eds. David O'Donald Cullen and Kyle G. Wilkison (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 111, 115.

As Johnson prepared his campaign Haley published a polemical book, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, that attacked LBJ's character and liberal ideologies. Haley's book soared on the best-seller lists and the grassroots campaign supporting Senator Barry Goldwater's (R-AZ) candidacy adopted the text as campaign propaganda. Johnson's campaign tied Goldwater to extremist ideologies with the aid of books like *A Texan*, leading to a landslide victory for LBJ and liberal Democrats in Congress. Yet the 1964 presidential campaign proved a turning point for conservatism. The mainstream conservative movement that emerged out of the ashes of Goldwater's defeat seemed more judicious in comparison to the paranoid, conspiratorial nature of Haley's book. Haley's crusades failed to invoke a turn toward ultraconservative values, but they opened new avenues for far-right grassroots activism and helped shape the emergent conservative movement in the late 1960s.

Haley's upbringing on the isolated plains of West Texas shaped his political ideals and activist bent. Born in Belton, Texas on July 5, 1901, to John A. and Julia E. Haley, young James Evetts grew up in a politically active, conservative household.[5] The Haley family quickly traded the rolling hills of Belton for the arid plains of West Texas, eventually settling in Midland. The extreme, arid climate of the Llano Estacado of West Texas punished its inhabitants, producing a "self-sufficient, lonely, suspicious citizenry, slow to change."[6] This environment hardened the

[5] William Curry Holden observed, "Evetts grew up in an atmosphere of political and educational participation." William Curry Holden, "J. Evetts Haley, The Man," undated, 5 in "Folder - 8 - JEH, The Man," Series K - Articles About J. Evetts Haley (Series K), Series IV - Literary Productions (Series IV), J. Evetts Haley Collection (JEH), Haley Memorial Library and History Center (HML).

[6] George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1979), 7.

Haley family, and instilled a rugged individualism in Haley. As Haley later noted, "I cherish the soil of the Plains above any other on earth, and am bogged deeper in its traditions, and more devoted to its ideals, than to all else besides."[7] Like many southerners, Haley's family tree was drenched in Texas tradition; many of Haley's ancestors fought for Texas during the Texas Revolution and joined the Confederacy during the Civil War.[8] The anti-statist populism—defined by Sean P. Cunningham as "the impulse to fight against an established elite"—that permeated the culture of the Lone Star State sharpened Haley's rugged individualism and conservative political views, producing a principled man that embodied the hardened individualism of West Texas.[9]

During his formative years Haley made a name for himself regionally as a historian of the Great Plains and a cowman. He developed his cowboy skills while working on his family's land by the Pecos River and on the legendary Long S Ranch.[10] Years later Haley's son, Evetts Jr., reminisced, "There are none superior to J. Evetts Haley as a *cowman*. He knows what a cow is thinking before she thinks."[11] Haley's mother encouraged him to quit the cowpunching lifestyle and pursue higher education. Haley relented, eventually graduated from the University of Texas with a master's degree in History in 1926.[12] The university hired Haley as a museum field

---

[7] J. Evetts Haley, "Crystal Gazing in the Dust Bowl," undated, 1 in "Folder - JD MSS Unpublished," Wallet XXII, Box 4, Series III-A - Jeffersonian Democrats (Series III-A), JEH, HML.

[8] B. Byron Price, "J. Evetts Haley: Southwestern Historian," in "Folder 4 - JEH: A Character Study," Series K, Series IV, JEH, HML.

[9] Sean P. Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism: Texas and the Rise of the Modern Right* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 10.

[10] Bill Modisett, *J. Evetts Haley: A True Texas Legend* (Midland, Tex.: Staked Plains Press, 1996), 31, 34.

[11] Evetts Haley, Jr., "Preface: Some Words From and About My Father," in *J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson, (Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978), 11.

[12] J. Evetts Haley, "A Survey of Texas Cattle Drives to the North. 1877-1895" (master's thesis, University of Texas, 1926).

curator, but, more importantly, Haley spent the 1920s and 1930s polishing his promising career as a writer.[13] This period of Haley's life coincided with the First Red Scare and the surge in national anti-communist anxieties. Additionally, business progressivism—an economic philosophy that valued "public service and efficiency" over state-funded social programs—and the racial violence of the Ku Klux Klan dominated Texas politics during Haley's formative years.[14] These socio-political movements, alongside the harsh nature of the West Texas plains, helped mold Haley into an ultraconservative southern Democrat.

Haley's principled nature and West Texas upbringing fostered anti-statist tendencies, which became a prominent facet of his far-right southern values. The stock market crashed just a few short years after Haley graduated from the University of Texas, sending the U.S. economy into a tailspin. When Franklin D. Roosevelt instituted the New Deal after his landslide electoral victory in 1932, Haley envisaged the specter of government oppression. His frontier upbringing produced a deep distrust of the federal government; he viewed the federal government as an alien intruder invading local society. Haley's anti-statism intertwined with the white supremacy that coursed throughout the Deep South, and his relative economic privilege further separated him from the plight of minorities and immigrants in Texas. In the quagmire of the Great Depression, J. Evetts Haley transformed from a simple cowman-historian into a spokesman for far-right conservatism.[15]

---

[13] Throughout his adult life he wrote numerous historical accounts about the cattle-driving western frontier, including the seminal work on Charles Goodnight and the culture of the Great Plains: J. Evetts Haley, *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949).

[14] Norman D. Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984), 6-7.

[15] Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 59; Keith Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics during the Roosevelt Era" in *The Texas Far Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*, ed. David O'Donald Cullen (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 74-76.

Haley attributed much of the social and political upheaval in the United States to communist subversion, which connected him to the broader Radical Right movement. This conspiratorial mindset tapped into traditional Texas hostilities toward "foreign" elements, especially northeastern establishment Democrats.[16] Haley viewed any centralization of power as a pathway to communism, which reinforced his advocacy of states' rights and mistrust of liberalism. Speaking in front of the American National Cattlemen's Association in 1955 Haley declared, "As a matter of integrity and of tactics, we must admit that the communist philosophy, the epitome of evil, has us by the throat."[17] During his 1956 gubernatorial campaign Haley pilloried liberalism as a gateway to communism: "Again this vehicle of social and racial revolution has added another link in the communistically forged chain to destroy the rights of the great majority of Americans, and fasten federal control completely upon the people."[18] Haley's distress about communism animated his leadership within the Jeffersonian Democrats, propelled his defense of segregation during the 1956 Texas gubernatorial campaign, and energized his grassroots organizing efforts to defeat liberalism in Texas.

Haley's anti-communism influenced a pair of issues that defined his entire political career: states' rights and segregation. Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman mobilized the Democratic Party in support of civil rights during the 1940s, which opened fractures within the party and alienated segregationist southerners. The Dixiecrat Revolt of

---

[16] Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 38.

[17] Speech Transcript, J. Evetts Haley, "Americanism—and the Cowman's Part," Program of the 58th Convention of the American National Cattlemen's Association, 1955 in "Folder - Jan. 10, 1955," Series IV-F - Speeches and Appearances (Series IV-F), JEH, HML.

[18] J. Evetts Haley, "States Rights—The Issue: Interposition: The Way to Preserve Them," undated, 4 in "Folder - Haley Clippings," Box 4, Series III-C - Governor's Campaign (Series III-C), HML.

1948, a third-party movement among southern Democrats, highlighted deep-seated anxieties toward challenging the South's traditional racial mores.[19] Overt defenses of segregation fell out of favor in Texas during the mid-1950s, but racial politics, especially the rhetoric of states' rights, still appealed to many Texans.[20] Haley addressed the Texas State Democratic Executive Committee in the summer of 1956 and lamented the plight of states' rights within the current atmosphere of the Democratic Party. Assessing the dwindling support for states' rights, Haley declared, "It is the most critical issue our national existence faces today."[21] Haley rejected FDR's New Deal and yearned for continued southern dominance of the Democratic Party; he argued that national Democrats seemed "determined to not only destroy the Party but the power of Texas and the South."[22] Haley's strict interpretation of the Constitution, particularly the Ninth and Tenth Amendments, buttressed his interpretation of states' rights. Put simply, Haley contended that New Deal liberalism represented a foreign threat to southern society.

Haley's suspicion of civil rights mirrored the sentiments of many southerners, and his defense of states' rights aligned with the massive resistance of integration that occurred during the 1950s.[23] States' rights undergirded Haley's support of racial segregation, and

---

[19] For more on the Dixiecrat Revolt, see: Nadine Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[20] Ricky F. Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans: Allan Shivers and Texas Two-Party Politics* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 134-135; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 174-175.

[21] Speech, Statement by J. Evetts Haley to the State Democratic Executive Committee, June 11, 1956, 1 in "Folder - Speeches & Material," Box 4, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Jeff Woods illustrated how southern politicians utilized Cold War anti-communism to stoke fears of civil rights within the Deep South, in Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003). George Lewis's work charts how

Haley used racially charged language to appeal to Texans who feared social change. In one inflammatory pamphlet, Haley asserted, "The South stands at the cross-roads of destiny. Is it to continue to be a 'white man's country,' or is it to be sunk to the cultural level of the negro, and have the purity of its blood corrupted with mulatto strains?"[24] Southern far-right conservatives like Haley argued that the liberalism of the national Democratic Party betrayed Southern principles. During his 1956 campaign Haley tried to bolster his states' rights credentials by blustering that he would use the Texas Rangers stop federal forces from integrating Texas schools.[25] Haley had no authority to deploy the Rangers, but this anecdote illustrated that he disregarded the political and civil rights of blacks and that his white supremacist, segregationist views reinforced his political ideologies.

Haley's strict interpretation of the Constitution also influenced his strict fiscal conservatism and stoked his disdain for liberal spending and welfare programs. Liberal programs like Social Security cut against Haley's bootstrapping nature. In a radio address Haley scorned relief programs: "It tears down the natural pride of the people of a state by keeping them from helping themselves. It tends to make beggars of us and I know that most

---

southern states differed in their responses to the civil rights movement, but Lewis argues that resistance constituted a thread that wove together the Deep South's discontent, in *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (London, England: Hodder Education, 2006). Joseph Crespino argued that Mississippi played a key role in the rise of conservatism, especially regarding the push for states' rights to stem the tide of civil rights, in *In Search for Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007). Clive Webb's work describes how right-wing extremists helped create an environment that abetted massive resistance during the 1950s and 1960s, in *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2010).

[24] Booklet, J. Evetts Haley, "The New Deal and the Negro Vote" (Austin, Tex.: The Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, 1936), 3 in Wallet XX, Box 3, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[25] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 175.

Texans don't want to be beggars."[26] Regarding the Social Security Act, Haley once quipped, "I do not believe in social security except as individually planned and earned."[27] Haley also lobbied for the removal of taxation and yearned for a balanced budget. He dismissed the Sixteenth Amendment as "insidious and completely immoral," thereby disregarding the Constitution and ignoring the power of taxation as a remedy for deficit spending.[28] Instead, Haley viewed taxation as a medium for propping up, what he perceived as, ill-conceived liberal programs like the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Haley contended that "agriculture has been converted into a political machine that stands expectantly at the trough of the federal treasury, instead of relying upon its own possibilities as an honorable, free, and independent way of life."[29] New Deal liberalism, Haley summarized in a 1936 speech, threatened to put the American economy on the "dangerous ground of inflation," approached the "brink of national bankruptcy," and foreshadowed certain "national chaos."[30]

Haley's philosophy represented an extreme version of Texas conservatism because he merged 1920's "business progressivism," First Red Scare anti-communism, and the Ku Klux Klan's racial views.[31] This ultraconservative blend prized regressive taxation, self-sufficiency over public services, the continuation of segregation, and a belief in states' rights

---

[26] Radio Address from Station WOAI in San Antonio Texas, July 20, 1956, 10:30 PM, 6 in "Folder - Speeches and Material," Box 4, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[27] Speech Transcript, J. Evetts Haley, "A Texan Still Looks at Lyndon," January 6, 1967, 4 in "Folder - Jan. 6, 1967," Series F, Series IV, JEH, HML.

[28] Keynote Address to West Texas Chamber of Commerce, J. Evetts Haley, "Americanism Without Apology," October 20, 1952, 5-6 in "Folder - October 20, 1952," Series F, Series IV, JEH, HML.

[29] Radio Address by J. Evetts Haley, "More Baloney and Less Bacon, or the New Deal in Texas," October 26, 1936, 10 in "Folder - Speeches," Wallet XII, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[30] Ibid, 5.

[31] Brown, *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug,* 6-7.

combined with a distrust of the federal government.[32] Among contemporary right-wing Texas politicians, Allan Shivers and W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel held the most similarities to Haley because each man willingly race-baited and used anti-communism for political gain. For instance, when Shivers's administration wilted amid scandals in the mid-1950s the governor turned to segregationist rhetoric in the hopes of resuscitating his career.[33] Pandering to the racist vote did not work as effectively as it did in Deep South states, however, because the relative racial uniformity of Texas limited interracial economic competition, especially in West and Central Texas.[34]

Haley's anti-communist and conspiratorial language linked him to mainstream Texas conservatives and endeared him to the ultraconservative fringe. Hardline right-wingers like U.S. Representative Martin Dies (D-TX) and Allan Shivers forged political careers, in part, by utilizing anti-communist anxieties to fight New Deal liberalism and win elections.[35] Red-baiting rhetoric, as historian George Green noted, was useful to Texas politicians who "feared not communism but rather the New Deal and the possibility of its extension."[36] Haley deployed anti-communism as a way to contest the spread of liberal values, rather than out of a legitimate fear of communist subversion. Haley depicted the New Deal as anathema

---

[32] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 125-128; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 137, 138, 154, 156.

[33] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 128.

[34] Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 26. David Cunningham illustrated that racial tensions flared in the South when interracial economic competition increased: David Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights Era Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11, 101, 166.

[35] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 103-104; Nancy Beck Young, *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 197-199.

[36] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 76.

to American, and especially Texas, values, and his ultraconservative ideals prompted him to fight liberalism through political activism.[37]

Haley argued that the liberalism of Roosevelt's New Deal eroded the traditional tenets of Texas society, which galvanized his initial foray into the political arena under the banner of the Jeffersonian Democrats. Roosevelt's re-election campaign in 1936 prompted a backlash from conservative Democrats disillusioned with New Deal liberalism. On August 7, 1936, delegates from twenty-two states, including J. Evetts Haley, met in Detroit to air grievances against the Roosevelt administration. This group, the National Jeffersonian Democrats, hailed mostly from Midwestern and Southern states and was headed by former Senator James A. Reed (D-MO).[38] Though the caucus originally sought to simply raise questions, the event ended with the formation of a conservative political action group bent on refashioning the Democratic Party.[39]

This reactionary response was not uncommon in the South because the New Deal provoked a backlash among conservative Democrats. As historian Kari Frederickson noted, "The decade's economic crisis and the radical reorientation of the federal government toward class issues awoke a slumbering grassroots populism and stoked the fires of political opposition within the Deep South."[40] The Jeffersonian Democrats preached an idealized version of American democracy that downplayed social and economic strife by accentuating

---

[37] J. Evetts Haley, "Rabble-Rousers at the University—Red as Red and Still Boasted 'Democrats,'" undated, 1 in "Folder - JD MSS Unpublished," Wallet XXII, Box 4, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[38] Turner Catledge, "Bolters Assemble to Map Campaign to Beat President," *New York Times*, August 7, 1936.

[39] Summary of Detroit Jeffersonian Democrat Conference, August 8, 1936, 1 in "Folder - Haley, J. Evetts," Wallet XI, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[40] Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South*, 18.

the positives of individual freedom. The Jeffersonians also used conspiratorial language, believing FDR sought to "strike down the beneficent structure of Democratic government and to substitute for it a collectivist state, replacing the doctrines of Democracy with the tenets and teachings of a blended communism and socialism."[41] This ideological admixture of idealized individual liberty and anti-communist conspiracy theories filtered down to the state branches, including the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas.

Haley and other Texans had previously founded an organization, the Constitutional Democrats of Texas, to challenge FDR in Texas, but they merged with the Jeffersonian Democrats after the Detroit meeting.[42] Re-christened itself as the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas (JDT), the group's corporate charter revealed that the organization's purpose was to "prevent some wild political dreamer from attempting to break down the lines which separate the State and of compounding the American people into one common regimented mass."[43] Judge W. P. Hamblen of Houston, Texas, wrote a statement of aims for the Jeffersonian Democrats: "We re-assert our belief in the Constitution, in the rights of the States, and in the Jeffersonian principles. Believing thus, we must condemn the Roosevelt administration."[44] Hamblen further argued that Roosevelt "distressed people with a false humanitarianism, and endangered freedom and democracy by opportunistic measures and incitement to class

---

[41] Summary of Detroit Jeffersonian Democrat Conference, August 8, 1936, 1 in "Folder - Haley, J. Evetts," Wallet XI, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[42] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 74.

[43] Corporate Charter of the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, undated in "Folder - Jeff Dems of Texas," Wallet XIII, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[44] Letter from W. P. Hamblen to Editor of *The Cherokeean*, August 8, 1936 in "Folder #3," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

warfare."[45] What set the Jeffersonian apart from other Texas right-wingers was a willingness to paint FDR and the New Deal as a cog in a grand communist conspiracy.[46]

Haley left his job at the University of Texas to work as the State Chairman of the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, where he became the primary organizer and propagandist.[47] Haley criticized the welfare spending of the New Deal and issued warnings about communist conspiracies and the impact of liberalism on race relations. In one Jeffersonian pamphlet Haley asserted, "[The] breakdown of color lines and mixture of the races, black, white, and tan, is one of the cardinal principles of Red philosophy. Already the initial steps have been carefully taken by leading lights of the New Deal."[48] Haley viewed these "initial steps"—public employment—as a conspiratorial ploy by New Deal Democrats to win votes by keeping people on government pay rolls, rather than FDR's attempt to ensure steady, livable wages for impoverished farm workers. Haley's disdain for welfare programs revealed his white supremacist values because he viewed federal relief as an avenue for winning the political allegiance of non-whites. In a published statement Haley argued against

---

[45] Ibid.

[46] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 74-77.

[47] Haley's departure from the University of Texas proved controversial. Primary documents indicated that Haley went on leave from the university to campaign for the Jeffersonians, Letter from Haley to Mr. H. Elbert Lasseter, August 25, 1936, Folder 7, Wallet 1, Box 1 - JDT, Series III-A - JDT, HML, which prompted UT to not renew Haley's contract because of budgetary concerns, Joe B. Frantz, "Memoir on J. Evetts Haley," in *J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson, (Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978), 118. Haley viewed this as a punitive action for his political activism, and he blamed his departure on "intellectual shysters" and as evidence of "the danger of new deal tactics," J. Evetts Haley, "Rabble-Rousers at the University—Red as Red and Still Boasted 'Democrats,'" undated, p. 3, Folder - JD MSS Unpublished, Wallet XXII, Box 4 - JDT, Series III-A - JDT, HML; "J. Evetts Haley, Critic of the New Deal, No Longer on Texas Univ. Payroll," *The Big Spring Daily Herald*, Sunday, September 13, 1936, Box 6 - JDT (loose in box), Series III-A - JDT, HML. An investigation of the university's papers and payroll is necessary to unearth the true cause behind Haley's departure from UT.

[48] Pamphlet, J. Evetts Haley, "The New Deal and the Negro Vote" (Austin, Tex.: The Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, 1936), 4 in Wallet XX, Box 3, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

"the political administration of relief, and the support of an army of shiftless negroes and aliens at the expense of all of us."[49] The term "us" presumably meant, and appealed to, Haley's far-right constituency of white landowners and businessmen.[50] Intriguingly, Haley demonized seasonal workers for accepting government jobs, but he never questioned if the wages offered by federal programs were better than those offered by Texas planters. The AAA negatively impacted cotton ginners and exporters and provided little security for tenant farmers and sharecroppers, but farmers in Texas overwhelmingly supported FDR's willingness to engage the problem of falling agricultural prices.[51] Regardless, Haley chafed against federal economic interventionism and viewed government programs as a communist threat and a menace to the traditional social and racial mores of southern society.

The Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas established a statewide apparatus and relied on grassroots activism to organize its anti-New Deal, anti-FDR campaign. Haley sent out form letters probing current and potential Jeffersonian Democrats to provide names of like-minded individuals that might join the cause. This strategy garnered Haley the majority of the names for the fundraising and volunteer mailing lists. Many Texans responded by sending in small donations to support the Jeffersonian's cause. For example, Haley received a one dollar donation from L. R. Atkins, a Republican transplant from Illinois living in Austin, Texas. Atkins referred to the Jeffersonian Democrats as "real patriots and statesmen and not politicians," in a letter, further noting, "I consider the work you are doing as the most effective that is being

[49] J. Evetts Haley, "Labor and the New Deal," undated, 2 in "Folder - Advertising #2," Wallet XI, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[50] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 75.

[51] Keith Volanto, *Texas, Cotton, and the New Deal* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005), 143-144.

done in this state for the defeat of Mr. Roosevelt."[52] Most of the donations the Jeffersonians received were modest, and the organization cast a wide net when searching for donations rather than relying on large benefactors.[53] Despite the influx of donations, the Jeffersonian campaign had limited appeal. An article titled "A Hopeless Undertaking" in Lubbock's *Morning Avalanche* compared giving money to the Jeffersonians to "pouring sand in a rat hole."[54]

Yet money continued to fill the Jeffersonian coffers and Haley used the funds to distribute anti-New Deal literature across the state of Texas. The organization printed its own newspaper, *Jeffersonian Democrat*, which circulated in every county across the state of Texas.[55] The first run of the newspaper neared two hundred thousand copies, with the second run reaching close to a million.[56] The Jeffersonians also advertised in over 300 weekly newspapers and at least 60 dailies across the Lone Star State. In one such advertisement Haley argued that the "Democrat Party as we of the South have known it passed completely away." He stressed that FDR must be defeated because the administration's policies were "flouting the Constitution" and "wooing the Negro vote."[57] The Jeffersonian Democrats

---

[52] Letter from L. R. Atkins to Messrs. Jeffersonian Democrat, October 12, 1936 in "Folder #1," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[53] Letter from J. Evetts Haley to Mr. L. R. Atkins, October 15, 1936 in "Folder #1," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[54] Newspaper Clipping, "A Hopeless Undertaking," *Morning Avalanche*, August 26, 1936 in Wallet XIV, Box 4, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[55] E. Paul Jones, "Anti-New Dealers Plan Campaigns Will Organize Campaigns Covering Entire State of Texas," October 1936 in "Folder - Advertising Rates," Wallet X, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[56] Letter from J. Evetts Haley to Mr. E. Lee Tucker, September 22, 1936 in "Folder #1," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[57] Prospective Advertisement for the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas, undated in "Folder Advertising #2," Wallet XI, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

cooperated with other organizations along the far-right, notably the American Liberty League, to defeat Roosevelt.[58] The Jeffersonians distributed American Liberty League pamphlets, like "The New Deal vs. Democracy," that lambasted FDR's policies alongside their own propaganda.[59]

Despite tapping into the Lone Star State's anti-statist traditions, the Jeffersonian Democrats had limited appeal because of FDR's popularity and Texas's strong ties to the national Democratic Party during the 1930s.[60] The Jeffersonians claimed an active membership of around five thousand, primarily composed of disillusioned conservative landowners, businessmen, and lawyers.[61] Supplanting FDR as the Democrat candidate proved impossible, so the Texas Jeffersonians coordinated with the Republican Party and the affiliated Landon for President Clubs to promote the candidacy of Kansas governor Alf Landon for president. However, the political alliance only went so far. The Jeffersonians' race-baiting disturbed Texas Republicans; the Republican Party affiliate in Houston refused to distribute issues of the *Jeffersonian Democrat* because of its racially charged rhetoric.[62]

---

[58] For more on the American Liberty League, see: Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), 10-13; George Wolfskill, *The Revolt of the Conservatives; a History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974).

[59] Jouett Shouse, American Liberty League, "The New Deal vs. Democracy," June 20, 1936 in Wallet XVIII, Box 3, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[60] Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 19-20; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 6-7. Ricky Dobbs and Keith Volanto pointed out that the New Deal incurred a backlash from conservative Texas politicians, but that these battles often occurred within the one-party system in Texas. Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 3; Volanto, The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 69.

[61] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 74.

[62] Letter from Fred Moore to J. Evetts Haley, October 9, 1936 in "Folder - Harris Co. Club," Wallet XXXI, Box 4, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

This indicated a significant rift between the Jeffersonians and the Republicans: the Jeffersonians fought for conservative values by stoking racial prejudices and employing conspiratorial language, but the Republicans—Landon, specifically—needed to court voters and the aggressive tactics of the Jeffersonians alienated African Americans, a key part of the traditional Republican constituency.[63] Landon tried to appease both the internationalist and conservative wings that vied for hegemony in the national Republican Party, but his campaign refused to resort to race-baiting rhetoric to win southern votes. The Jeffersonians, on the other hand, willfully pandered to religious and racial prejudices, and Haley issued warnings about Roosevelt's supposed communist ties. As historian Keith Volanto noted, "Readers who picked up the *Jeffersonian Democrat* and found no problem with the views expressed, or excitedly experienced a 'Give 'Em Hell!' moment, were safely in the ultraconservative camp."[64]

The Jeffersonians deluded themselves into believing Landon had a solid chance for victory in Texas, despite the fact that Texas remained a Democratic stronghold. The office manager of the Houston JDT chapter, Fannie B. Campbell, wrote to Haley, "I can barely keep my enthusiasm down as the days go by and hundreds of phone calls come in in answer to our various literature we are sending out." Campbell exclaimed, "I feel so confident at present that we are going to win out."[65] Haley sent out encouraging form letters predicting a Landon victory: "We are making splendid progress in our movement. The Literary Digest

---

[63] George Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 65

[64] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 76.

[65] Letter from Fannie B. Campbell to J. Evetts Haley, September 24, 1936 in "Folder - Harris Co. Club," Wallet XXXI, Box 5, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

poll indicates that Roosevelt will be defeated, and this has never failed to be correct."[66] Unfortunately for Haley and the Jeffersonians, The *Literary Digest* polls that were being used by the Jeffersonians to support Landon turned out to be incredibly inaccurate: Roosevelt won an astounding eight-seven percent of the popular vote in Texas on route to the largest electoral victory in the history of the United States.[67] The Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas shuttered its Austin headquarters on November 2, 1936, as quickly as the wind dissipated from Landon's sails. Summarizing the self-perception of the Jeffersonians, Haley signed off in a letter to Judge Hamblen of Houston, "This has been a campaign by patriots."[68]

Though the Jeffersonian Democrats failed to defeat FDR's second presidential bid, the movement foreshadowed the winds of political change within Texas and the Democratic Party. Historian George Norris Green argued that the midcentury "bolt" away from the Democratic Party in Texas originated with Haley's Jeffersonian Democrats in 1936.[69] Keith Volanto agreed, noting that the Jeffersonian movement "laid the groundwork for future ultraconservative activity in Texas politics."[70] Soon after the demise of the Texas Jeffersonians, the election of W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel—a noted red-baiter and

---

[66] Letter from J. Evetts Haley to Mr. R. F, Evans, October 1, 1936 in "Folder #1," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[67] James West Davidson, et al., *U.S.: A Narrative History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2015), 528; Alice V. McGillivray, Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004: John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 19. Historian H. W. Brands noted, "Scientific polling began during the 1930s, supplanting the impressionistic sampling done as a sideline by such journals as *Literary Digest*. The Gallup poll, which commenced surveying in 1935, gained credibility when it correctly called the 1936 Roosevelt-Landon contest—a race *Literary Digest* got wildly wrong." H. W. Brands, *The Strange Death of American Liberalism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 24:

[68] Letter from J. Evetts Haley to W. P. Hamblen, November 2, 1936 in "Folder - Committee," Wallet XI, Box 2, Series III-A, JEH, HML.

[69] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 115-120; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 198.

[70] Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 77.

segregationist—as governor in 1938 highlighted the rightward shift of Texas politics.[71] Additionally, the Jeffersonians' grassroots strategies influenced future far-right movements that underscored the Democratic Party's internecine struggles. For example, the reactionary campaign of the Texas Regulars, a group of hardline conservative Democrats, in 1944 and the third-party Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948 highlighted the conservative political evolution of the South and the gradual move away from the Democratic Party.[72] Additionally, the mass mailing techniques utilized by the Haley found their way into future conservative campaigns. Haley receded from politics from the latter 1930s through the early 1950s, working as a ranch manager and serving as a regent for Texas Technological College, but his sabbatical ended during the tumultuous 1956 gubernatorial election.[73]

Haley returned to politics in 1956 by mounting a gubernatorial campaign based on segregation and interposition. His return to the public eye coincided with the decline of Governor Allan Shivers's grip on the Democratic Party. Shivers, a close friend of Haley's, decided not to run for a fourth full term amid criticisms of his scandal-ridden administration.[74] The 1956 Texas gubernatorial election represented a watershed moment as

---

[71] Samuel K. Tullock, "'He, Being Dead, Yet Speaketh,' J. Frank Norris and the Texas Religious Right at Midcentury" in *The Texas Far Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*, ed. David O'Donald Cullen (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 61; Volanto, "The Far Right in Texas Politics During the Roosevelt Era," 78-79.

[72] The Texas Regulars adamantly opposed the New Deal and sought to defeat liberal Democrats like Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson. The regulars above all wanted to reassert conservative control over the Democratic Party in Texas. The Texas Regulars represented the internecine battles in the Democratic Party—the party-loyalist, liberal wing maintained control of presidential elections, but the Texas Regulars like "Pappy" O'Daniel and Allan Shivers won gubernatorial contests. The regulars foreshadowed that many conservatives were beginning to question the national Democratic Party's adherence to right-wing values. However, many Texans were unwilling to move away from the Democratic Party. The Dixiecrat's candidate, Strom Thurmond, received paltry support in Texas because loyalty to the Democratic Party remained deep. Robert Dallek, *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 260-264; Cunningham, *Cowboy Conservatism*, 25-26; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 49-57, 112.

[73] Modisett, *J. Evetts Haley*, 93.

[74] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 115-120, 130.

the liberal, party-loyalist Democrats, newly empowered by the sagging Shivers administration, battled with the conservative Democratic forces that traditionally held sway in Texas. Multiple politicians contended for the Democratic nomination: Price Daniel, representing responsible conservatives; Ralph Yarborough, running as a liberal, party-loyalist Democrat; and "Pappy" O'Daniel, clinging to his folksy segregationism.[75] Haley, never known to back away from a challenge, threw his hat into the ring in order to bolster the waning support for far-right conservatism. Yet Haley faced an uphill battle since he lacked name recognition—he had never run for political office—and his rhetoric closely mirrored that of the outgoing governor, Allan Shivers.

Haley's gubernatorial platform, like his work with the Jeffersonian Democrats, promoted segregation and southern traditionalism through grassroots activism. On March 21, 1956, Haley paid the filing fee and announced his decision to run from his ranch in Canyon, Texas. Haley crusaded as a political outsider, and his slogan, "Qualified-Honest-Fearless," reinforced his identity as a straight-shooting cowpuncher. His ties to the Jeffersonian movement and Shivers cast doubt on his credentials as an "outsider" candidate.[76] However, his image as an independent cowboy helped solidify his conservative bona fides. This was Haley's first foray into public office, which his advisors thought would endear him to Texans looking for a candidate untainted by the perceived corruption of Austin. Jack Taylor, the General Chairman of the Haley for Governor Panhandle Committee, sent out form letters underscoring Haley's outsider status: "Though Mr. Haley is not a political figure and this is

[75] Patrick L. Cox and Edward M. Kennedy, *Ralph W. Yarborough: The People's Senator* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), xvi-xvii.

[76] Campaign Postcard, J.Evetts Haley Campaign, undated in "Folder - Haley Clippings," Box 4, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

his first effort in seeking public office, he has gained state-wide publicity in the past three weeks."[77] Haley received support from far-rightists like Dan Smoot, a far-right publisher and radio host. Smoot noted, "For years conservatives have belly-ached—with just cause—that we didn't have a real choice to vote for. In Texas this year we do have a choice—and I hope that every Texan who calls himself a conservative will work for J. Evetts Haley."[78] Haley hoped his gubernatorial campaign would galvanize a conservative constituency based on states' rights, segregationism, and conspiracy theories.

Harkening back to his days in the Jeffersonian Democrats, Haley stumped for a strict interpretation of the Constitution, defended states' rights, and issued dire warnings about communist subversion. In particular, Haley argued that the doctrine of interposition, which articulated that the Tenth Amendment empowered states to interpose their authority against federal action, buttressed southern segregation. Haley viewed desegregation as evidence of federal tyranny, and his staunch advocacy for interposition was not simply a theoretical debate—he intended to use interposition as a mechanism to stop desegregation. To prove this point, Haley declared, "I am for its use to stop this mixing, by coercion and immoral force, of white and Negro children in public schools, with its consequent destruction of our race and our way of life."[79] Haley was not interested in extending rights to African Americans, and instead he appealed to the remaining pockets of white supremacists in Texas by warning about the perceived ills of race mixing.

---

[77] Form Letter from Jack Taylor to Jeff Austin, June 25, 1956 in "Folder - A," Wallet 1, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[78] Letter from Dan Smoot to Mr. J. C. Phillips, May 13, 1956 in "Folder - D," Wallet 2, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML

[79] Pamphlet, J. Evetts Haley, "States Rights—The Issue! Announcement for Governor of Texas," February 29, 1956 in "Folder - Pamphlets," Wallet 6, Box 2, Series III-C, JEH, HML

Haley used interposition to defend states' rights and attack liberalism, despite the fact that the ideology was widely discredited. In his campaign announcement, Haley promised to use interposition to prevent the "Federal government from destroying our most vital national industry, namely oil and gas, and thereby the judicial predicate for the power to take over the industry, agriculture and labor generally."[80] Interposition was a delusion of grandeur for Haley because such defiance of federal law was illegal.[81] Nevertheless, Haley utilized interposition as an avenue for promoting far-right conservatism, contesting liberalism on all fronts, fighting integration, maintaining Texas's independence in the face of federal growth, and enforcing free market economics by removing regulations. Speaking to its political efficacy, historian Ricky Dobbs observed that interposition "elevated arguments against integration from the shameful muck of sectional racism by allowing good people who favored segregation to deny their own racism and cast the debate in terms of conservatism versus liberalism, modernization versus the 'Southern Way of Life.'"[82]

Haley's campaign and advocacy for segregation aligned with other far-right segregationist movements that dotted the South during the 1950s. The *Brown* decision and the ensuing push for desegregation inflamed support for states' rights across the Deep South, and the rhetoric of "massive resistance" easily adapted to the conspiratorial anti-communism of the Cold War.[83] Segregationists utilized anti-communism as a defense mechanism,

---

[80] Ibid.

[81] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Democrats*, 127.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*, 49-54; George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 40, 47. Webb, *Rabble Rousers*, 137, 145. For more on the rhetoric of "massive resistance," see: George Lewis, *Massive Resistance*; Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008).

historian George Lewis noted, in an effort to "recast what was a peculiarly southern problem as one of national concern."[84] Southern politicians, like Georgia governor Herman Talmadge, campaigned against the dual threats of integration and communism while threatening violence against African Americans that attempted to exercise their voting rights.[85] Similarly, Haley dubiously threatened to deploy the Texas Rangers if the federal government attempted to enforce the *Brown* decision in Texas, and he peppered his segregationist rhetoric with anti-communist conspiracies.[86] The ideological connections between Haley and southerners like Talmadge illustrated that Haley embodied a combination of extreme Deep South segregationism and rugged West Texas individualism.

Despite Haley's leadership in the Jeffersonian movement and connections with Allan Shivers, Haley remained a relative unknown in the gubernatorial election. Haley barnstormed all over Texas building a constituency, attending local events like the Cowboy Reunion in Stamford, speaking to the Lions Club in San Angelo, and participating in the Sidewalk Cattleman's Association parade in Madisonville.[87] He campaigned in major metropolitan areas like Houston, Austin, and Dallas, which led to the creation of local Haley for Governor Clubs. Throughout the election Haley played up his cowboy charm. In one legendary story Haley introduced himself to another car stopped at a stoplight. After handing the driver next to him some campaign literature, Haley said, "I'm Evetts Haley. I'm running for Governor.

---

[84] Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace*, 52.

[85] Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2005), 23-24; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 33-35. For more on Strom Thurmond, see: Cohodas, *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change*; Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America*.

[86] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 175

[87] Letter from J. Evetts Haley for Governor Headquarters to Scott Syler, June 27, 1956; Letter from J. Evetts Haley to Governor Headquarters to Jack G. Brock, June 28, 1956; Letter from Panhandle Committee Haley for Governor to Gib Gilchrist, June 4, 1956 all in "Folder - Rallies," Wallet 7, Box 2, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

Hope you will read this. If you disagree with me, then by gosh just vote against me."[88] When Haley's operation arrived in Dallas, local journalist Lynn Landrum commented, "Haley was in town Wednesday night and gave something like 300 people every chance in the world to cross him off their list—and they whooped and clapped and ate up just about every word he said."[89] Haley's segregationism and conspiracy theories appealed to a modest, but dedicated, constituency.

Taking a cue from his time with the Jeffersonian Democrats, Haley used grassroots activism and mass mailings to appeal to voters and fund his gubernatorial campaign. Contributions to Haley's operation ranged from one dollar to five hundred dollars, but the vast majority of the donations were small. This illustrated that establishment contributors, namely the oil industry, spurned Haley's campaign.[90] Nevertheless, within the first month and a half of its inception, Haley's campaign raised roughly $21,000 in donations.[91] Haley's defense of far-right conservatism found a support network among Texans who disagreed with the direction of the Democratic Party and, in general, U.S. society. This sectional constituency also endorsed Haley's segregationism and conspiratorial anti-communist rhetoric. Haley's supporters fretted about "the destruction of the white race," "red-tinged judicial tyranny," and "the conspiracy to change our form of gov't."[92] They also used phrases

---

[88] Richard M. Morehead, "Evetts Haley: No Pussyfooter," *Dallas Morning News*, Sunday, April 8, 1956 in "Folder - Haley Clippings," Box 4, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[89] Lynn Landrum, "Thinking Out Loud: What About J. Evetts Haley for Governor?," *The Dallas News*, June 10, 1956 in "Folder - Haley Clippings," Box 4, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[90] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 18.

[91] Financial Balance Sheet, July 18, 1956 in "Folder - Finance Report," Wallet 3, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[92] Letter from J. B. McMillan to J. Evetts Haley, June 9 , 1956 in "Folder - N (Nacodoches, Navarro, Nueces)," Wallet 6, Box 2, Series III-C, JEH, HML; Letter from J. B. McMillan to J. Evetts Haley, June 23 , 1956 in

like a "man of strong convictions" and, perhaps most importantly, "true conservative" to describe Haley's character.[93] Haley's campaign tapped into white anxieties regarding desegregation and the undercurrent of anti-statism inherent in Texas politics. He successfully linked, at least according to his supporters, federal tyranny and communist conspiracies to liberal values. This rhetoric earned Haley's campaign contributions from around the state and sustained his fringe support base.

Some Texans readily embraced Haley's conspiratorial, racially-charged ideals, but it earned a far greater number of detractors. One Texan, Robert C. Leathers, wrote to Haley expressing his disgust with the Haley's segregationism: "I must register the shame, disgust, and revulsion that I feel as a result of your un-Christian, if not un-American, stand on the matter of integration."[94] Referring to "separate but equal" as "farcical," Leathers rightly upbraided Haley's idealized revisionism of race relations in the post-Civil War South.[95] Leathers angrily charged, "There is no room in this democracy for any law, rule, or social custom that is premised on the fallacious principle that one individual is innately superior to another."[96] This letter underscored how desegregation split the Texas electorate. After the

---

"Folder - N (Nacodoches, Navarro, Nueces)," Wallet 6, Box 2, Series III-C, JEH, HML; Letter from Miss Mary Bosworth to J. Evetts Haley, March 29, 1956 in "Folder - H, A-M," Wallet 4, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[93] Letter from Miss Mary Bosworth to J. Evetts Haley, March 29, 1956 in "Folder - H, A-M," Wallet 4, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML; Letter from Dan Smoot to Mr. J. C. Phillips, May 13, 1956 in "Folder - D," Wallet 2, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[94] Letter from Robert C. Leathers to J. Evetts Haley, March 12, 1956 in "Folder - D," Wallet 2, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[95] Multiple books have examined the role of violence in the post-Reconstruction South as a medium for sustaining white hegemony. For choice examples, see: Alfred L. Brophy, *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984).

[96] Letter from Robert C. Leathers to J. Evetts Haley, March 12, 1956 in "Folder - D," Wallet 2, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML

Supreme Court declared segregation unconstitutional major Protestant organizations, like the Texas Council of Churches, urged Texans to follow the letter of the law. Other groups, notably Southern Baptists, felt that the federal government should mind its own business.[97] Nevertheless, eight years after the Dixiecrats failed to create inroads in Texas mainstream political campaigns had eschewed the acerbic rhetoric of segregationism.[98] Coded racial politics continued to played a role in Texas—Price Daniel confirmed his support of states' rights during the election—but Texas drifted away from the "massive resistance" of the Deep South, which partially explained the limited appeal of Haley's platforms.[99] Despite the long history of race-baiting in Texas, citizens expected a more well-rounded campaign than Haley's conspiracy-tinged, one-note platform.[100]

As Election Day neared, Haley's campaign remained hopeful that the divisions within the Democratic Party, and perhaps apathy among voters, would result in a run-off. Campaign chairman Jack Taylor wrote, "Experts are predicting that Daniel and Yarborough voters, being overconfident, will not go to the polls in full strength in the primary election, and that Haley supporters, growing daily by the thousands, will got to the polls and vote Haley and the run-off."[101] Unfortunately for Haley, his campaign could not compete with the

---

[97] Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible Belt State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 256-257.

[98] Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South*, 188; George Norris Green makes a similar argument in *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 112.

[99] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 41, 46, 135; Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 190; Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 69.

[100] Historian Darren Dochuk noted, "Citizens in the western South always expected more than coarse race baiting from their dynamic politicians." Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 11.

[101] Letter from Jack Taylor to Mr. Frank Carter, July 24, 1956 in "Folder - Chairman Letters," Wallet 4, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

fundraising or popularity of the mainstream Democratic candidates. Even "Pappy" O'Daniel siphoned potential votes away from Haley because the former governor boasted similar race-baiting rhetoric, which meant that the staunch segregationist constituency was split between Haley and O'Daniel. Historian Ricky F. Dobbs noted that during the campaign season Yarborough and Daniel "took the high road during the first primary campaign, allowing Haley and O'Daniel to inhabit the gutter."[102] When the votes were tallied, moderate conservative Price Daniel, whose campaign was supported by the oil industry and corporate interests, won a plurality of 629,000 votes while liberal Democratic Sam Yarborough received 463,400.[103] Former Governor Pappy O'Daniel used his folksy charm to garner 347,750 ballots, and Haley brought up the rear with just 88,800 votes.[104]

Haley's overt support of segregation proved to have sectional appeal in the Lone Star State. He received paltry support in the Valley and in cities like San Antonio or El Paso, which suggested that Haley's segregationism and racial rhetoric did not appeal to voters in areas with higher percentages of Mexican Americans. The fact that Haley's metropolitan campaign strongholds were concentrated in East Texas indicated that segregationist rhetoric galvanized voters in the racially diverse pine forests of East Texas, rather than the racially uniform plains of West Texas.[105] Historian David Cunningham studied a similar trend, noting

---

[102] Dobbs, *Yellow Dogs and Republicans*, 135.

[103] Price Daniels, in particular, was supported by the oil industry and other corporate interests during the 1956 Texas gubernatorial election. Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 175.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Haley's campaign ledgers revealed that the vast majority of financial disbursements went to radio stations and groups in East Texas, specifically, Fort Worth, Dallas, and Houston. Amarillo was the only major headquarters for Haley in West Texas, and he had no official presence near the Texas-Mexico border. Ledger, "All money or things of values paid or promised by J. Evetts Haley," July 18, 1956 in "Folder - Finance Report," Wallet 3 - D-F, Box 1, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

that Klan activity in 1950s North Carolina coalesced in areas with a higher percentage of blacks because "white residents felt their social, economic, and political standing acutely threatened by civil rights reform."[106] This perhaps explained the dearth of support in Haley's homeland—the plains of West Texas. Haley's appeal to white anxieties about desegregation and the loss of white supremacy did not translate to the predominantly white regions of Texas. The poisoned well of segregationist politicking appealed solely to fringe voters as Texans moved toward moderate conservatism, or, at the very least, more subtle racial politics, in the late 1950s.[107]

Nevertheless, the fact that Haley garnered a small, dedicated constituency signified that far-right conservatism remained a force in Texas politics. Despite only receiving votes from a small percentage of "hardcore extremists," journalist Jim Mathis observed, "Haley's exposure [in the 1956 campaign] had catapulted him into the leadership of their fights."[108] Haley's 1956 campaign marked the end of overtly racist campaigns in Texas, truly the end of an era.[109] Yet some ultraconservative Texans remained optimistic. Milton F. Hill, a supporter from Mineral Hills, Texas, wrote to Haley, "The conservative forces of Texas have been lethargic and sluggish and have greatly needed the stimulus of a dynamic and vigorous personality and courageous leadership. And this you have certainly given."[110] Through his

---

[106] Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*, 101.

[107] W. Lee O'Daniel actually accrued roughly 122,000 votes as a write-in candidate during the 1956 election, but this success could be chalked up to O'Daniel's previous record as a governor. Haley, on the other hand, had to make a name for himself from scratch during the 1956 election. Joseph E. Kallenbach and Jessamine S. Kallenbach, eds., *American State Governors, 1776-1976: Volume I* (Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1977), 579.

[108] Jim Mathis, "James Evetts Haley: The Voice of Many Hatreds," *Houston Post*, Monday, October 12, 1964 in "Folder - Political Correspondence 1964," Wallet - Correspondence clippings and campaign material 1964, Box 1, Series III-E - Misc (Series III-E), JEH, HML.

[109] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 190.

gubernatorial campaign Haley built a constituency attuned to the language of states' rights, conspiracy theories, and strict constitutionalism, and his earlier efforts with the Jeffersonian Democrats helped create connections with Republican conservatives. Both of these political movements helped Haley during the next phase of his activism. Haley never again campaigned for office; instead, he fostered a grassroots movement to fight liberalism through the national organization For America.

Following the election in 1956, Haley poured his energy into the anti-liberal For America organization and its state affiliate, Texans for America. For America's national organization was founded on June 1, 1954, just weeks after the Supreme Court rendered the *Brown* decision. Clarence Manion—a former dean of Notre Dame's law school that briefly chaired the Intergovernmental Relations Committee under Eisenhower before turning to far-right radio broadcasting—co-chaired TFA with General Robert E. Wood. Manion rooted the organization in far-right principles like strict Constitutionalism, Americanism, free enterprise, and conspiratorial anti-communism.[111] The National Policy Committee of For America employed anti-communist conspiracy theories, observing an "inexorable rising peril" in the United States.[112] One of the stated purposes of For America was "to eradicate the Godless evil of Communism," a malleable platform that targeted everything from school textbooks to political liberalism.[113] Manion's leadership connected For America with many

---

[110] Letter from Milton F. Hill to J. Evetts Haley, August 3, 1956 in "Folder - P," Wallet 7, Box 2, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[111] Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 10-11.

[112] For America, Conference of National Policy Committee, March 19, 1955, 3 in "Folder - For America," Box 3, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[113] Letter from Thomas M. McNicholas to J. Evetts Haley, March 29, 1955 in "Folder - For America," Box 3, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

prominent figures on the fringe right, including Dallas-based publicist and radio host Dan Smoot, Oklahoma minister Billy James Hargis, and Haley. Haley joined TFA prior to his gubernatorial campaign, but his efforts accelerated after he lost the Democratic nomination in 1956. He served as the state chairman for Texans For America because Haley shared For America's principle concern: that "the communistic goal of material security, aided and abetted by public education, sometimes by the churches, and especially by the government, is taking the place of the adventurous appeal of liberty.[114]

Haley and TFA's platforms closely mirrored those of For America's national organization: support for the Bricker Amendment, which was intended to restrict executive power and the ratification of international treaties; repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment; and promotion of states' rights, fiscal conservatism, and free-market economics.[115] Haley fought for issues of "individual liberties and sound government," while also warning about the power of "socialists and communists . . . to divide and conquer."[116] Haley and TFA members blanketed the state with propaganda to promote its brand of far-right conservatism, ranging from polemical educational materials and films to traveling speakers and radio-television programs. Arguably TFA's greatest influence occurred through its Committees of Correspondence and mass letter writing campaigns. The ultimate goal for Haley and Texans for America was to defend and promote far-right conservatism with the intent of ultimately

---

[114] Speech Transcript, J. Evetts Haley, "Americanism—and the Cowman's Part," Program of the 58th Convention of the American National Cattlemen's Association, 1955 in "Folder - Jan. 10, 1955," Series IV-F, JEH, HML.

[115] Summary of Proceedings at a Meeting of Certain Members of the For America Policy and Finance Committees, May 23, 1955, 2 in "Folder - 'For America,'" Box 3, Series III-C, JEH, HML.

[116] J. Evetts Haley, "Special Report to the Committees of Correspondence," TFA Newsletter, October 1, 1959, 2 in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 1, Series III-B - Texans for America (Series III-B), JEH, HML.

transforming one of the major political parties—the focus eventually became the Republican Party—into a bastion of conservatism. Haley's leadership in TFA illustrated his maturation as an ultraconservative leader by mobilizing mass mailing campaigns, reaching out to the burgeoning business activist movement, and coordinating with other far-right organizations. However, Haley continued to employ anti-communist, segregationist rhetoric, which limited the appeal of TFA and earned the organization many detractors.

The Committees of Correspondence's mass mailing campaigns, which often coordinated TFA with groups like the John Birch Society, represented the bulk of TFA's grassroots activism in the Lone Star State. Haley and TFA encouraged letter writing campaigns in support of conservative legislation, or to discourage politicians from supporting liberal measures, in order to attune Texans to the importance of local politics. Utilizing the patriotic imagery of the founding fathers, Haley proclaimed, "The precedent for our Committees of Correspondence is found in the history of the American Revolution . . . stirring American patriotism by committees of concerned citizens writing letters to inform and inflame the public."[117] Explaining how to accomplish this, Haley wrote, "[The] timing of our efforts is of tremendous importance; concentration of firepower on the proper target at the right moment will amplify, in geometric proportions, our strength and effectiveness."[118] An example of such "concentrated firepower" was the TFA campaign against Governor Price Daniel's proposal to raise teacher salaries in 1959. Haley viewed the "teacher tenure" bill, as

[117] J. Evetts Haley, "Special Report to the Committees of Correspondence," TFA Newsletter, October 1, 1959, 1 in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML; For more on the Revolutionary Era Committees of Correspondence, see: Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), 224.

[118] The emphasis in the statement belongs to Haley. J. Evetts Haley, "Special Report to the Committees of Correspondence," TFA Newsletter, October 1, 1959, 2 in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

TFA and other conservatives derisively called it, as a clandestine plan to increase taxes. In response, TFA's constituency wrote hundreds of letters designed to defeat the bill while urging Governor Daniel to slash the budget instead.[119]

The Committees of Correspondence bore many similarities to the mailing campaigns of the Jeffersonians, except that Texans For America directly targeted specific legislation and politicians rather than distributing broad propaganda. The letter writers focused on multiple conservative issues, ranging from anxieties toward communist infiltration and integration to fears of increased taxation. Kara Hart, the chair and heartbeat of the TFA Committees of Correspondence, was a fanatical conspiracy theorist. At one point Hart wrote to Haley that she believed the United States was "on the verge of being forced to surrender."[120] Haley recruited letter writers with Hart's help by surveying Texas newspaper editorials and letters to the editor for conservative entries. One TFA letter writer, Mrs. O. C. Rodgers, sent Haley a letter to the editor she penned to the *San Angelo Standard* about the "cynical immorality" that she believed permeated the United States. Rodgers argued that "America still [had] many decent and true patriots . . . But the real enemy we must identify, who is engaged in a sneak attack here as he is all over the world, is the Socialist."[121] Like Haley and Hart, Rodgers saw the taint of socialism around every corner, especially when it came to the government regulating the economy. Letter writers like Rodgers were crucial for building the conservative

---

[119] Allen Duckworth, "Writers to Papers Organize," *Dallas Morning News*, Thursday, December 3, 1959 in "Folder - Committee of Correspondence Letters," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[120] Letter from Kara Hart to J. Evetts Haley, undated in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 2, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[121] Letter from Mrs. O. C. Rodgers to J. Evetts Haley, February 7, 1960 in "Folder - Committee of Correspondence Letters," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

coalition that Haley envisioned would transform conservatism in Texas, and their activism pressured politicians to address right-wing concerns.

Texans for America turned conspiracy theories and far-right ideologies into tangible political action by instructing the Committees of Correspondence to write letters opposing or supporting statewide and national issues. For example, TFA officials thought Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's visit to Washington constituted an "abject surrender to the communist conception of co-existence, and Hart sent instructions to the Committees of Correspondence: "Register your opposition."[122] On the other hand, Haley urged TFA members to write letters in support of the Slack Bill, which prevented Texas schools from losing accreditation for refusing to implement guidance-counseling programs.[123] Haley saw the implementation of guidance programs as a "sinister move with mental-health overtones, meddlesome, disturbing and expensive, besides robbing the districts of further control."[124] As letters supporting the Slack Bill poured in, Haley triumphantly crowed, "The result has been a tremendous upsurge of patriotic sentiment in defense of the right of privacy, of the primary prerogative of the parents, and the proper province of the dedicated teacher."[125]

---

[122] TFA Newsletter from Kara Hart, undated in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 2, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[123] More research is needed to unearth information on the Slack Bill, which was presumably proposed by long-time Texas Representative Richard Clay "Dick" Slack. The only information I have found on the Slack Bill come from Haley's records—hardly an unbiased source. A trip to the Texas Legislative Reference Library and the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History should clarify the fate of the Slack Bill. For now, the Slack Bill illustrates how Haley used specific pieces of legislation to encourage political involvement among TFA members.

[124] J. Evetts Haley, "The Fallacies of the Defense of the Guidance-Counseling Program," TFA Newsletter, undated in Box 1 (loose in box), Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[125] TFA Newsletter, From J. Evetts Haley to the State Committees of Correspondence and Education, March 15, 1961, 2-3 in Wallet - TFA Form Letters (Copies), Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

Haley's communist conspiracy theories stimulated the letter writing campaign of Texans For America, illustrating that anti-communism still appealed to a modest constituency. Hart also urged TFA members to submit "an avalanche of protest" in support of the Connally Reservation, which prevented the UN from theoretically claiming jurisdiction over U.S. courts.[126] TFA justified the Connally Amendment because it "assured some protection from this communist-atheistic monster," despite Eisenhower's support of the United Nations and the World Court.[127] Haley and the TFA refused to entertain the merits of an international court, and instead accused the United Nations of communist leanings, which highlighted Haley's history of red-baiting and conspiratorial thinking. Civil rights activists, public schools, and liberal-moderate politicians all found themselves in the sights of TFA's army of letter writers. TFA cultivated a politically engaged constituency, one willing to support or criticize legislation that aligned with TFA's ultraconservatism. This willingness to interject far-right platforms into mainstream politics also illustrated Haley's maturation as a far-right leader. Haley now commanded a small army of writers to promote ultraconservative values instead of solely distributing propaganda and fundraising.[128]

TFA connected Haley to the broader conservative movement because he reached out to the business community in order to bolster its fundraising and broaden its activism. A TFA newsletter from 1958 read, "There is an increasing awareness among business leaders that

---

[126] Kara Hart, "The Connally Reservation Again Under Attack—It Must Be Retained," TFA Committees of Correspondence Newsletter, undated in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[127] TFA Newsletter, January 20, 1960, 3 in "Folder - Committees of Correspondence," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[128] There were a great deal of correspondence between Haley and prospective letter writers, but I did not find a data sheet containing all of the information for the TFA Committees of Correspondence. A future goal for this chapter is to ascertain exactly how many citizens wrote letters on behalf of Texans For America.

they and their firms must—for the sake of survival—become politically active."[129] The newsletter listed a number of firms that, in varying degrees, joined the political fray in the 1950s, like Boeing, Monsanto, and Dow Chemical. Big business, especially the oil industry, already played a crucial role in Texas politics, especially regarding the maintenance of pro-business, fiscally conservative policies.[130] The same 1958 newsletter noted TFA's desire to tap into this tradition of Lone Star business conservatism: "We must keep in mind that whatever program we adopt we cannot succeed without the support of business. There is now, however, in view of the deadly threat to free enterprise an opportunity to enlist strong financial support."[131] Texans for America, and Haley himself, aligned with the growing "business activist movement"—articulated by historian Kim Phillips-Fein—through its promotion of free market economics and deregulation.[132] Corporate influence, through the oil industry, in Texas politics dated back to the at least the 1930s, and TFA's decision to chase corporate funding suggested that Haley recognized the importance of recruiting businessmen to legitimize TFA as a mainstream conservative outlet. However, a November 1958 TFA budget sheet revealed that Haley's chapter operated on a shoestring budget and did not receive large donations from businesses. Only twenty-three people donated to TFA that month, totaling a paltry $546.92.[133]

---

[129] Newsletter, "For America—Our Urgent and Immediate Problems," December 31, 1958 in "Folder - Notes on 58 Campaign," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[130] Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 34.

[131] Newsletter, "For America—Our Urgent and Immediate Problems," December 31, 1958 in "Folder - Notes on 1958 Campaign," Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[132] Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands*, ix.

[133] Texans For America Financial Statement, November 30, 1958 in "Wallet - Notes on 1958 Campaign, Correspondence-General, 1958," Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

Haley's attempts to solicit funding from corporate interests failed, but TFA successfully networked with other far-right organizations and individuals like Robert W. Welch's John Birch Society (JBS), Dallas's Dan Smoot and H. L. Hunt, and Billy James Hargis and the Christian Crusade. Texans For America joined forces with these groups and individuals to attack the perceived leftism in the United States. For example, Haley and the TFA teamed up with Hargis to fight the Forand Bill, formally titled the "Social Security Amendments of 1958," which tried to extend Social Security hospital insurance benefits to elderly citizens. Haley viewed the expansion of Social Security as part of the communist conspiracy, and he erroneously defined the Forand Bill as "communizing medical treatment.[134] The Forand Bill failed to pass the House Ways and Means Committee, with Secretary of Health Arthur S. Flemming arguing that the legislation failed to fully address Social Security's problems.[135] TFA also joined the Birch Society's quixotic fight against the Supreme Court and Justice Earl Warren. Haley and the Birchers sought to impeach Earl Warren and the rest of the Supreme Court for "usurping" power through its decisions on civil rights cases. A TFA petition demanding that the U.S. Congress impeach the entire Supreme

[134] TFA Newsletter, "Report to Texas for America, Committees of Correspondence," undated in Wallet - TFA Form Letters (Copies), Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML. Social Scientist Wilbur J. Cohen wrote a telling paragraph rebutting arguments put forth by groups like TFA: "The key to the solution lies in the controversial issue of utilizing the resources of public responsibility to require employers, employees, and the self-employed to contribute toward the payment of their hospital costs when they retire. This 'compulsory' contribution is attack by the opponents of the bill on the grounds that it is inconsistent with the American way of life which is based on 'voluntarism.' No responsible individual or group in the United States believes in compulsion for its own sake. But we have found it better to require people to stop on a red light than to be free to go through whenever they want to do so. Stop lights do limit your freedom to do as you wish. But we feel that such a limitation on our freedom also preserves our freedom for a long period of time. Compulsory laws can enhance freedom at the same time they restrict it." Wilbur J. Cohen, "The Forand Bill: Hospital Insurance for the Aged," *The American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 58, No. 5 (May 1958): 701.

[135] Lenore A. Epstein and James C. Callison, "Financing Health Care for the Aged," *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 27, No. 1, (Winter 1962): 106-107.

Court contained around 12,000 signatures by January 1959.[136] The signature count by no means indicated an ultraconservative mandate from Texans, but Haley's coordination with other far-right organizations illustrated that he understood that fostering a national movement necessitated the creation of a nationwide coalition of ultraconservative organizations.

Haley and TFA also continued the southern tradition of combining anti-communist rhetoric with white supremacy in order to attack the push for racial equality in the mid-twentieth century. Historian Jeff Woods called this phenomenon the "Southern Red Scare," in which "the main goal was to discredit the civil rights movement by associating it with the nation's greatest enemy, Communism."[137] In the summer of 1958 TFA defined Eisenhower's forceful integration of Little Rock Central High as "one of the worst depravities of political history" because it reduced "the once sovereign states to iron-curtain satellites"[138] Texans For America appealed to the racist undercurrents in Texas by depicting Eisenhower as a tyrant bent on destroying states' rights through his actions in Little Rock, even though Orval Faubus's refusal to integrate Little Rock Central High after the *Brown* decision constituted an actual defiance of federal law.[139] Eisenhower's actions offered more proof of the red-tinted tyranny of liberalism to Haley and TFA, reinforcing the need for a conservative movement to defend states' rights and racial segregation in Texas.

---

[136] "Court Impeachment Petition Growing," *Ft. Worth Star Telegram*, Tuesday, January 7, 1958 in "Folder - TFA Newsletter Jan 1958 Issue," Wallet - TFA Newsletters late 1950s, Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[137] Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*, 5.

[138] "Status of Bills to Restrict the Court to its Proper Jurisdiction," TFA Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 5, June-July 1958 in "Folder - Texans for America Newsletters," Wallet - TFA Newsletters Late 1950s, Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[139] For more on the Little Rock Crisis and Orval Faubus, including an examination of the conflation of anti-communism and segregationism, see: Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 81-90; Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace*, 75-78; Woods, *Black Struggle Red Scare*, 68-72.

The rhetoric deployed by Haley and Texans For America earned arguably more detractors than followers. Some Texans criticized TFA's racial rhetoric while others accused the organization of affiliating with communists. Edgar Chasteen, a Texan from Huntsville, disparaged TFA's alarmist rhetoric, noting "If one is to accept the views expressed by this publication, he must, of necessity, become anti-everything."[140] He also chastised TFA for supporting the executions of black men based on hearsay and joining the Birch Society's movement to impeach Earl Warren. Chasteen struck a tone of religious moralism to reject TFA's racism: "I also object to your use of Christianity and the Bible to suit your purposes. The Bible certainly does teach the brotherhood of all men." Chasteen saved his most biting comment for last, intoning, "As voting records show you represent a very small segment."[141] Another Texan, R. E. Driscoll, called the Attorney General's office to inquire if TFA was on the list of subversive organizations. Despite assurances that TFA was not on the list, Driscoll wrote, "I am almost of the opinion that you should be."[142] Driscoll also criticized TFA for editorializing and relying on emotional rhetoric rather than presenting facts. Interestingly, Driscoll lamented, "I can readily agree that a great deal of what you say is true but the manner in which you have said it is what gets my dander up." Driscoll's statement suggested that there was an undercurrent of citizens that agreed with Haley's principles, but that the harsh, antagonistic rhetoric of TFA's leaders spurned potential allies.

---

[140] Letter from Edgar Chasteen to Texans for America, October 31, 1958 in "Folder - TFA Hate Letters," Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Letter from R. E. Driscoll to J. Evetts Haley, July 13, 1958 in "Folder - TFA Hate Letters," Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s southern rhetoric moved away from overt anti-communist and segregationist rhetoric, and the lack of support for TFA highlighted this gradual transition.[143] Many southerners were alarmed by the rapidly changing racial mores of southern society, but, in general, Texans had greater tolerance for racial inclusion than the rest of the Deep South.[144] TFA operated at a turning point in Texas politics, the late 1950s and early 1960s, as politicians started softening their segregationist, red-baiting rhetoric.[145] Nevertheless, Haley tapped into an ultraconservative constituency that felt ignored by the zeitgeist of liberal reform. Additionally, the mass letter writing campaigns of Texans for America indicated an eagerness among the far-right to coordinate and make their voices heard, which established a nationwide network of ultraconservative groups that shared similar interests. In terms of success, Haley's time in Texans for America was the most fruitful chapter of his political life because the organization produced quantifiable activism among the grass roots and coordinated with other far-right organizations, but TFA and its parent organization failed to bring about a conservative revolution in U.S. politics.[146] The Republican Party maintained a relatively moderate-conservative stance and continued to house liberals during the late 1950s, and the national Democratic Party championed the liberalism of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. Yet the ascendance of Senator Barry

---

[143] Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 180. In Texas the process occurred even earlier. George Norris Green wrote, "Race ceased being a statewide factor in elections after 1956, and by failing to embrace the South's tactics of massive resistance, Texas drifted further away from southern moorings," in Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 190.

[144] Green, *The Establishment of Texas Politics*, 186.

[145] Cunningham, "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits," 105.

[146] My argument agrees with Sean P. Cunningham's assessment regarding the success of Haley's activism. Cunningham hones in on Haley's attacks on public school textbooks, while I argue that Haley's coordination with other far-right groups and letter writing campaigns were equally crucial to far-right politics. Cunningham, "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits," 111.

Goldwater (R-AZ) and the election of 1964 provided an opportunity for Haley to link up with the burgeoning conservative movement.

During the 1964 campaign Haley channeled his scorn toward liberalism into an all-encompassing attack on President Lyndon Johnson, which propelled Haley's ultraconservatism onto the national stage. Haley stumped against Johnson's administration because LBJ was loyal to the national Democratic Party, supported civil rights legislation, and represented the Democratic Party's transition away from southern conservatism. Haley also disliked the fact that Johnson gained a great deal of his political power through coercion and intimidation, and he viewed Johnson's contested victory in the 1948 senatorial election as evidence of LBJ's corruption. Simply put, Haley, a far-right conservative Democrat, viewed LBJ as a traitor to southern politics. The bellicosity between the two men symbolized the festering schism within the Democratic Party. During Haley's time as the state chairman of Texans for America, TFA attacked LBJ's "complete betrayal of the South in the segregation fight."[147] Haley often referred to Johnson in pejorative terms, such as calling him "the slickest operator ever sent to Washington from Texas."[148] The presidential election of 1964 gave Haley the opportunity to criticize LBJ in front of the entire nation while simultaneously helping the cause of Goldwater conservatism.

When a coalition of grassroots activists and right-wing Republicans thrust Barry Goldwater onto the 1964 GOP ticket, Haley abandoned the Democratic Party and joined forces with the Republicans. Haley had previously flirted with the Republican Party while

---

[147] TFA Newsletter, "New Party Proposed By Patriots in Chicago," *Texans for America*, Vol. II, No. 2 (October-November 1959): 3 in Wallet - Notes on 58 Campaign and Correspondence, Box 3, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

[148] TFA Committees of Correspondence Newsletter, "Special Report to the Committees of Correspondence," November 12, 1959, 1-2 in "Folder - Committee of Correspondence Letters," Box 1, Series III-B, JEH, HML.

leading the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas and TFA , but Goldwater's candidacy convinced Haley that the GOP adhered more closely to conservative principles than the Democratic Party. In support of Goldwater's nomination, Haley noted, "[Goldwater] would return us to fiscal sanity and return us to observance of the Constitution."[149] Goldwater's platform epitomized the strains of fiscal and constitutional conservatism that appealed to Haley. Haley's shift to the GOP coincided with other major Democratic figures switching parties to support Goldwater. Most notably, former Dixiecrat and U.S. senator from South Carolina Strom Thurmond changed his party affiliation from Democrat to Republican in order to aid Goldwater's campaign and contest LBJ's liberalism.[150] Haley challenged Johnson's re-election bid in 1964 by publishing a polemical, mudslinging book that disparaged Johnson's character and policies. The book, titled *A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study in Illegitimate Power*, catapulted Haley and his brand of Texas ultraconservatism into the national political discourse.[151]

Haley's book purported to be an accurate portrayal of Lyndon Johnson's personal and political career, and, as the subtitle indicated, Haley believed LBJ came to his position through illegitimate means. Researched, written, and published in 1964, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* landed during the critical summer months before the polls opened for the presidential election. Haley self-published the book out of his own Palo Duro Press, located in his home of Canyon, Texas. The first print run in June totaled 100,000 copies with friends and small

---

[149] Chicago Tribune Press Service, "Haley Says Sale of Book Points Goldwater Victory," *Houston Post*, August 19, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[150] Pamphlet, Harry Everringham, "Jeffersonian Democrats Welcome Thurmond's Support of Goldwater," *The Fact Finder*, Vol. 22, No. 22 (September 30, 1964) in "Folder - Political Clippings and Material undated," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[151] Cunningham, "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits," 111.

conservative bookstores aiding the distribution effort.[152] Much of Haley's book decried LBJ's liberalism and character flaws, often through oversimplified, misleading statements. For example, to elicit an emotional response from readers, Haley pontificated, "Johnson's voting has consistently been anti-business and pro-socialist."[153] This characterization ignored that Johnson voted in favor of corporate tax cuts and received frequent criticism from more liberal Democrats.[154] Despite the fact that LBJ was neither a socialist nor anti-business, Haley viewed liberalism as a pathway to federal, and potentially communist, tyranny. Haley also frequently referred to Johnson's political scandals, such as the contested congressional election of 1948, in an effort to damage LBJ's integrity. Haley's book vilified Johnson's personal character while also attacking his liberal platforms, especially LBJ's advocacy of civil rights.

Haley criticized Johnson, the Democratic Party, and liberalism in general for aligning with the movement for racial equality. Haley wrote that Johnson's "most extreme position" was his cooperation with the civil rights movement and his support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which, Haley argued, would "end the American Republic."[155] Alongside such conspiratorial language, Haley used the cudgel of racial politics against LBJ because it had a long history of political efficacy in Texas. As contemporary journalists Rowland Evans and

---

[152] Haley, Jr., "Preface," 19; Joseph Warren, "Suppression of a Book" in *J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West*, ed. Chandler A. Robinson, (Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978), 111.

[153] J. Evetts Haley, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study in Illegitimate Power* (Canyon, Tex.: Palo Duro Press, 1964), 168.

[154] Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics*, 201.

[155] Haley, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, 172. Haley seemed to ignore Johnson's early voting history as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where LBJ vote against civil rights and Truman's integration platforms, Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Means of Ascent* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), xvii.

Robert Novak observed, "In Texas, the temptation to play the race issue against the first southern president in a century is strong, and the ground is fruitful."[156] Segregationist, race-baiting rhetoric no longer won elections in Texas by the early 1960s, but Haley undoubtedly spoke for many southerners and Texans when he called Lyndon Johnson a "traitor to the South."[157]

Haley's abhorrence for Johnson went deeper than just politics, entering the realm of personal principles. Haley portrayed himself as a man of integrity while characterizing LBJ as an elusive, perfidious politician. Nothing illustrated Haley's rigid probity more than his willingness to fall on the sword of segregation during the 1956 Texas gubernatorial election. Speaking to LBJ's perceived lack of integrity, Haley declared, "There is nothing more significant in Johnson's career than the fact that he has never been known to take an unpopular position and resolutely go down the line for it."[158] This was an unfair characterization of Johnson, especially since later critics of Johnson's presidency noted his dogged adherence to Great Society liberalism and the conflict in Vietnam.[159] Yet Haley's book spoke to a segment of the conservative population that believed too many politicians lacked firm values or convictions. As Sean Cunningham pointed out, Haley "vilified [LBJ] as

---

[156] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "GOP Basing Coming Campaign On Books Written in Texas?," *The Daily Oklahoman*, July 30, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[157] Haley, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, 178.

[158] Ibid., 172.

[159] For more info on this duality of Johnson's presidency, see: Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). Historian Randall B. Woods wrote, "Lyndon Johnson's personality, like the nature of Congress and, indeed, the human condition, was rife with opposites and tension between them. Ambition versus public interest. One versus many. Faith versus doubt," Randall B. Woods, *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 219. This illustrated that Haley's characterization of LBJ was one-sided for the purpose of vilifying the incumbent president.

the personification of all that was corrupt and wrong with American politics."[160] Haley hoped Barry Goldwater, a principled conservative, could reverse the perceived deceitfulness of politicians like Lyndon Johnson.

When Goldwater received the GOP nomination Republican campaign headquarters around the nation proffered right-wing books, including Haley's, in an effort to bolster Goldwater's electoral chances. Contemporary journalist Donald Janson marveled, "Never before . . . have paperback books of any category been printed and distributed in such volume in so short a time. Never before has such literature been used to such an extent in a Presidential campaign."[161] Many GOP headquarters, including the Republican office in Houston, stocked Haley's book alongside Phyllis Schlafly's *A Choice, Not an Echo* and John A. Stormer's *None Dare Call It Treason*.[162] Goldwater's campaign made a concerted effort to distribute and sell *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* in order to damage President Johnson's reputation.[163] As Janson noted, Haley's book aligned best with treatises written by Stormer and Schlafly as books by "ultraconservatives . . . [that] purport to offer documentation that the Johnson administration is 'soft on Communism' and that the President is a man of little principle."[164] The Goldwater campaign gave Haley's book sales an unexpected boost while also making him a national figure in the fight for ultraconservative principles.

---

[160] Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 101.

[161] Donald Janson, "Extremist Book Sales Soar Despite Criticism in G. O. P.: Paperbacks Pushed by Goldwater Camp in Many Areas," *New York Times*, Sunday, October 4, 1964 in "Folder - 1964 II, Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid.

The grassroots effort that supported Goldwater's campaign helped distribute Haley's book throughout the United States.[165] GOP offices, book stores and airports around the nation carried *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*. The book was purchased in bulk by wealthy Birchers, distributed at political rallies, and even translated into Spanish.[166] Palo Duro Press claimed to have 7.5 million copies either published or ordered within two and a half months of publication.[167] Haley believed the book sales harbingered the beginning of the conservative movement he had spent his life trying to foment. "There is a real stirring at the grass roots," Haley said, "Otherwise, how could somebody like me, who is absolutely unknown, and with no sales organization at all and no promotion, bring out a book and have those millions of sales."[168] With a tinge of hope Haley augured, "Something is happening throughout the nation."[169] The interview represented a bit of gamesmanship because Haley did in fact have help distributing the book through GOP state branches, especially throughout the Sunbelt, but the influx of early sales indicated that something *was* happening around the United States.[170] Haley's book tapped into the resentment felt by hardline conservatives, anti-communists, and other groups that felt ignored by the current political system.[171] This

---

[165] Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 478.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Warren, "Suppression of a Book," 112.

[168] Chicago Tribune Press Service, "Haley Says Sale of Book Points Goldwater Victory," *Houston Post*, August 19, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Robert Dallek, *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 187.

[171] Rick Perlstein noted that White House Press Secretary Bill Moyer's claimed to not have discussed Haley's book with the president, and this "response showed little more than the Administration's incomprehension of this strange new virus spreading in their midst: the people likely to be convinced by *A Texan* were the same people who looked upon Drew Pearson as a traitor." Perlstein, *Before the Storm*, 478.

disillusion helped Haley sell millions of books that told the American public the current president was a crook, and, more importantly, *A Texan* helped fuel the national movement that pushed Goldwater conservatism into the mainstream political arena.

In an effort to bolster Goldwater's electoral chances some Republican politicians utilized Haley's book as a campaign document to attack liberalism and LBJ's administration. Republican lawmaker Bob Wilson, the chairman of the GOP congressional campaign committee, recruited other politicians to publish *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* in the *Congressional Record* in an effort to aid distribution efforts. Journalist Jack Anderson noted that Wilson's effort would "make the book an official document and permit the Republican Party to mail it around the country at taxpayers' expense."[172] By late summer 1964, Representative Robert Michel (R-IL) successfully inserted one chapter into the *Congressional Record*, though the whole book never made it. This support from the GOP demonstrated the slow consolidation of conservatism, or at the very least the pragmatic desire to win an election, within the Republican Party. When depositing Haley's book into the *Congressional Record*, U.S. Representative H. R. Gross (party-state) declared, "It is a book that ought to be read by every American."[173] However, the legislators' plan of putting Haley's book in the *Congressional Record* and mailing it at taxpayer expense exhibited incredible irony since it went against Haley's belief in limited government and suspicion of the misuse of public funds. Regardless, through the efforts of the national Republican

---

[172] Jack Anderson, "Rich Texas Rancher Helps Smear LBJ," *Long Island Press*, August 18, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[173] *Congressional Record*—Appendix, "A Texan Looks at Lyndon," Extension of Remarks of Hon. H. R. Gross of Iowa, Tuesday, September 1, 1964, A4550 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

apparatus *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* entered the political lexicon as a campaign document favoring Goldwater conservatism and highlighting the disillusion with Johnson and the Democratic Party.

The endorsement from a few Republican politicians and state branches bestowed an air of legitimacy to *A Texan*, but the bulk of distribution efforts fell to national and regional ultraconservative groups. Willis Carto's Liberty Lobby lauded Haley's book as "crammed with facts and footnotes . . . [that provide] all of the details to the sordid background of the current resident of the White House."[174] Aside from agreeing with Haley politically, the Liberty Lobby also had a vested interest in supporting Haley's work because it bolstered their own anti-Johnson publication, *LBJ: A Political Biography*.[175] The Birch Society called Haley's publication a political necessity: "This book is loaded with facts, of the very kind that make small arms add up to the power of the atom bomb. You need it in your field equipment."[176] Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade advertised Haley's book in its monthly periodical, encouraging crusaders to buy *A Texan* in bulk so more right-wingers could read the "sordid details" of Johnson's life.[177] The book also received accolades from a legion of smaller far-right journals and organizations, such as the *Bulletin Board of Conservatives* and the Austin Anti-Communism League.[178] Connections with far-right anti-

---

[174] Liberty Lobby, "Documentation by Haley," *Liberty Letter*, No. 46 (August 1964): 46 in "Folder - Political Printed Material & Clippings-Lyndon Johnson-1964 and undated," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[175] Liberty Lobby, *LBJ: A Political Biography* (Washington, D.C.: Liberty Lobby, 1964).

[176] "Your Own Reading," *John Birch Society Bulletin* (August 1964): 21 in "Folder - Political Correspondence 1964," Wallet - Correspondence clippings and campaign material-1964, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[177] Advertisement, ed. Billy James Hargis, *Christian Crusade*, Vol. 6, No. 9 (October 1964): 23.

[178] Periodical, Mrs. J. Milton Lent, *The Bulletin Board of Conservatives*, July 24, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E,

communist groups undoubtedly helped Haley move more books, but it also brought criticisms of bias. A book review in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* called Haley's work "arrogant" for believing that "both the Almighty and the Constitution are invariably on the side of the Birchers."[179]

The populist conservatism that propelled Goldwater to the national spotlight also animated the grassroots campaigns that supported far-right books like *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*. Individuals like Lloyd Ellenburg wrote their local papers urging fellow conservatives to read Haley's book. Ellenburg noted that Haley provides "all of the shameful details" of LBJ's life, and he signed off by declaring, "We desperately need a national leader of strong moral fiber."[180] A reader named E. L. Bynum used similar language to endorse Haley's book in a letter to the *Plains Baptist Challenger*: "The American people have a right to know the moral and ethical standards of those who are running for a political office."[181] All of this support for Haley's book, from individuals, far-right journals, GOP branches and politicians, and facets of the Goldwater campaign illustrated that a significant amount of the population was disenchanted with liberalism or Johnson or both. It also indicated that Haley and the broader Goldwater campaign had tapped into a discontented element of the U.S. electorate. This conservative constituency that viewed the federal government as corrupt, or

---

JEH, HML; *Freedom Views*, Vol. IV, No. 43 (Austin, Texas: June 30, 1964) in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[179] "Texan's Look at Lyndon Is Through Biased Eyes," *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Sunday, July 19, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[180] Newspaper Clipping, Letter from Lloyd Ellenburg to the Editor of the *Pittsburgh Press*, undated in "Folder - Political Printed Material & Clippings-Lyndon Johnson-1964 and undated," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[181] E. L. Bynum, "A Texan Looks at Lyndon," *Plains Baptist Challenger*, undated in "Folder - Political Printed Material & Clippings-Lyndon Johnson-1964 and undated," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

at the very least incompetent, lauded Haley for taking on liberalism and helped solidify Goldwater as a legitimate political challenger to LBJ.

Despite the grassroots support for Haley's work, the majority of the mainstream media excoriated Haley's book as politically-motivated and poorly researched. Most newspapers urged their readers to look elsewhere for political analysis. A review in the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* referred to *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* as "stridently partisan" and "without literary merit." More damning was the columnist's assertion that Haley's work was historically inaccurate and "totally devoid of perspective."[182] An article in the *Denver Post* dismissed *A Texan* as "propaganda" and noted that Haley alleged many things through "inference, implication, and supposition" rather than hard facts.[183] Reviewer A. C. Greene disparaged Haley's book as "evil" and "outrageously, surreptitiously wrong," while Ronnie Dugger, a consistent critic of Lyndon Johnson, called Haley's methodology and documentation into question.[184] Years later, while speaking at a Liberty Lobby convention in Washington, D.C., Haley decried the barrage of negative reviews as a "campaign of smear and vilification."[185] Haley viewed all criticisms as "attempted character assassination" that

---

[182] "Texan's Look at Lyndon Is Through Biased Eyes," *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Sunday, July 19, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[183] "Anti-LBJ Propaganda Flowing in Texas," *The Denver Post*, August 2, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[184] Newspaper Clipping, A. C. Greene, "Texan Replies to L. B. J. Book," undated in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964 and undated," Folder - Political Printed Material & Clippings-Lyndon Johnson-1964 and undated, Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML; Jim Mathis, "J. Evetts Haley Doesn't Play by Any Rules," *Houston Post*, Tuesday, October 13, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[185] Speech Transcript, J. Evetts Haley, "A Texan Still Looks at Lyndon," January 6, 1967, 1 in "Folder - Jan. 6, 1967," Series F, Series IV, JEH, HML.

ignored the contents of his book.[186] Yet many of the criticisms of the book, such as Haley's faulty citation methods and dubious research, contained valid complaints.

Multiple mainstream politicians joined the press in roasting Haley's book for being a polemical hatchet job. Governor Robert E. Smylie of Idaho, the chairman of the Republican Governors Conference, referred to Haley's book as "smut," while Paul W. Wolf, the Republican chairman in Colorado, said his outfit would "try to produce votes by entirely different methods."[187] Texas Governor and Democrat John Connally dismissed Haley's book in a White House press conference, remarking, "I know the purpose of it and I don't have time to read a propaganda piece."[188] If nothing else, the LBJ insignia affixed to Connally's lapel illustrated the governor's dedication to Johnson.[189] Connally's rebuke of Haley also highlighted the chasm between Haley's far-rightism and the party-loyal, moderate conservatism that inhabited the Texas Governor's mansion. The fact that both Republicans and Democrats repudiated Haley's work illustrated that far-right conservatism remained out of step with mainstream U.S. politics, regardless of Goldwater's nomination.

In the end, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon* epitomized campaign propaganda by giving a biased account of Lyndon Johnson and American liberalism. Haley only highlighted the most negative characteristics of LBJ while ignoring all of his positive character attributes and

---

[186] Ibid.

[187] Donald Janson, "Extremist Book Sales Soar Despite Criticism in G. O. P.: Paperbacks Pushed by Goldwater Camp in Many Areas," *New York Times*, Sunday, October 4, 1964 in "Folder - 1964 II," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[188] "Connally Says Texan's Book On Johnson Just Propaganda," *Times-Herald* (Waco, Texas), September 25, 1964 in "Folder - 1964 II," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

[189] John Connally's loyalty to Lyndon Johnson stemmed from the fact that LBJ helped jump start Connally's political career. Connally worked for Johnson during LBJ's career in the House of Representatives. Dallek, *Lone Star Rising*, 186-187.

political platforms. Johnson's anti-poverty and civil rights crusades of the 1960s were portrayed as indicative of a power-hungry tyrant rather than steps toward necessary progressive societal change. Haley presented Johnson as a one-dimensional demagogue, and he construed LBJ's pragmatism and negotiating prowess as a lack of principles. This unfair characterization focused entirely on Johnson's character flaws without accounting for LBJ's concern for individual rights and the impoverished. He also committed significant citation errors, and many of his stories relied on hearsay and gossip rather than factual evidence, which led many reviewers and voters to disregard Haley's research. Yet Haley's book contained minor highlights, such as illustrating how LBJ stole the Senate election of 1948 from Coke Stevenson, but the recounting of this episode remained skewed by Haley's abhorrence of Johnson.[190] Ultimately, the movement for Goldwater conservatism came up short; Johnson received nearly sixteen million more votes than the Arizona senator, and Goldwater lost the Electoral College in a landslide: four hundred eighty-six to fifty-two.[191] Despite this seeming repudiation of conservatism, the support for Haley's book evidenced the fact that the grassroots constituency that galvanized Goldwater's campaign was slowly sowing the seeds of a national conservative movement.

By the mid-1960s J. Evetts Haley's transition—a shift mirrored by millions of other Americans—from conservative southern Democrat to far-right Republican was complete. In 1964, the same year as LBJ's was re-election and the publication of *A Texan Looks at*

[190] Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, Chapter 13: The Stealing; Woods, *LBJ*, 217.

[191] McGillivray, Scammon, and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 22-23.

Lyndon, Haley officially switched political allegiance to the GOP. Haley believed that the liberal-leaning Democratic Party would collapse under its own weight, and he argued that right-wingers should consolidate "conservative strength in, and control of, one major political organization—obviously now the Republican Party."[192] This marked a continuation of Haley's far-right activism, but it also denoted the shifting tides within the party system. He tried to foment a conservative movement throughout his life, and often defected from Democratic ranks to defend his far-right values.

Haley's activism illustrated that political anxieties pinched southern conservatives not just during the Cold War, but dating back to the Great Depression.[193] He led the Texas chapter of the Jeffersonian Democrats in 1936 to promote states' rights conservatism and bolster southern influence within the Democratic Party. Haley flirted with the Republicans by advocating for Alf Landon, but this effort failed despite Haley rousing a small grassroots constituency using mass mailers and educational propaganda. During the 1950s Haley ran for governor on a platform of segregation and interposition, and, when that failed, he and other ultraconservatives attempted to foster a broader far-right movement under the banner of

---

[192] Speech Transcript, J. Evetts Haley, "A Texan Still Looks at Lyndon," January 6, 1967, 18 in "Folder - 6 Jan 1967," Series F, Series IV, JEH, HML.

[193] Consensus historians like Richard Hofstadter and Daniel Bell argued that reactionary conservatism was driven by status anxieties during the 1950s. Daniel Bell, *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955); Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955). This view has been challenged over the years, and my dissertation is indebted to the historians that reshape the narrative of conservative politics. James Patterson noted that conservatism grew in congress as a reaction against New Deal liberalism. James Patterson, *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal: The Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967). During the 1990s historians like Mary Brennan and Dan T. Carter focused on the socio-cultural conflagrations of the 1960s as the turning point for the growth of conservatism. Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of The New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995). Recently a great deal of work has explored the grassroots activism propelling the modern conservative movement. For more, see: Donald Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Perlstein, *Before the Storm.*

Texans for America. However, it was ultimately his hatred for LBJ, the collapse of southern control of the Democratic Party, and the rise of Goldwater conservatism that pushed Haley from the right-wing of the Democratic Party to the conservative vanguard of the Republican Party. By 1976 Haley was heavily involved the Republican Party, supporting Ronald Reagan's political ascent and serving as a state delegate for Texas in the Republican National Convention.[194] In fact, Haley stumped for the GOP in West Texas, transitioning old George Wallace supporters to the new conservatism of Reagan.[195] At last, within the GOP's platform of modern conservatism, Haley found a political home.

Haley's career was defined by his ardent ultraconservatism, but his life also served as a prism through which to view the shifting party politics of the mid-twentieth century. The gradual leftward shift of the national Democratic Party, from the 1930 through the 1960s, ostracized hardline conservatives like Haley, relegating him to the right-wing fringe of Texas and national politics. In turn, Haley's rhetoric, particularly regarding civil rights and communist subversion, helped delineate the difference between ultraconservatism and mainstream right-wingers. Price Daniel won the 1956 election, in part, because Haley and "Pappy" O'Daniel's relied extensively on conspiratorial, race-baiting rhetoric. Similarly, Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential election because Johnson's campaign linked the Arizona senator to right-wing extremism. Haley's book, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, helped solidify that characterization. Haley never achieved electoral success or the acclaim of conservative celebrities like Phyllis Schlafly or Ronald Reagan, or even far-rightists like Robert W.

---

[194] Newspaper Clipping, Roland Lindsey, "'Texan Looks at Lyndon' Author Backing Reagan," *The Monitor* (McAllen, Texas), July 8, 1976 in "Folder-14 - Clippings, Misc.," Series K, Series IV, JEH, HML.

[195] Magazine Clipping, "Names in the News," *Conservative Digest* (July 1976): 23 in "Folder 14 - Clippings, Misc.," Series K, Series IV, JEH, HML.

Welch, but his grassroots activism set the tone for far-right conservatism as it entered a new phase within the Republican Party. As the "voice of many hatreds," Haley provided an outlet for disillusioned conservatives that simultaneously helped legitimize mainstream conservatism.[196]

[196] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "GOP Basing Coming Campaign On Books Written in Texas?," *The Daily Oklahoman*, July 30, 1964 in "Folder - Political Printed Material 1964," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E, JEH, HML.

Chapter Five

The Third Party Architect: Kent Courtney and the Conservative Society of America

"Unless we translate this anti-Communist education into political action," Kent Courtney warned his readers, "we will end up being the best educated anti-Communists in a Communist concentration camp."[1] Courtney, a third-party advocate and leader of the Conservative Society of America (CSA), was better at organizing than at delivering fiery orations. Courtney lacked the populist bombast of George Wallace and the smooth delivery of Ronald Reagan, but his writings exuded conspiracy and hyperbole. Wallace and Reagan were natural politicians; but Courtney, on the other hand, did most of his work behind the scenes crafting platforms, publishing propaganda, and organizing movements. Through the ultraconservative CSA Courtney hoped to defeat, what he considered, communist subversion abetted by liberal policies. Courtney epitomized the radicalism of the southern right-wing that clung tightly to segregation and saw communist subversion as the root of every problem in the United States. Courtney's communist conspiracy theories relegated him to the fringes of the right-wing vanguard, but his grassroots strategies, third-party platforms, and activism through the CSA helped shape the ultraconservative movement in the mid-twentieth century.[2]

---

[1] Letter from Kent Courtney to Friend, January 12, 1967 in "Folder 38 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1967," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), Kent Courtney Collection (KCC), Cammie G. Henry Research Center (CGHRC), Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana (NWSU).

[2] Courtney's activism originated during Eisenhower's administration and reached a zenith with Wallace's third-party run in 1968. Many histories of conservatism focus on prominent right-wingers that benefited from populist surges, like Barry Goldwater and George Wallace, or specific areas like Orange County, California. Recent scholarship has introduced the Sunbelt, writ large, as a crucial region for the growth of conservatism. This chapter, and the dissertation itself, argue that focusing on the local activism driven by far-right agitators underscores the forces that propelled men like Wallace to national prominence. The scholarship on major

This chapter examines the impact of Kent Courtney and his far-right organization, the Conservative Society of America, upon the political discourse and ultraconservative movement of the mid-twentieth century. After providing a brief analysis of Courtney's early life and political philosophies, the chapter uses a chronological approach to highlight how Courtney and the CSA influenced right-wing conservatism. Three major elements dominated Courtney's political ideals: anti-communism, conspiracy theories, and segregationism. The liberalism that controlled the major parties, Courtney argued, acted as a gateway for communism, which explained his adherence to both anti-communism and third-party politics. As a result, Courtney identified as a political outsider and oscillated between third-party activism and supporting GOP right-wingers. Courtney's wife, Phoebe, also shaped his activities and publications. Phoebe Courtney's ideals resembled those of previous fire-breathing hardliners like author Elizabeth Dilling, and she wrote and edited many CSA publications.[3] Though she features less throughout this chapter, Phoebe played a crucial role in the CSA and Kent Courtney's push for an alternative party.[4]

---

conservative politicians is immense. For examples, see: Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); Troy Gil, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995); James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972); Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: Harper, 2008). For more on Sunbelt conservatism, see: Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Matthew D. Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001); Michelle M. Nickerson, *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Place, Space, and Region* (Philadelphia, Penn.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

[3] For more on Dilling and conservative women in general, see: Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: a Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005); Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement of World War II* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Catherine E. Rymph, *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[4] Kent Courtney once called Phoebe the "tigress of the Right," illustrating his high opinion of Phoebe's contributions to the CSA. Historians and contemporary analysts considered Phoebe and Kent Courtney an

Kent Courtney created the Conservative Society Courtney's after his early forays into electoral politics failed to cause a right-wing revolution. After the spectacular failure of the far-right Constitution Party in 1956, Courtney took a pragmatic turn in 1960 by aligning with the GOP to support Senator Barry Goldwater's (R-AZ) potential candidacy. However, when Vice President Richard Nixon's won the GOP nomination, Courtney argued that neither major political party represented conservative values. In a newsletter Courtney wrote, "Today we Conservatives are in the majority, but we are not in a position of political power so that the will of the majority is properly represented in our government."[5] This belief led Courtney to establish the CSA in 1961 based on Courtney's far-right blend of anti-communist conspiracy theories and segregationism. The creation of the Conservative Society of America bolstered Courtney's ultraconservative outreach—the organization served as a hub for the far-right movement—and allowed Courtney to forge connections with other organizations like Robert W. Welch's John Birch Society and Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade.

Courtney targeted far-right conservatives, especially Sunbelt voters, through mass publications and grassroots activism, which paved the way for Courtney's involvement in the presidential elections of 1964 and 1968. During the 1964 presidential campaign Courtney again deferred his third-party aspirations to organize and propagandize on behalf of Barry

---

inseparable team. Jonathan Schoenwald referred to the Courtney's as a "essentially a two-person front" for the New Orleans John Birch Society, in *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 109. Benjamin R. Epstein and Arnold Forster of the Anti-Defamation League referred to the Courtneys as "the Radical Right's most important (perhaps only) husband-and-wife team," in *The Radical Right: A Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies* (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 79. Some of Phoebe Courtney's papers are a part of the Wilcox Collection at the University of Kansas's Spencer Library. I later plan on visiting the Spencer Library to flesh out Phoebe's contributions when I move toward a completed manuscript.

[5] Kent Courtney, "Our Sacred Constitution," *The CSA Newsletter*, No. 4 (March, 1962): 2 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Goldwater. Courtney proclaimed in a CSA pamphlet, "A 'me-too' Republican like Richard Nixon cannot defeat President Lyndon Johnson in November, but that a pro-American, anti-Communist like Barry Goldwater CAN DEFEAT JOHNSON."[6] Goldwater's defeat stunned Courtney, which prompted Courtney's return to third-party politics through George Wallace's American Party campaign and the 1968 presidential election. Courtney published *Wallace for President News*, the semi-official Wallace periodical, through the CSA and accompanied Wallace on the Alabama governor's tour of California.[7] The electoral and public repudiation of Wallace in 1968 indicated the inefficacy of ultraconservative third-party politics, but Courtney's activism illustrated how the far-right established activist networks and tried to influence U.S. politics through grassroots efforts.

Courtney's third-party activism peaked with Wallace's campaign in 1968, but an analysis of Courtney and the CSA illuminates the conspiratorial, anti-communist impulses that permeated the far-right during the mid-twentieth century. Even though Courtney's third-party ideals failed to gain positive electoral results, his agitations underscored right-wing disillusion with liberalism and helped cement a legacy of local activism throughout the Sunbelt. The CSA and Courtney established connections with other right-wing groups and influenced the trajectory of the midcentury ultraconservative movement. Ultimately, Kent Courtney and the Conservative Society of America act as a prism through which to analyze ultraconservative ideologies, Cold War politics, the emergence of the Sunbelt, and the role of

---

[6] Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "The Soft-on-Communist Record of Richard Nixon," Tax Fax Pamphlet No. 52, 1964 in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[7] Kent Courtney, "Gov. Wallace Hits Campaign Trail: C.S.A. Members Urged to Attend Events," *Wallace for President News* in the *CSA Handbook*, April 24, 1967 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Letter from Kent Courtney to Member of the CSA, January 15, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

anti-communism and conspiracy theories.[8]

Courtney's segregationism and communist conspiracy theories epitomized southern right-wing radicalism, but his familial origins laid in wintery Minnesota. Born in St. Paul on October 23, 1918, Kent Courtney was raised by Joseph Frank Courtney, a production engineer, and artist Zella Edana Smith in a conservative, Catholic household. The Courtneys moved to New Orleans during Kent's childhood, and the Big Easy later served as Courtney's home and CSA's organizational headquarters. Kent Courtney joined the U.S. Navy as an aviator on September 12, 1941, but was honorably discharged less than a year later on August 19, 1942.[9] The reason behind Courtney's discharge was not revealed in archival documents, but he continued to work with the U.S. military by transporting U.S. troops overseas as a pilot for Pan-American airlines. Afterward he attended the University of Idaho and Tulane University, receiving a business degree from the latter in 1950.[10]

Courtney's early adult life, especially his military background and local political

---

[8] Courtney's state political campaigns will not be covered because he did not have a great enough impact to warrant inclusion in a chapter on national politics. For example, Courtney ran as a states' rights gubernatorial candidate in Louisiana in 1960. He received only 12,000 of 500,000 votes. His efforts as a national and regional grassroots agitator were much more effective, and this chapter will cover this facet of Courtney's activism rather than his personal election failures. An expanded version of this chapter would benefit from including Courtney's personal campaign failures because it would add texture to the understanding of conservatism in Louisiana. "Louisiana Budget Eyed: Davis, Now Governor-Elect, Cites Financial Problems," *New York Times*, April 21, 1960.

[9] "New Membership Secretary On Duty," *Chamber of Commerce News Bulletin*, Vol. XXXII, No. 9 (March 1, 1951) in "Folder 109 - Biography," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[10] Pamphlet, CSA, "Meet Kent Courtney", CSA No. 2 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "New Membership Secretary On Duty," *Chamber of Commerce News Bulletin*, Vol. XXXII, No. 9 (March 1, 1951) in "Folder 109 - Biography," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

involvement portended his ultraconservative activism in the 1960s. Courtney's involvement in far-right causes started with positions in the American Legion, the Chamber of Commerce, and the New Orleans Citizens Council. While working as the Counter Subversive Chairman for the New Orleans Area American Legion Courtney honed his right-wing rhetoric. He also spent two years working for the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce as the director of membership, where his main responsibilities involved promoting the business and civic affairs of the chamber. Courtney was also an "active member in the White Citizens Council" of New Orleans.[11] After marriage, Kent and Phoebe Courtney started a self-publishing business in 1954 in New Orleans that eventually evolved into the foundation for their activism during the 1960s. This early local political engagement bolstered Courtney's skills in rousing right-wing constituents, serving as the training for his organizing during the 1960s.[12]

The Second Red Scare and Joseph McCarthy's communist witch hunts left an indelible impression upon Courtney, especially McCarthy's utilization of conspiratorial red-baiting rhetoric.[13] "Every Congressman should be a militant anti-Communist," Courtney demanded in a mass letter to Congress, "In this cold war there is no room for half-hearted

---

[11] "Unsuccessful Causes," *New York Times*, April 15, 1961.

[12] Conservative Society of America (CSA) Flyer, "Meet Kent Courtney," undated in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[13] Letter from Kent Courtney to Member, April 9, 1965, 2 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. For more on Joseph McCarthy and the Second Red Scare, see: Don E. Carleton, *Red Scare!: Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanatacism, and Their Legacy in Texas* (Austin, Tex.: Texas Monthly Press, 1985); David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2004); David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Green Press, 1983); Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998); Landon R. Y. Storrs, *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

Americans in the Congress in Washington, D.C."[14] Courtney contended that a grand communist conspiracy had infiltrated the United States through liberal policies, like welfare spending and foreign aid.[15] This adherence to communist conspiracy theories prejudiced Courtney's ideals and lingered for the duration of his active political life.

The belief in an overarching communist conspiracy galvanized Courtney's activism and prejudiced his perception of the U.S. political spectrum. He frequently argued that liberal and moderate politicians assisted the overarching communist conspiracy, either willingly or unwillingly. "It matters very little if . . . [Franklin] Roosevelt or Eisenhower is a Communist or not," Courtney proclaimed in a 1962 column, "What does matter is that they have advanced the Communist cause and American Liberals, by participating in the advance of the cause of Communism are unwitting dupes of the International Communist Conspiracy."[16] Courtney feared the U.S. republic would "disappear into some sort of One-World Government" without the emergence of a truly conservative movement.[17] Courtney's anti-communist beliefs led him to join the John Birch Society in the spring of 1960, and he became the chairman of Birch Society Chapter 246 in New Orleans.[18] "The basic argument,"

---

[14] Letter from Kent Courtney to All Members of Congress, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[15] Pamphlet, Conservative Society of America, "Appeasement in Asia", CSA No. 9, undated in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[16] Kent Courtney, "Buckley vs. Walker," *The CSA Newsletter*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (March 2, 1962) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[17] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of *The Independent American*, January 19, 1962, 6 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[18] Letter from Kent Courtney to Pearl Adams, June 24, 1969 in "Folder 110 - Subject Files A-Bl," Box 14 - Subject Files - A-Bl, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. Letter from Kent Courtney to All Members and Friends of the John Birch Society in the City of New Orleans, March 23, 1961 in "Folder 153 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject Files - Li-Lo, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Courtney wrote to Birch Society founder Robert Welch, "between the anti-Communists and the moderate Republicans is centered around the fact that the anti-Communists believe the evidence of their eyes and agree that there is a Communist Conspiracy inside the United States and that it controls at least eighty per cent of the government of the United States."[19]

Courtney contended that communism and liberalism were the same thing, and he viewed the major parties as compromised by subversive elements. Courtney, like many other radical rightists, categorized all liberals as "socialist." In a 1962 newsletter Courtney claimed, "There is little, if any, difference between the Democrat and Republican Parties in the field of promotion of domestic Socialism, the expansion of the bureaucracy and the proliferation of unnecessary and wasteful spending."[20] Even political moderates, like Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower, were subjected to withering criticism from Courtney. "To stay in the 'middle-of-the-road' the Republican Party must always move further to the left as the Democratic Party moves to the left," Courtney lamented. "This is the story of the American movement into socialism."[21] Accordingly, Courtney defined any form of government intervention, like Kennedy's "New Frontier," as a "front for socialism."[22] This red-baiting rhetoric provided an avenue to attack liberalism and the two major parties.

The anti-communism of the Cold War undergirded Courtney's other platforms, like his advocacy of strict constitutionalism and states' rights. Courtney used a metaphor in 1962

---

[19] Letter from Kent Courtney to Robert W. Welch (Bob), November 16, 1965 in "Folder 152 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject Files - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[20] Kent Courtney, "There Is No Difference," *The CSA Newsletter* (October 11, 1962) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[21] Kent Courtney, "The Future Offered by The Liberal Republican 'Middle-of-the-Road,'" *The CSA Newsletter* (December 30, 1964): 2 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[22] "Conservative Group to Map Third Party," *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 1961.

to describe his admiration for the Constitution: "I like to think that our Constitution is like an old-fashioned lantern. It sheds a steady light and the light glows out in all directions. The glass which might be called the Bill of Rights protects the flame of liberty from the cold winds of Socialism and Centralized tyranny."[23] In Courtney's view, a strict Constitutional interpretation acted as a bulwark against communist subversion and federal "tyranny" while simultaneously propping up states' rights and racial separation. He believed racial issues should be a matter left up to the states, not the federal government. For example, the federal government repeatedly used military force to quell desegregation-related violence, most famously in 1957 at Little Rock Central High School, and Courtney responded to such displays of force by accusing both political parties of trying to "establish tyrannical rule over the sovereign states."[24]

Courtney claimed to support neither integration nor segregation but his rhetoric, and the language within CSA publications, capitalized on white anxieties of integration. He attempted to sidestep the divisive issue of mandatory segregation by claiming he was "an advocate for freedom of association," but this phrase obscured the fact that Courtney supported de facto segregation.[25] Courtney concealed his racism and advocacy of racial separation under the guise of individual liberty and constitutionality. For instance, Courtney

---

[23] Kent Courtney, "Our Sacred Constitution" *The CSA Newsletter*, No. 4 (March, 1962): 1 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[24] Kent Courtney, "Letter to the Editor", January 30, 1963 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. For more on "massive resistance," see: Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Joseph Crespino, *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2007); Karen Anderson, *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010); George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Hodder Arnold, 2006); Clive Webb, *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[25] Kent Courtney, "On The Joe Pyne Radio and TV Shows," *The CSA Newsletter* in the *CSA Handbook*, August 26, 1966 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

published a pamphlet urging his CSA constituency to oppose the Fair Housing Act of 1968 because "rioters and looters" could "wreck your property or neighborhood."[26] Courtney called it the "Forced Housing Act" because, in the conservative mind, it prevented homeowners from choosing their neighbors and tenants.[27] In reality the Fair Housing Act prevented property owners from discriminating against potential tenants based on race, among other qualifiers. As Lisa McGirr pointed out, "It was not civil rights that the conservatives supported, but individual property rights."[28] Though not overtly racist, the CSA pamphlet targeted white anxieties about racial violence using the language of individual liberty. In response to civil rights legislation, Phoebe Courtney defined segregation through strict constitutionalism: "We've got niggers living in the next block to us and that's all right but we're against the civil rights bill because it destroys property rights and freedom of choice."[29] The Courtneys' argument for property rights and the primacy of states over the federal government mirrored the gradual evolution of right-wing thought during the mid-twentieth century; however, the use of slurs illustrated that southern racism was often concealed by a thin veneer of respectable conservatism.[30]

Kent Courtney's anti-civil rights and anti-communist ideologies connected him to other southern right-wingers, but his advocacy of strict fiscal conservatism set him apart from

---

[26] Kent Courtney, "The 'Open Housing' Law Must Be Repealed!," CSA No. 22, 1968 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[27] For more on the fight over housing and integration, see: Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[28] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 185.

[29] Donald Janson, "Rightist Buoyed By the Election; Open New Drives," *New York Times*, Monday, November 23, 1964 in "Folder - Ha (1)," Box 38 - Principal File, 1964, Office of Dwight D. Eisenhower (ODDE), Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEL).

[30] Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-Communism in the South, 1948-1968* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 254, 257.

liberal spenders like ultraconservative hero George Wallace. Despite supporting fiscal conservatism at the federal level, Wallace expanded the Alabama budget with social programs for his supporters and used regressive tax policies to enable his liberal spending.[31] Courtney, on the other hand, called for an unfettered free market, the nullification of union power, and severe spending cuts.[32] He also opposed federal taxation and joined the Liberty Amendment in its fight to repeal of the Sixteenth Amendment.[33] Courtney penned a letter to the editor of the *Los Angeles Times* in 1959, contending, "You have no moral right to pay taxes which support the hundreds of government activities which are in direct competition with private enterprise."[34] Courtney's ludicrous comparison of taxation and morality highlighted his negative perception of federal economic interventionism. "Big government bureaucrats always take their 'bite' out of your tax dollar before they dribble a little bit back to you," Courtney lamented in a 1959 letter-to-the-editor, "In effect they are buying you off with your own money."[35] Courtney argued that liberal economic platforms, like raising the minimum wage and subsidizing healthcare, constituted communistic economic policies.[36] The combination of communist conspiracies, racist undertones, and fiscal conservatism

---

[31] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 352.

[32] Kent Courtney, "Let's Try Capitalism: Freedom and Private Enterprise," *CSA Handbook* (May 16, 1967) in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[33] "Parley Backs Goldwater In Election of '64: 3d Party Possible Conservatives Say," *Chicago Tribune*, September 21, 1963; Letter from Willis E. Stone to Kent Courtney, August 3, 1964 in "Folder 164 - Subject Files Li-Lo," Box 19 - Subject Files - Li-Lo, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. Letter from Kent Courtney to Willis E. Stone, November 5, 1959 in "Folder 166 - Subject Files Li-Lo," Box 19 - Subject Files - Li-Lo, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[34] Kent Courtney and John A. Gustafson, "Graduated Income Tax Repeal Moves Backed," *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1959.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Kent Courtney, "How Congress Is Carrying Out The Aims Of The Communist Party, U.S.A.," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 28 (undated): 2 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

placed Courtney on the ultraconservative fringe of U.S. politics. Anti-Semitism and condoning outright violence were the only areas Courtney dared not tread.

When it came to foreign policy, however, Kent Courtney had little problem promoting military aggression to fight global communism. Courtney identified as an anti-internationalist because he viewed containment as a tentative, weak foreign policy. Courtney favored an aggressive military stance instead of trying to contain communism. He advocated an invasion of Cuba in April 1961 in the hopes that U.S. troops could seize Russian advisers and hold them hostage as a bargaining tool.[37] Even the apocalyptic stakes of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis failed to deter Courtney's hawkishness.[38] Conversely, the nuclear standoff reaffirmed his conspiratorial mindset. Courtney purported that the Democrats manufactured the crisis to gain more seats in the 1962 midterm elections and "to conduct such a mass brainwashing of the American people . . . [so] that they will be 'softened up' to accept total disarmament, which will place this nation under the control of the Communist-dominated UN."[39]

Courtney's conspiratorial mindset and lack of faith in the traditional two major parties catalyzed his political activism, starting with the limited campaign of the far-right Constitution Party in 1956.[40] Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism"—a platform that

---

[37] "Birch Society Leaders Propose 3D Party Here," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 14, 1961.

[38] For more on the Cuban Missile Crisis, see: Robert F. Kennedy, *Thirteen Days: A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969); Ernest R. May and Philip Zelikow, *The Kennedy Tapes: Inside the White House During the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1997); Sheldon M. Stern, *Averting 'The Final Failure:' John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

[39] Letter from Kent Courtney, "Kennedy's 'Sell-Out' On Cuba," undated, 2-3 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[40] "Urges A Third Party to Stop Liberal Trend," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 16, 1961.

accepted limited government intervention in an effort to moderate the GOP's antistatist tendencies—spurred Courtney's third-party effort to defeat Ike's re-election attempt.[41] In a letter to the *Hartford Courant* Courtney lamented the state of U.S. politics: "How many stay-at-home voters will there be in the 1956 Presidential election? They may number in tens of millions who cannot in good conscience vote for either a New Deal Democrat or a New Deal Republican."[42] Courtney served as the executive secretary for the National Committee for a New Party (NCNP), which established the Constitution Party in 1956 on a foundation of hardline conservative principles, such as fighting for a strict interpretation of the Tenth Amendment, repealing the Sixteenth Amendment, and fighting against "the socialism that is taking over [the] country."[43] A column in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* described the Constitution Party as "a collection of splinter parties" that were attempting to "bind themselves into a big political stick."[44]

Former Internal Revenue Commissioner T. Coleman Andrews and former U.S. Representative Thomas H. Werdel (R-CA) carried the banner of the Constitution Party into the presidential election of 1956. By late September the Andrews-Werdell ticket was on fourteen state ballots in the Sunbelt, Upper South, and Midwest, but the Constitution Party fizzled out during the election.[45] The two major parties accrued over 60 million votes, with

---

[41] Geoffrey M. Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, from Eisenhower to the Tea Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 14-15; Robert Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 156; Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 5.

[42] Kent Courtney, Letter to the Editor, "Seeks Support of A Third Party," *The Hartford Courant*, August, 9, 1955.

[43] "Constitution Party Proposes Own Ticket: Former Tax Chief Andrews Urged for President; Werdel for Running Mate," *Los Angeles Times*, August 29, 1956; "Conservatives Map Plans For New U.S. Party," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1956.

[44] "'Third party' Groups to Pick '56 Candidates," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 9, 1956.

Eisenhower receiving over 35 million compared to Democrat Adlai E. Stevenson's 26 million. The Constitution Party's Andrews-Werdell ticket earned a paltry 111,178 votes.[46] This overwhelming repudiation of third-party, states' rights politics did not deter Courtney's ambitions. On the contrary, the defeat strengthened Courtney's resolve to challenge Eisenhower's "Modern Republicanism" and the liberal consensus in U.S. politics.

Four years later Courtney involved himself in the push for a conservative third-party during the election of 1960 to counter the liberalism of Senator John F. Kennedy (D-MA) and the moderate policies of Vice President Richard Nixon and the Republican Party.[47] In late October 1959, Courtney sponsored the Independent American Rally at the Morrison Hotel in Chicago to promote his third-party, ultraconservative ideals. In an interesting twist of fate, the Lincoln National Republican Club held a conference at the exact same time and place.[48] Led by Southern Baptist minister and former Air Force Major Edgar C. Bundy, the Lincoln Club advocated "corrective measures" to ensure a more conservative Republican Party, whereas Courtney's meeting endeavored to consolidate conservatives within a new party. Disillusion with the two major parties drove exasperated right-wingers to search for

---

[45] "Open 3D Party Group Meeting By Ripping Ike," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 30, 1956.

[46] "Total 1956 Vote Exceeds 1952 Record by 473,658: Ike Majority 2d to Roosevelt's," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 16, 1956; Alice V. McGillivray, Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004: John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 26.

[47] After the election of 1960 Courtney claimed that Eisenhower's moderate policies hamstrung the Republican Party, and he referred to Richard Nixon as a "me-too" Republican, a false conservative, despite Nixon's reputation as an ardent anti-communist. On the other side of the aisle, Courtney frequently referred to Kennedy's liberalism as "soft-on-communism." Kent Courtney, "Hamstrung By Ike's Record," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 1 (undated) in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Pamphlet, Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "Nix on Nixon" 1964, Tax Fax No. 53 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Kent Courtney, "Letter to the Editor," January 30, 1963 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 29-33, 44-45.

[48] "Lincoln G. O. P., Third Party Rivals Gather," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 23, 1959.

solutions, and the two meetings illustrated the variance in conservative strategies. Bundy pushed for reform, but Courtney wanted a political revolution. "Both national parties are practicing socialism today," Courtney charged, "so a new party is the answer."[49]

The Independent American Rally illustrated the growth of far-right conservatism during Eisenhower's presidency. Over 500 people from thirty-five states attended Courtney's 1960 Independent American Rally in Chicago, impressive growth considering the Constitution Party's National Convention in 1956 attracted a meager seventy-five individuals.[50] The National Committee for Economic Freedom, an organization dedicated to repealing the federal income tax, attended Courtney's rally, and William F. Buckley Jr., of the *National Review* gave a speech as well.[51] Other right-wingers present included John Birch Society Founder Robert Welch, publisher and radio host Dan Smoot, and Utah governor J. Bracken Lee (R).[52] Welch spoke at Courtney's rally but he ultimately disavowed the third-party movement in favor of supporting Goldwater for the Republican nomination.[53]

During the 1960 election Courtney shifted away from a third-party politics to support Goldwater conservatism. Courtney originally hoped that right-wingers like Senator Strom Thurmond (D-SC), Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), and Dean Clarence Manion would consider running for president as third-party candidates to counter the "socialism" of the major

---

[49] "Plan Political Party to Repeal Income Tax," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 24, 1959.

[50] "3D Party Mapped By Conservatives: Parley in Chicago Sets Up State Groups to Achieve Spot on '60 Ballots," *New York Times*, October 25, 1959.

[51] "Rightwing Tide Claimed By 2 Groups: Senator Bridges Sees Political Upsurge Al Over World," *The Sun*, October 24, 1959.

[52] "Rightwing Tide Claimed By 2 Groups: Senator Bridges Sees Political Upsurge Al Over World," *The Sun*, October 24, 1959.

[53] Letter from Robert W. Welch to Kent Courtney, March 30, 1960 in "Folder 153 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject Files - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

parties.[54] However, Courtney came around to Welch's thinking and joined the Americans for Goldwater movement to promote Goldwater's candidacy.[55] Courtney opened up a "Goldwater for President" headquarters at the Morrison Hotel and hosted a rally for Goldwater before the GOP Convention in Chicago.[56] Goldwater's platforms appealed to Courtney because of his stance against the income tax, advocacy of states' rights, aggressive foreign policies, and willingness to utilize anti-communism as a political bludgeon.[57] Kent Courtney argued that liberal Republican would attempt to stifle the voices of conservatives at the GOP convention, and he encouraged right-wingers to draw strength from the lingering resentment regarding Senator Robert A. Taft's (R-OH) defeat in 1952.[58] Courtney's support of Goldwater allied him with the mainstream conservative movement that had mobilized for the Arizona senator in 1960, if only momentarily.[59] It also, in general, presaged Courtney's willingness to back mainstream candidates that met his stringent definition of conservatism.

Goldwater's candidacy, and Courtney's support, proved fleeting. Vice President Richard Nixon steamrolled to the Republican nomination by assuaging GOP liberals like

---

[54] "Plan Political Party to Repeal Income Tax," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 24, 1959.

[55] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 143-144.

[56] CSA Press Release, March 13, 1964, 2 in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[57] Pamphlet, CSA, "Goldwater For President: How You Can Have a Chance to Vote for a Man Who Stands for Pro-Constitution Principles," Tax Fax No. 18, 1960 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. For an in depth examination of Barry Goldwater's platforms, see: Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*.

[58] Pamphlet, CSA, "Goldwater For President: How You Can Have a Chance to Vote for a Man Who Stands for Pro-Constitution Principles," Tax Fax No. 18, 1960 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. For more on Senator Robert A. Taft, see: Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*, 112-147; Patterson, *Mr. Republican*; Elliot A. Rosen, *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014).

[59] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 143.

New York governor Nelson Rockefeller.[60] After an ineffectual challenge of Nixon, Goldwater dropped out of the race and instructed conservatives to unite behind the Californian in the name of party unity; however, Goldwater also called for conservatives to "take this party back," a statement which became a call to arms for a new generation of Republican right-wingers.[61] Nixon lost the election of 1960 to Kennedy by a razor thin margin, and conservatives like Courtney blamed Nixon's placation of GOP liberals for the defeat.[62] Goldwater's tacit support of Nixon also raised Courtney's ire. After the election Courtney ranted, "Mr. Goldwater not only compromised his own conservative principles . . . but he asked his followers to compromise their conservative principles and also support Nixon."[63] Courtney suggested that the Arizona senator had "tainted himself with socialism when he backed Richard Nixon in 1960."[64] This perceived betrayal convinced Courtney that the only way obtain a purely conservative party was to create an organization to lead the charge.

In Chicago, April 1961, a coalition of far-rightists formed the Conservative Society of America to spearhead the conservative third-party movement. Kent Courtney was named the national chairman, and in a letter to members he declared, "The [CSA] was founded on the

---

[60] Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*, 30; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*, 178.

[61] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 145.

[62] Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*, 180.

[63] "Right Wingers Call for End to Income Tax: 3D Party Group Tells Principles," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 17, 1961.

[64] "Bircher Leads Parley to Form Third Party: Society Will Play Major Role in Three-Day 'Convention of Conservatives' in Chicago," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1961.

bedrock of Constitutional principles."[65] The founders forged the CSA's "Declaration of Faith," which combined various elements of conservatism like free market economics and a general spirit of American exceptionalism.[66] Three central issues drove the creation of CSA: federal spending via liberal economic policies, the perceived federal encroachment on states' rights, and the "disastrous" policy of containment.[67] However, undergirding these platforms was Courtney's anti-communist conspiracy theories and his stringent definition of conservative values. *Washington Post* columnist Drew Pearson observed that the CSA "confuses the voter by mixing domestic problems with anti-communism and puts the inferential stamp of pro-communism on Liberals."[68]

CSA's publishing promoted anti-communism while bolstering Courtney's third-party aspirations.[69] During the mid-1950s Kent and Phoebe founded their New Orleans-based publishing house with the far-right periodical *Free Men Speak.*[70] *Free Men Speak* evolved into *The Independent American*—the centerpiece of Courtney's press. Circulation of *The Independent American* stood at 9,000 in 1961, but by 1965 that number ballooned to 220,000 subscribers thanks to the CSA's outreach and membership list swapping among conservative

---

[65] CSA Flyer, "Meet Kent Courtney," undated in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Letter from Kent Courtney to Member, April 9, 1965, 2 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[66] Clayton Rand, "Declaration of Faith," *CSA Handbook* (undated) in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[67] Pamphlet, Conservative Society of America, "The Conservative Society of America: An Invitation to Patriotic Political Action," CSA No. 1 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[68] Drew Pearson, "The Washington Merry-Go-Round: New Orleans Is Rightist Hotbed," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 9, 1962.

[69] Selling books, membership dues, and individual contributions supplemented Courtney's publishing empire. Receipts and Expenses - July 1961 through October 31, 1962 in "Folder 32 - Book Mailings and Expenses, 1961-62," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[70] "Conservatives Map Plans For New U.S. Party," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 18, 1956.

organizations.[71] Courtney encouraged members to circulate CSA publications at civic meetings and local gatherings, and he boasted that *The Independent American* reached at least half a million Americans through these efforts.[72] The CSA-funded radio show, the "Radio Edition of *The Independent American*" (1958-1967), disseminated right-wing news over thirty-two radio stations in sixteen states.[73] Courtney also published small, tabloid-style periodicals called *CSA Info Memos* that aggregated right-wing news, from radio broadcasts to speeches from notable politicians. The *Info Memos* also reprinted columns from prominent right-wing newspapers like the *Jackson Daily News* and the *Lynchburg News*.[74]

The main periodical of the CSA was the bi-weekly *CSA Newsletter*, which kept Courtney's constituency up-to-date on third party movements across the nation, such as the formation of new parties like the Constitutional Party of Pennsylvania. It eventually turned into one of the most prolific sources for right-wing propaganda during George Wallace's presidential run in 1968.[75] To stimulate CSA's educational outreach, Kent and Phoebe Courtney produced "CSA Voting Indexes" that graded individual congressmen's adherence to Courtney's stringent definition of conservative values. For example, a vote in favor of the

---

[71] Thomas O'Neill, "Politics and People: Restless Right," *The Sun*, April 21, 1961; Letter from Kent Courtney to Carl Prussian, February 15, 1965 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[72] CSA Flyer, "Meet Kent Courtney," undated in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[73] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of The Independent American, August 2, 1965, 5 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[74] Bill Coppenbarger, "Mayor Thompson (Jackson, Miss.) Suggests National Third Party," *Jackson Daily News*, undated in *CSA Info Memo*, No. 3, undated in "Folder 31 - CSA Memos," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "Why Alabama Was Chosen," *Lynchburg News*, undated in *CSA Info Memo*, No. 3, undated in "Folder 31 - CSA Memos," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[75] Kent Courtney, "Constitutional Party of Penna.," *The CSA Newsletter* in the *CSA Handbook*, Oct. 3, 1966, 4 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Civil Rights Act of 1964, which Courtney defined as "a Liberal Vote favoring Socialist legislation," earned a congressman a negative rating.[76] Courtney's fuzzy language illustrated how ultraconservatives used red-baiting rhetoric to attack liberal legislation. Courtney derided the Civil Rights Act as "socialist" even though the legislation did not impact the political economy. In practice this led to Courtney lauding the voting records of Senator John Tower (R-TX) and Senator Strom Thurmond for voting against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 while Thruston B. Morton (R-KY) and Jacob B. Javitz (R-NY), both of whom voted in favor of the bill, received negative grades.[77] Nearly half of Republican congressmen voted "Liberal-Socialist" more than half the time according to Courtney's scale. The CSA's voting indexes, and a great deal of Courtney's other publications, left little room for grey areas; Courtney characterized politicians as either strict conservatives or liberal-communist dupes.[78] Nevertheless, CSA's publications disseminated Courtney's anti-communism throughout the nation, which compelled conservatives across the nation to get involved in the CSA's grassroots activism.

Courtney's communist conspiracy theories underwrote the CSA's unabashed political purpose: "to elect Patriotic Americans—conservatives—to office."[79] Patriotism facilitated the growth of the far-right during the 1950s, but Courtney's reductive ideology posited that

---

[76] Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "Johnson's Republicans," 1965 in Box 40 - Pamphlets, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Drew Pearson of *The Washington Post* argued that CSA's Voting Indexes purposefully mischaracterized politicians, like HUAC stalwart Francis Walter (D-PA), as voting for "Liberal-Socialist" legislation and being "soft on communism," in "The Washington Merry-Go-Round: New Orleans Is Rightist Hotbed," *The Washington Post*, May 9, 1962.

[79] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

only conservative anti-communists were true, patriotic Americans.[80] This underscored Courtney's binary vision of the American electorate. He characterized voters as either conservatives, based on Courtney's stringent standards, or as communist-aiding liberal-socialists. Courtney believed that conservatives comprised the majority of the U.S. electorate because he had never met a voter in favor of foreign aid or the United Nations, but that undoubtedly indicated Courtney's social circles rather than a true representation of the American electorate.[81] In a recruitment letter Courtney touted, "The CSA is a means by which people can participate in Conservative political action for the defeat of those Liberals in Congress who have been voting us into Socialism and Communism."[82] Preventing certain politicians—those loosely defined as moderate to left—from getting elected was also a central goal for the Courtney. The CSA allowed Courtney to expand his electoral strategies. Courtney started by targeting ballots at local, state, and federal levels instead of focusing solely on presidential elections.

The CSA established Political Action Units across the United States to stimulate local activism. The Political Action Units mobilized conservative voters throughout congressional districts to defeat, what Courtney called, "pro-Communist" congressmen. Courtney hired Ward Poag, a former Birch Society organizer in Tennessee and Arkansas, to coordinate and

---

[80] M. J. Heale, *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 173-174.

[81] Kent Courtney, "Our Sacred Constitution," *The CSA Newsletter*, No. 4 (March, 1962): 2 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[82] CSA Recruitment Letter, April 16, 1965, 3 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

develop the action units.[83] Poag worked as CSA's national field organizer, and he also wrote columns in the *CSA Political Action Bulletin*, a periodical that provided explicit instructions for how to form neighborhood conservative enclaves and foment grassroots movements. Such instructions included conducting voter censuses to tally support and opposition for conservative principles.[84] In a letter to the leader of a CSA Political Action Unit in Columbus, Georgia, Courtney instructed, "The whole idea is to saturate your Congressional district with the Conservative viewpoint."[85]

The CSA Political Action Units and Ward Poag's organizing efforts trained the shock troops for Courtney's third-party aspirations. Action units were fairly autonomous as long as they adhered to Courtney's strict definition of conservatism, pursued "the right kind of people" for leadership positions, and actively engaged the local political scene.[86] Courtney targeted particularly right-leaning areas as potential locations for action units. For example, Courtney focused on cities in West Texas—Midland, Odessa, and Lubbock—that had a history of anti-statism and "frontier individualism."[87] Ward Poag's travel notes revealed that he networked with CSA Action Units and other pre-existing local conservative organizations

---

[83] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of the CSA, Subscribers of the *Independent American* in the State of California, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[84] Ward Poag, "What Not To Do!," *CSA Political Action Bulletin*, No. 1 (April 11, 1963) in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[85] Letter from Kent Courtney to Alice Mills Creveling, November 14, 1962, 3 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[86] Ward Poag, "Notes on California," June 14, 1962, 2 in "Folder 192 - Subject Files Po-Rh," Box 22 - Subject Files - Po-Rh, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[87] Letter from Kent Courtney, November 27, 1961 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1979), 7. Sean P. Cunningham paints an excellent portrait of West Texas conservatism in "Chapter Eleven: The Political Culture of West Texas" in *West Texas: A History of the Giant Side of the State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 165-180.

throughout California.[88] By the end of 1962, Poag and the CSA established Political Action Units throughout the Sunbelt, including states like Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Georgia, Arizona, and California.[89]

Forming action units was not always easy, however, because the CSA's third-party drive often attracted unwanted attention from more unsavory, white nationalist groups. Members of the Nationalist Action League, an organization on the Attorney General's subversives list with ties to the American Nazi movement, held prominent positions within CSA's Political Action Unit in Pennsylvania.[90] Courtney feared being linked to far-right subversives so he liquidated the Pennsylvania unit in an effort to distance the CSA from the Nationalist Action League.[91] After obviating the potential scandal Courtney pursued rigid organizational uniformity, insisting that CSA leadership sign loyalty oaths that stated opposition to "all forms of totalitarian government" and disclaimed links to subversive groups.[92] This episode indicated that certain lines of propriety existed that even Courtney was reluctant to cross; in this case, he was unwilling to associate the CSA with the Nationalist Action League even though their politics aligned.

The CSA implemented an aggressive strategy to saturate the country with right-wing

---

[88] Ward Poag, "Notes on California," June 14, 1962, 1-13 in "Folder 192 - Subject Files Po-Rh," Box 22 - Subject File - Po-Rh, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[89] More research is needed to uncover the true impact of the CSA Political Action Units. I did not find a ledger of all the CSA action units, but another research trip might well uncover the proper material. Letter from Kent Courtney to All Newspapers in the State of Missouri, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[90] Martin Durham, *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 13-14.

[91] Letter from Kent Courtney to Walter Wetzel, November 1, 1965, 2 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[92] CSA Memo, "Leadership Security Measures," undated in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

officials at the grass roots to supplement Courtney's national ambitions. Courtney believed that it was "necessary for Conservative Americans to take effective political action at the local level . . . [in order] to defeat the Socialist conglomerate who are voting our nation into Socialism and Communism."[93] CSA members established connections with other local conservatives, engaged in door-to-door canvassing, and endeavored to prevent "banditry" at the polls.[94] Courtney intended for the CSA action units to dominate local elections in order to create a "shadow government" where elected officials, like sheriffs, could push far-right values. "The office of sheriff has a potential for juvenile education and other activities which in many cases has not been sufficiently exploited," Courtney theorized, "Just imagine the amount of anti-communist education which could be carried out by a Conservative sheriff who would establish a junior sheriff's posse."[95] Similarly, Courtney envisioned a school board that would use auditoriums for "patriotic gatherings" on weekends, "adult education seminars concerning national and international affairs," and "the adoption of pro-American and anti-Communist study courses."[96] Courtney's strategy called for a complete takeover of elected offices throughout local levels in order to saturate districts with anti-communist ultraconservatism. It is difficult to assess the success of this electoral approach, unfortunately, because most of Kent Courtney's papers detail the strategies behind the action units rather than the

---

[93] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of the CSA, Subscribers of the *Independent American* in the State of California, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[94] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members, undated in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[95] Kent Courtney, "Needed: A Shadow Government," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 13 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[96] Ibid.

results.[97]

However, the CSA Political Action Units and Courtney's local canvassing tactics succeeded in building an active constituency across the nation. By the beginning of 1962 the CSA spanned forty-five states, and the organization busily prepared for that year's midterm elections with an eye toward the presidential campaign of 1964.[98] Courtney claimed that the CSA had around 2,500 members in 1963 with the largest concentration residing in the Sunbelt, especially the conservative hotbed of California.[99] The modest number of CSA members was bolstered by the large amount of subscribers to Courtney's various periodicals. The CSA kept its members and readers engaged by distributing *CSA Action Handbooks* that contained instructional memos like "How to Write Your Congressman" and "How to Write Letters-to-the-Editor."[100] These simple info sheets provided guidelines for undertaking mass mailing campaigns and writing opinion columns targeting legislative efforts. The *Handbook* served as a member's personal ledger for all CSA publications, calls for action, and scraps from local papers. This reinforced the importance of local-level political activism since members were expected to analyze their own congressional districts in order to facilitate right-wing momentum.[101]

---

[97] Assessing the success of Courtney's grassroots activism would require intensive research at the local level. In order to turn this dissertation into a manuscript, part of my goal is to ascertain the breadth and effectiveness of Courtney's local strategies.

[98] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of *The Independent American*, January 19, 1962 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[99] "Rockefeller Stirs Rightists' Wrath: South-Based Group Calls Him Rights Agitator" *New York Times*, April 14, 1963. For more on Sunbelt Conservatism and California, see: Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*; Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011); McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*.

[100] CSA, "How To Write Your Congressman," "How to Write Letters-to-the-Editor," *CSA Handbook* (undated) in "Folder - CSA Handbook," KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Courtney's publishing empire and activist constituency increased his stature within the far-right movement of the 1960s, allowing him to influence and network with other ideologically-aligned organizations. He served as a local chapter leader for the most infamous ultraconservative group of the mid-twentieth century: the John Birch Society. The CSA and the Birch Society advocated nearly identical platforms, especially regarding the overarching premise of a vast communist conspiracy, but Courtney favored third-party politics and direct activism compared to Welch's reticence toward political involvement. Courtney never missed an opportunity to preach the Bircher message or coordinate with the Birch Society. CSA publications carried information encouraging readers to join the Birch Society.[102] This collaboration benefitted Courtney because he served as the chairman of the New Orleans Birch Society chapter, and additional Birchers meant more potential foot soldiers for the CSA. The CSA supported Birch Society projects by urging members to support Bircher movements, like the campaign to impeach Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren.[103]

Courtney kept in close contact with Welch throughout the years, writing letters to Welch regarding recent CSA publications and advertisements in the Birch Society's *American Opinion*.[104] Courtney lubricated the relationship between the CSA and the Birch

---

[101] Form Letter from Kent Courtney to Member, undated in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[102] George Tagge, "Conservative Leader Backs Birch Society," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 4, 1961.

[103] Ibid; Virginia Wilson, "How U.S. Government Supports The Communist Revolution," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 23 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. For more on the Birch Society's campaign against Earl Warren, see: D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 109-117.

[104] Letter from Kent Courtney to Robert W. Welch (Bob), July 27, 1965 in "Folder 152 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject Files - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Society by giving the JBS a 50 percent discount on all CSA-published books.[105] The Birch Society frequently bought and distributed Courtney's publications to Bircher-fronted bookstores and libraries. The two organizations shared mailing lists as well. In 1965 Courtney sent the Birch Society a list of 8,000 individuals that worked for or supported Goldwater's presidential campaign.[106] Courtney also promised Welch that the CSA's mailing list would be made available to the Birch Society if he and Phoebe were to meet an unfortunate end.[107] "Phoebe and I are always happy to stand shoulder to shoulder with Robert Welch because if the John Birch Society should falter, the whole anti-Communist movement would suffer a serious setback," Courtney confided in a private letter to the Associate Editor of *American Opinion*, Francis X. Gannon.[108]

Courtney's anti-communist beliefs also led to associations with ultraconservative religious groups like Billy James Hargis's Christian Crusade. Hargis purchased Courtney's books to sell to crusade members, and Courtney gave Hargis a discount similar to the Birch Society, charging four cents less per book to help the crusade make a larger profit on each book sold.[109] Hargis defined the Christian Crusade as an apolitical organization, but the fact that Hargis and Courtney attended similar far-right conferences and planned a speaking tour

---

[105] Letter from Donald R. Gray to Kent Courtney, March 8, 1965 in "Folder 153 - Subject Files I-Le, Box 18 - Subject Files - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[106] Letter from Kent Courtney to Robert W. Welch (Bob), February 24, 1965 in "Folder 153 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject File - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Letter from Kent Courtney to Francis X. Gannon, November 17, 1965 in "Folder 153 - Subject Files I-Le," Box 18 - Subject File - I-Le, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[109] Letter from Kent Courtney to Billy James Hargis, August 17, 1962 in "Folder 117 - Subject Files - Bo-Com," Box 15 - Subject Files - Bo-Com, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

together undermined Hargis's contention.[110] Courtney's vehement anti-communism and relationship with Hargis led him to serve as a faculty member—a glorified title for giving speeches—in the Christian Crusade's Anti-Communist Leadership School in Shreveport, Louisiana.[111] The *CSA Newsletter* also displayed advertisements for Billy James Hargis's "Midnight Ride" speaking tour with General Edwin Walker, and in return Hargis distributed Courtney's speeches to Christian Crusade chapters across the country.[112] The relationships with fellow ultraconservatives like Hargis and Welch illustrated that the CSA existed within a constellation of far-right organizations. Anti-communism was often the glue that held these partnerships together, though the CSA differed from the Birch Society and Christian Crusade by openly campaigning for politicians and legislation.

The formation of the CSA and the strengthening of ultraconservative networks in the early 1960s emboldened Courtney's third-party aspirations. The Constitution Party's poor showing in 1956 and the failure to galvanize a right-wing revolution in 1960 convinced Courtney that an early start was necessary to influence the presidential election of 1964. By 1962 Courtney directed the organizing and publishing power of the CSA toward alternative party advocacy. The goal remained the same as the 1956 and 1960 elections: create a truly conservative third party to split the current two-party system. During the buildup to 1964

---

[110] Letter from Billy James Hargis to Kent Courtney, October 9, 1962 in "Folder 117 - Subject Files - Bo-Com," Box 15 - Subject Files - Bo-Com, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Letter from Billy James Hargis to Kent Courtney, January 6, 1962 in "Folder 117 - Subject Files - Bo-Com," Box 15 - Subject Files - Bo-Com, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[111] Letter from Billy James Hargis to Kent Courtney, February 24, 1964 in "Folder 117 - Subject Files - Bo-Com," Box 15 - Subject Files - Bo-Com, KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[112] Kent Courtney, "The Midnight Ride," *The CSA Newsletter* (February 22, 1963) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Courtney unfairly described the policies of both major parties as "Socialist-Communist appeasing" in an effort to convert conservative voters to third-party politics.[113] However, Courtney's assertion that the Democratic and Republican parties were "indistinguishable" from one another was not simply a rhetorical device to gain new followers; it underscored his belief that the U.S. polity in the early 1960s was a one-party system.[114] "This new Conservative party will not be a third party . . . It will be a SECOND PARTY," Courtney crowed in a letter to CSA members.[115]

When Barry Goldwater entered the 1964 election Courtney suspended his third party activities in favor of supporting the Arizona senator. Despite Courtney's belief that Goldwater betrayed the right-wing cause by supporting Nixon in 1960, he returned to Goldwater's camp by the midterm elections of 1962. A mass letter to CSA members written in 1962 indicated this shift. Courtney told his readers, "We Conservatives are not going to be able to turn the tide against Socialism and Communism at home or abroad until we elect a majority of Congressmen who vote like Senator Barry Goldwater."[116] This pronouncement coincided with a nationwide campaign to build up CSA Political Action Units in an effort to support conservative candidates. By 1963 Courtney extolled Goldwater's presidential credentials, asserting that "if the Republican Party wants to remain in existence it will have to nominate Goldwater."[117] CSA propaganda promoted Goldwater's campaign while Courtney

---

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.

[115] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of the CSA, November 29, 1962, 3 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[116] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of CSA and Subscribers of *The Independent American* in the State or Arizona, May 30, 1962 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

lauded Goldwater as "a man who stands for Constitutional principles - a man opposed to the Big Spending, High Tax policies of the past three decades."[118] As was the case in 1960, Goldwater's platforms, especially his vehement anti-communism and bellicose foreign policies, appealed to Courtney and other right-wing hardliners.

During the GOP primaries Courtney traveled across the country campaigning on behalf of Goldwater. Throughout the spring of 1964 Goldwater amassed a significant advantage with 555 delegates—mostly from Sunbelt, Midwestern, and Rocky Mountain states—firmly supporting or leaning toward the Arizona senator.[119] Goldwater's advisers decided to skip the Oregon primary in May 1964, in part because of Goldwater's delegate lead but also because New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller mounted a half-a-million-dollar last ditch effort to seize the nomination.[120] Rockefeller viewed the Oregon primary as crucial for building momentum heading into the potentially decisive California primary.[121] When Goldwater's campaign abandoned Oregon in favor of focusing on California, Courtney took it upon himself to mount a conservative offensive.[122] Courtney hired attractive young women to stand outside of storefronts and pass out pro-Goldwater CSA pamphlets in downtown Portland. Kent's personal secretary and Phoebe Courtney created red, white, and blue aprons for the models to wear. The aprons had five pockets that held around 150

---

[117] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of the CSA, November 14, 1963, 5 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[118] Pamphlet, Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "Goldwater for President; Where Goldwater Stands - Federal Tyranny or Freedom," Tax Fax No. 51, 1964 in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[119] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 189.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid., 187.

[122] Robert David Johnson, *All the Way With LBJ: The 1964 Presidential Election* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 108.

pamphlets. Additionally, Courtney noted, "Each [model] was wearing an Uncle Sam hat with a 'Goldwater for President' bumper sticker wrapped around the crown."[123] Courtney paid the models $100 total to distribute CSA's propaganda, a cost he considered "well worthwhile" because his efforts received coverage in *The Oregonian* and two local Portland papers.[124] This technique of using models, soon to be dubbed "Goldwater Girls," underscored women's complex role in the conservative movement: on one hand, activists like Phyllis Schlafly wrote right-wing treatises and organized on behalf of Goldwater, and Goldwater himself highlighted the grassroots efforts of Republican women; on the other hand, hiring models to peddle propaganda reinforced derivative gender stereotypes, which might explain women's flagging support for Goldwater.[125] Nevertheless, Courtney's "Goldwater Girls" were later used broadly by Goldwater's campaign during the California primary.[126]

Courtney also attacked Goldwater's Republican opposition during the Oregon primary through advertisements and mass propaganda. CSA ads appeared in all of Oregon's daily newspapers—combined circulation of 627,524—that accurately pinned the assassination of staunch anti-communist South Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem on presidential hopeful Henry Cabot Lodge, the U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.[127] Back

---

[123] Kent Courtney, "Inside Oregon: A First-Hand Political Action Report" *CSA Newsletter*, April 29, 1964, 3 in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[124] Ibid., 4.

[125] Rymph, *Republican Women*, 162-163, 172; Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*, 132-136.

[126] Godfrey Hodgson, "Goldwater's Last Chance?," *The Observer*, May 31, 1964; Anne Sonne, "Goldwater Girls in the Mainstream," *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1964.

[127] Kent Courtney, "Inside Oregon: A First-Hand Political Action Report," *CSA Newsletter* (April 29, 1964): 5-6 in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU. Frederick Logevall, *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 64; Stephen Kinzer, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq* (New York: Times Books, 2006), 165-167.

in the 1950s the Eisenhower administration worked with Diem, in part, because of the prime minister's anti-communistic beliefs. Lodge and the Kennedy administration signed off on Diem's ouster in 1963 out of fear that Diem would negotiate a truce with North Vietnam, but Courtney viewed Lodge's complicity in the removal of an anti-communist ally as tantamount to aiding the communists.[128] While contesting Lodge's foreign policy credentials Courtney attacked Rockefeller by attempting to sway union members to the side of Goldwater.[129] Courtney hoped that the flood of pamphlets, over 20,000 were distributed, would be "taken to work, passed around at civic club meetings, and passed from hand to hand."[130] Ultimately Rockefeller's financial largesse defeated Lodge's campaign and bedeviled Courtney's efforts.[131] Goldwater lost the Oregon primary, earning only 17 percent of the vote; however, Goldwater's returns could have been far worse without the activity of Courtney and the CSA.[132]

Courtney regularly targeted Goldwater's GOP opposition throughout the primary season, namely Pennsylvania Governor William W. Scranton, Nelson Rockefeller, and Henry Cabot Lodge. Courtney attacked Rockefeller and Lodge as "socialists" that were "soft on communism," and he even criticized Eisenhower's continued influence on the Republican

---

[128] Robert Buzzanco, *Vietnam and the Transformation of American Life* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 68; Seth Jacobs, "The Religious Roots of U.S. Support for Ngo Dinh Diem," in *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War* ed. By Robert J. McMahon, Fourth Edition (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 105; Logevall, *Choosing War*, xx, 64.

[129] Kent Courtney, "Inside Oregon: A First-Hand Political Action Report" *CSA Newsletter* (April 29, 1964): 4 in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Robert David Johnson remarked that Rockefeller's win in the Oregon primary destroyed Lodge's campaign, in *All the Way with LBJ*, 110-111. However, Courtney's anti-Lodge propaganda undoubtedly contributed to Lodge's rapid declining poll numbers.

[132] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 189, 194.

Party.[133] One of Courtney's inflammatory newsletters took a line straight from the Birch Society, arguing, "Eisenhower was one of the best friends that the Communists ever had!"[134] Scranton, in particular, received emphatic denunciations from Kent Courtney. Courtney distributed literature through Independent Americans for Goldwater that characterized Scranton as "an ardent leftwinger" with a record of "softness on communism."[135] Courtney claimed his organization distributed over 108,000 anti-Scranton pamphlets during a pro-Goldwater rally in the summer of 1964, and took partial credit for Scranton's inability to effectively challenge Goldwater's movement.[136] This audacity prompted direct responses from Scranton himself. On the campaign trail Scranton reiterated his moderate platforms, claiming that he mobilized his campaign "so the people of this nation will clearly understand that the Republican Party is not just another name for some ultra-rightist society . . . that we are responsible Americans, not radical extremists."[137] Scranton also noted that he wanted the GOP to remain "in the tradition of . . . Bob Taft, not in the tradition of Kent Courtney."[138]

Despite unfavorable poll numbers—Goldwater trailed Rockfeller by twenty-one

---

[133] Letter to Members of the Board of Advisors of The Conservative Society of America and All Political Action Unit Chairmen of The Conservative Society of America from Kent Courtney, April 12, 1963 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "Rockefeller Stirs Rightists' Wrath: South-Based Group Calls Him Rights Agitator," *New York Times*, April 14, 1963; Lawrence E. Davies, "Lodge Son Denies A Campaign 'Plot': Says Father Does Not Seek to Block or Aid Any Rival," *New York Times*, May 14, 1964; Chesly Manly, "Scranton Charges 'Smear' Plot: Television Address Slaps At Goldwater," *Chicago Tribune*, July 8, 1964.

[134] Kent Courtney, "Special Report to CSA Members," *CSA Newsletter*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (March 20, 1964) in "Folder 36 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1964," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[135] Chalmers M. Roberts, "Barry's Arrival Stirs San Francisco Today," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, July 9, 1964.

[136] "Bircher Would Post Ike As Berlin Wall Sentry," *Boston Globe*, July 13, 1964.

[137] Ernest B. Ferguson, "Is Cheered By Crowd As He Takes Attack Into San Francisco: Goldwater's Talk Of Change Between Now And November Suggests He Hopes For Racial Unrest, Governor Says," *The Sun*, July 9, 1964.

[138] Ibid.

points in a Gallup poll taken in June—Goldwater was the favorite heading into the August GOP Convention because of his strength at the grassroots level.[139] Courtney supported Goldwater's candidacy by creating a base of operations in San Francisco called Independent Americans for Goldwater. Wallace Turner of the *New York Times* observed, "It appeared that the main purpose of Mr. Courtney's appearance in San Francisco for the Republican convention will be to create a movement of opposition to all liberal and moderate tendencies in platform, candidates and speeches."[140] Courtney confirmed Turner's prognostication through a press release, stating that the Independent Americans for Goldwater intended to "work for the nomination of Barry Goldwater running on a conservative platform, and . . . [to] see Goldwater select an anti-Communist as his Vice-Presidential running mate."[141] Throughout the campaign Courtney and the CSA printed and distributed over one million pro-Goldwater pamphlets.[142] Courtney claimed the purpose of CSA's publishing drive was to expose "the Socialist, pro-Communist backgrounds of those opposing Goldwater."[143] Courtney declared in a CSA pamphlet, "No Republican candidate for President had ever promised leadership for victory over Communism until Barry Goldwater announced his

---

[139] The Gallup poll showed 30 percent of voters preferred Goldwater, 51 percent liked Rockefeller, and 18 percent registered no opinion. Gallup Organization, Gallup Poll (AIPO), "Suppose the choice for President in the Republican Convention in 1964 narrows down to Barry Goldwater and Nelson Rockefeller. Which one would you prefer to have the Republican convention select?," USGALLUP.64-692.R06A, (Storrs, CT: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, June, 1964), accessed via iPOLL on April 3, 2016; Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 201-204; Johnson, *All the Way with LBJ*, 128.

[140] Wallace Turner, "Rightist Sets Up Convention Shop: He Booms J. Edgar Hoover for Goldwater Ticket," *New York Times*, July 8, 1964.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of The Independent American, August 2, 1965, 3 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[143] Ibid.

candidacy."[144]

Goldwater spurned moderation and openly courted the extremist vote, including Courtney, which hurt the Arizona senator's electability. He refused to repudiate the John Birch Society for fear of alienating its constituency.[145] Such principles endeared Goldwater to hardline right-wingers like Kent Courtney; however, after Goldwater won the nomination many Americans, especially the press, viewed Goldwater's followers with a mixture of horror and bewilderment. Courtney himself was occasionally singled out. Chalmers M. Roberts of the *Washington Post* observed that pressure from far-rightists like Courtney might convince Goldwater to spurn GOP moderates by creating a "totally conservative ticket."[146] Richard Wilson, a journalist for the *Los Angeles Times*, described Courtney as "so far right he comes within one degree of making a complete circle," and Wilson further wondered why mainstream conservatives like William F. Buckley Jr., were willing to share an ideological bed with "kooks" like Courtney.[147] Robert Schulz of the *Boston Globe* contended, "[Courtney] is an enormous headache to the architects of Sen. Barry Goldwater's seemingly relentless drive for the Republican presidential nomination. They privately wish he would get lost in the High Sierras."[148]

These media accounts ignored the fact that Goldwater refused to snub his radical supporters, and Goldwater countered, somewhat correctly, that the press presented him and

---

[144] Pamphlet, Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "Goldwater For President: His Position on National Defense and Foreign Policy," Tax Fax No. 50, 1964 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[145] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 190.

[146] Chalmers M. Roberts, "Barry's Arrival Stirs San Francisco Today," *The Washington Post*, July 9, 1964.

[147] Richard Wilson, "These Are Strange Bedfellows," *Los Angeles Times*, July 16, 1964.

[148] Robert Schulz, "Barry Wants One Backer To Get Lost," *Boston Globe*, July 12, 1964.

his supporters in an unflattering light.[149] Indeed, writers feasted on Goldwater's public miscues, and many editors and reporters were biased in favor of incumbent Lyndon Johnson.[150] Despite Goldwater's accurate charges against the press, Kent Courtney's public proclamations unveiled the depths of extremism within the Goldwater camp. For example, Courtney prophesied that a "purge of liberals from the Republican Party" would occur after Goldwater won the GOP nomination.[151] Journalist Thomas O'Neill of Baltimore's *The Sun* summarized the opinion of many GOP moderates: "Worried Republicans fear the growing identification of the GOP with the fruitcake fringe."[152]

The battles within the GOP prohibited a unified front for Goldwater as the 1964 election neared in November. Major GOP figures like Rockfeller and Romney refused to endorse Goldwater, though Richard Nixon stumped on Goldwater's behalf.[153] To make matters worse, incumbent President Lyndon Johnson effectively portrayed Goldwater as a foreign policy extremist during a time when global events, like China's first nuclear test, seemed to call for restraint rather than hawkishness.[154] Additionally, Goldwater's connection to right-wing radicals alienated many voters.[155] Lyndon Johnson overpowered Goldwater in the 1964 election, despite the Arizona Senator's legion of grassroots activists. Johnson won

---

[149] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 190.

[150] Ibid., 224.

[151] Robert J. Donovan, "Convention May Be Political Landmark," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, July 13, 1964.

[152] Thomas O'Neill, "Politics and People: The Watchdogs," *The Sun*, July 19, 1963.

[153] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 196, 221, 234.

[154] Ibid., 231.

[155] Johnson, *All the Way With LBJ*, 143.

by a margin of sixteen million votes, seemingly reinforcing the liberal consensus.[156] Johnson's victory was a microcosm of Democratic gains across the nation as Republicans lost seats in the Senate, House, and within state legislatures. However, LBJ's landslide masked the fact that conservatism was growing in ways not evidenced by electoral results. Historian Lisa McGirr contended that, because of Goldwater's campaign, "a new generation of activists, tightly organized, staked their claim to the leadership of the Republican Party."[157]

The election of 1964 was a crucial moment for the ascent of modern conservatism despite contemporary wisdoms that relegated right-wing thought to the historical dustbin. Robert Alan Goldberg observed, "The reports of conservatism's demise were greatly exaggerated because they neglected crucial changes at the grassroots."[158] Other historians viewed the Goldwater campaign as a critical juncture, if not the origin, for the right-wing ascendance in the latter half of the twentieth century.[159] Donald Janson of the *New York Times* noted that Goldwater conservatives "feel they have gained a grip on the Republican Party machinery, and they have no intention of relaxing it."[160] Kent Courtney agreed that

---

[156] McGillivray, Scammon, and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 22; Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 233.

[157] McGirr, *Suburban Warrior*, 143.

[158] Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 235.

[159] For more on the 1964 campaign and grassroots politics, see: John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997); Mary Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*; Johnson, *All the Way With LBJ*; Rebecca E. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Joseph E. Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*; Perlstein, *Before the Storm*; Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President 1964* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1965).

[160] Donald Janson, "Rightists Buoyed By The Election; Open New Drives," *New York Times*, November 23, 1964, 1 in "Folder - Ha (1)," Box 38 - Principal File, 1964, ODDE, DDEL.

"conservatives demonstrated that they could exert enough pressure and they could work hard enough to do an education job thorough enough to capture control of Republican nominating convention."[161]

Courtney believed Goldwater's success in the South indicated the growing success of his right-wing activism. "The Conservative movement is so vast . . . that hundreds of specialized groups have been organized in the past ten years, many of them devoted to a single aspect of the situation," Courtney wrote to his subscribers, "But all united on election day in support of the Conservative principles advocated by Goldwater's platform in 1964!"[162] Courtney believed the twenty-seven million votes garnered by Goldwater was "a cause of deep concern to the Liberals who now control both the Democrat and Republican Parties."[163] The Conservative Society of America sold bright orange bumper stickers emblazoned with the phrase "27,000,000 Americans Can't Be Wrong!" to commemorate Goldwater's campaign.[164] Yet the internecine struggles during the GOP primaries reinforced Kent Courtney's belief that a third-party movement remained the best way to unite conservatives in the United States. "The people who worked for Goldwater's principles should band themselves together in each State to form a new anti-Communist, Conservative political party," Courtney roared in the wake of Johnson's 1964 victory.[165]

---

[161] Ibid.

[162] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of The Independent American, August 2, 1965, 1 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[163] Letter from Kent Courtney to Member, April 9, 1965, 1 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[164] Donald Janson, "Rightists Buoyed By The Election; Open New Drives," *New York Times*, November 23, 1964.

[165] Kent Courtney, "G.O.P. Liberals Purge Conservatives: Purge in Wisconsin," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 10 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, GCHRC, NWSU.

The amount of votes Goldwater received, especially carrying five states in the Deep South, convinced Courtney that millions of untapped conservative voters existed in the United States and resurrected Courtney's push for a "new national, anti-Communist, pro-American political party."[166] This re-energized third-party activism revealed the fractious nature of conservatism in the 1960s. Goldwater himself doubted the efficacy of a third party. When a reporter asked about Kent Courtney's movement, Goldwater replied, "I would resist the formation of any third party . . . Whether it is liberal or conservative, it won't work, and it does not have any part in our American scheme of things."[167] Additionally, Ronald Reagan emerged in California by tapping into the grassroots movement forged during Goldwater's campaign, and many Republican conservatives believed they were steadily eroding the power of the liberal-moderate wing of the GOP.[168] On the other hand, some hardline conservatives like Courtney viewed the formation of an alternative party as the only viable method for breaking the preponderance of liberalism. Analysts Rowland Evans and Robert Novak of the *Washington Post* observed that far-rightists were "disillusioned with the Republican Party as a vehicle for super-conservatism," and issued warnings about "a potential epidemic of rightist third parties."[169] It was within this admixture of conservative growth and political uncertainty

---

[166] Letter from Kent Courtney to Member, March 12, 1965, 1 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[167] Joseph R. L. Strene, "Goldwater Says His Viet Plan Is Being Followed: Cites Action Against Red Supply Line," *The Sun*, January 22, 1965.

[168] The scholarship on Ronald Reagan and the rise of modern conservatism is robust. For choice examples, see: Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties*; Crespino, *In Search of Another Country*; Gil, *Morning in America*; Kabaservice, *Rule and Ruin*; Kruse, *White Flight*; William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008); Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*; Dominic Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of The Populist Right* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2013); Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*; Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan*.

that Courtney again called for the creation of a third party at the Congress of Conservatives in 1965.

On May 1, 1965, Courtney convened the Congress of Conservatives in Chicago, Illinois, to assess the state of right-wing, hoping to reintroduce his plan for an alternative right-wing party. Over five hundred individuals registered for the congress with roughly 150-200 people in attendance on the opening day.[170] The congress attracted a motley crew of radical rightists, suggesting that Courtney's ideologies were falling increasingly out of favor with mainstream conservatives. Journalist Hella Pick of *The Guardian* described the congress attendees as communist conspiracy theorists "who consider Cuba a formidable enemy, the United Nations a subversive force, and the civil rights movement one of Communists, Jews, and sexual perverts; and who think that any mention of disarmament is appeasement of the most dangerous kind."[171] Paul Gapp of *The Washington Post* agreed that many of the guests held "an overriding fear that the Communist conspiracy already has progressed so far that America may be doomed; that all may be destined to imprisonment behind barbed wire, or be slaughtered."[172]

The Congress of Conservatives issued a declaration during the second day that hewed closely to Courtney's acerbic conservatism. The document called for a "reappraisal of American military and political doctrines," a withdrawal from all projects and organizations

---

[169] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Inside Report: Third Party Epidemic," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, November 23, 1965.

[170] Austin C. Wehrwein, "Conservatives Decide to Put Off The Formation of a Third Party," *New York Times*, May 1, 1965; "Anti-Red Party Planned by Conservative Group," *Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 1965.

[171] Hella Pick, "Right-Wing Americans Undecided," *The Guardian*, April 30, 1965.

[172] Paul Gapp, "Radical Right Lets Off Its Steam But Fails to Launch Third Party," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, May 6, 1965.

linked to "the establishment of a world government," and a break in diplomatic ties "with all governments that are openly creatures of the Communist Party."[173] However, the declaration underscored the persistent schism between those that favored or opposed the formation of a third party. David Halvorsen of the *Chicago Tribune* reported, "many feared that the liberals would benefit from the formation of a new party since it would weaken the ranks of the Republican Party."[174] The Chicago congress ultimately decided against forming a new third party. A committee was formed instead to explore future options, including creating a potential third party coalition. Courtney called the delay "realistic" because, as he wrote to CSA subscribers, "there were not enough new party organizations established in a sufficient number of states."[175] The plan called for a push to establish third-party chapters across the U.S. until a national party could be organized.

Despite referring to the delay as "realistic," the failure to officially form a third party at the congress must have been a bitter pill for Courtney. By 1965 he had spent a decade trying, and failing, to organize conservatives under one banner. However, the congress inspired a new generation of third-party activists. Attendees returned home after the Chicago congress and fostered right-wing movements in their own backyards. Mark Andrews, who served on the Political Action Executive Committee at the Chicago congress, held a similar meeting in Missouri. Taking cues from Courtney's strategies, Andrews sent a mass mailer to "Missouri Conservatives" and urged people to support the formation of a new political party based on the ideals passed at the CSA congress. The Missouri congress brought in roughly

---

[173] David Halvorsen, "Right Wingers Resolution on 3d Party Mild," *Chicago Tribune*, May 2, 1965, 12.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of The Independent American, August 2, 1965, 5 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Austin C. Wehrwein, "Conservatives Decide to Put Off The Formation of a Third Party," *New York Times*, May 1, 1965.

one hundred delegates from neighboring states and eventually led to the creation of a state-wide right-wing party.[176] Other hardline conservative parties popped up around the nation. An anti-communist political party formed in Florida and a conservative party appeared in La Grange, Illinois. Twenty Michigan activists created the Michigan American Party to fight the "one-party" system and stymie the implementation of a state income tax.[177] Michigan's American Party even invited Courtney to attend the founding meeting as the keynote speaker. Similar conservative parties were founded in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Colorado, and Massachusetts, all of which claimed direct lineage with Courtney's Chicago congress.[178]

The national third-party crusade blossomed just one year after the Chicago meeting and by the summer of 1966 the CSA functioned as a central hub for the national third party movement. "The Conservative Society of America is now acting as the National Headquarters of the Conservative Party movement," Courtney wrote to CSA members, "As soon as parties are organized in 30 or more States, then it will be time to call a national organizing convention and . . . raise sufficient money to run their national committee and establish a Washington office."[179] The umbrella term "Conservative Party" came to

---

[176] Kent Courtney, "Anti-Communist Party Launched In Florida," *The CSA Newsletter* (June 18, 1965) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "3rd U.S. Party Planned," *Pacific Stars and Stripes* reprinted in *The CSA Newsletter* (October 8, 1965): 2 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[177] Kent Courtney, "Illinois Party Being Organized," *The CSA Newsletter* (July 1, 1965) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "Conservatives Map New Party In Michigan," *The CSA Newsletter* (August 30, 1965) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[178] "Pennsylvania New Party Meeting - Dec 11," *The CSA Newsletter* (October 8, 1965): 1 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "Georgia New Party Underway," *The CSA Newsletter* (November 1, 1965) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "State-Wide Organization Established By Colorado Conservative Group," *Gazette-Telegraph*, November 19, 1965 in *The CSA Newsletter* (December 7, 1965) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; "Mass. Conservatives Form Party," *The Boston Globe*, December 18, 1965 reprinted in *The CSA Newsletter* (January 15, 1966) in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

encompass multiple parties with different names across the U.S., including the Constitution Party in Florida and the American Party in Michigan. The Conservative Party existed in eighteen states by June 1966, with plans to continue organizing throughout the country.[180] Some of these third parties, like the Wisconsin Conservative Party, siphoned members away from local GOP branches. Two officers from the Manitowoc County Republican organization resigned and joined the newly created Wisconsin Congress of Conservatives.[181] Courtney's ultimate goal, aside from fomenting a permanent conservative movement, was to nominate a right-wing candidate for the 1968 election under the banner of the Conservative Party.

Courtney's insistence on an alternate party, rather than working with the Republican Party that gained millions of Goldwater votes, illustrated the depth of his distrust for the GOP. He contended that liberals controlled the Republican Party in the name of "party unity," and viewed the fact that Republican votes helped pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as confirmation that the GOP was complicit in advancing the liberal agenda.[182] Republicans gained gubernatorial and congressional seats in the 1966 midterm elections, but Courtney dismissed these victories as Pyrrhic because he considered many of the GOP politicians too left-leaning. For example, Courtney purported that newly elected California governor Ronald Reagan would fall in line with the liberalism of Republicans like Richard Nixon, Dwight D.

---

[179] Letter from Kent Courtney to CSA Member, June 15, 1966, 5 in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[180] Ibid., 4.

[181] "Wisconsin GOP Leaders Resign From Party, Join Conservative Forces," *The CSA Newsletter* (May 20, 1966): 1 in "Folder 40 - CSA Newsletters, 1961-1971," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[182] Pamphlet, Conservative Society of America, "G.O.P. Now Under Liberal Control," CSA No. 4 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber of The Independent American, August 2, 1965, 2 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Eisenhower, Nelson Rockefeller, and George Romney.[183] This reiterated Courtney's stringent litmus test for conservatism—only ardent states' righters, war hawks, and anti-communists constituted true right-wingers—and his belief that the two mainstream parties were irreversibly tainted by socialism.

The 1968 presidential election provided the opportunity, Courtney believed, for conservatives to illustrate their electoral strength.[184] The 1964 election indicated that millions of Americans were willing to vote for a principled conservative, and third-party activists sought to capitalize on this momentum. The fractious state of the United States in the 1960s contributed an added sense of anxiety to the far-right movement. Courtney proclaimed in a *CSA Info Memo*, "I cannot support the Republican Party in any respect and I am urging Conservatives now held captive by the Republican Party to declare their independence and join with the fast-growing, new Conservative Political Party Movement in this country."[185] Courtney's hopes were quenched when former Alabama governor George Corley Wallace announced his candidacy for president under the banner of Alabama's American Party. Wallace held a small meeting to coordinate his upcoming presidential campaign, and the two-dozen attendees represented a cross section of the far-right movement, including CSA leader Kent Courtney.[186]

---

[183] Letter from Kent Courtney to CSA Member, "The Conservatives and the November Elections," November 16, 1966, 2 in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[184] For more on the Presidential Election of 1968, see: Carter, *The Politics of Rage*; Lewis Gould, *1968: The Election that Changed America* (Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 1993); Michael Nelson, *Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014); Rick Perlstein, *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* (New York: Scribner, 2008); Theodore H. White, *The Making of the President, 1968* (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969).

[185] Kent Courtney, "The Council on Foreign Relations: Courtney Questions Lucius Clay," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 12 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[186] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 295.

The divisions within U.S. society during the 1960s amplified the noise surrounding the presidential election of 1968. Crime and leftist social movements appeared more prevalent than previous decades.[187] The seemingly endless Vietnam War, and especially the Tet Offensive in January 1968, produced the "credibility gap" and eroded public trust in the government.[188] Anti-war activists protested political candidates across the nation and street violence received breathless media coverage.[189] Similarly the civil rights movement entered a more radical phase during the late 1960s with groups like the Black Panthers and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee espousing Black Power.[190] The perception of chaos in the streets and LBJ's support for civil rights and escalation of Vietnam helped destroy the remnants of the New Deal coalition.[191] Contemporary analyst Theodore H. White rightly

---

[187] For a broad overview of the New Left in the 1960s, see: Van Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

[188] Buzzanco, *Vietnam and the Transformation of American Society*, 85.

[189] For more on Vietnam and the anti-war movement, see: Irving Bernstein, *Guns or Butter: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Buzzanco, *Vietnam and the Transformation of American Life*; Gosse, *Rethinking the New Left*; Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Klatch, *A Generation Divided*; Allan J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Dominic Sandbrook, *Eugene McCarthy: The Rise and Fall of Postwar American Liberalism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

[190] For more on the radicalization of the civil rights movement, see: Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Gerald Horne, *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Peniel E. Joseph, *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006); Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (New York: Viking, 2011); Jeffrey O. G. Ogbar, *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[191] The historiography chronicling the demise of the liberal consensus is dense. For select scholarship, see: H. W. Brands, *The Strange Death of American Liberalism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001); Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Gareth Davies, *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996); Michael W. Flamm, *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle, eds., *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Kevin Mattson, *When America Was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism*

described the "liberal consensus" of Johnson's Democratic Party as "out of date as a Ptolemaic chart of the Mediterranean."[192]

The disarray in the Democratic Party mirrored the national discord, and Lyndon Johnson shocked the world by deciding not to run for president despite being eligible for one more term. Multiple candidates had already emerged to contest LBJ for the Democratic nomination during the 1968 election cycle, including Vice President Hubert Humphrey, Representative Eugene McCarthy (D-MN), Senator George McGovern (D-SD), and Senator Robert F. Kennedy (D-NY). Many analysts penciled in Hubert Humphrey as the Democratic favorite, but Humphrey's milquetoast liberalism failed to appeal to civil rights activists and anti-war advocates who supported RFK and George McGovern, respectively. LBJ's decisions regarding Vietnam plagued Humphrey because the Vice President was seen as a representative of the administration. Bobby Kennedy appeared to have the Democratic nomination sewn up after winning the California primary on June 5, 1968, until three bullets from the .22 revolver of Sirhan Sirhan ended Kennedy's presidential aspirations in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel.[193] Buoyed by the strength of labor unions and the lack of a true adversary after Kennedy's tragic demise, Humphrey received the Democratic nomination in Chicago in August. Yet the anti-war protests outside of the DNC wrought a spectacle of police brutality that diminished Humphrey's victory.[194] An air of desperation

---

(New York: Routledge, 2004); Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*; Douglass C. Rossinow, *Visions of Progress: The Left-Liberal Tradition in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Tom Waldman, *Not Much Left: The Fate of Liberalism in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

[192] White, *The Making of the President 1968*, 76.

[193] Nelson, *Resilient America*, 106-107.

[194] For more on the Democratic National Convention of 1968, see: Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004); Norman Mailer, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago: An Informal History of the Republican and Democratic Conventions of 1968*

exuded from the Democratic Party as the 1968 election loomed.

The Republican Party seemed tame in comparison to the disarray within the Democratic ranks. Richard Nixons's activism on behalf of Goldwater in 1964 and Republican candidates during the 1966 midterms endeared him to the GOP rank-and-file, which cemented Nixon as the GOP front-runner in 1968.[195] Nixon focused on, what he called, the "Forgotten Americans" of the suburban Sunbelt.[196] Contemporary analyst Theodore H. White described Nixon's strategy as surrendering the Deep South to George Wallace while challenging Wallace's hold on the Upper South and Border South.[197] Nixon harnessed the rhetoric of anti-communism that often doubled as a race-baiting code language for southerners, and he stumped for "law & order" and railed against the perceived divisiveness of liberal policies.[198] As the election cycle progressed Nixon took small, but significant, steps to the right in an attempt to appeal to conservative voters.

Ronald Reagan challenged Nixon's candidacy from the right while George Romney and Nelson Rockefeller attacked from the left. Romney dropped out of the race early in 1968 and Rockefeller's late announcement left little time to rattle the sabers of the traditional eastern elite wing of the GOP. Reagan, on the other hand, charmed conservatives and made Nixon's campaign sweat until Strom Thurmond helped Nixon retain control of crucial southern votes at the 1968 Republican National Convention in August.[199] The instrumental

---

(New York: World Publishing Co., 1968); John Schultz, *No One Was Killed: The Democratic National Convention, August 1968* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

[195] Nelson, *Resilient America*, 110.

[196] White, *The Making of the President 1968*, 379.

[197] Ibid., 385.

[198] For more on "law and order" politics, see: Flamm, *Law and Order*.

role of Strom Thurmond in Nixon's campaign shocked many staunch conservatives, including Kent Courtney.[200] Fortunately for Courtney, Wallace's candidacy provided the opportunity to organize at the grassroots level for a "true" conservative with national ambitions.

George Wallace's anti-communism and subtle racism aligned perfectly with the ideologies of Courtney and the CSA. Wallace, like Courtney, accused all liberal-moderate ideals of subverting traditional socio-political mores. "There's a great difference between honest dissent and overt acts of treason," Wallace declared, "We will awake the Nation to the Liberal-Socialist-Communist design to destroy local government in America."[201] In 1966 Wallace attacked federal involvement in education as a "blueprint devised by the Socialists which has as its objectives the capture and regimentation of our children and the destruction of our public education system."[202] Wallace argued, "The local police needed to be supported as the first and last line of defense of the people against anarchists, criminals, subversives, and Communists."[203] Of course, Wallace and Courtney loosely used the terms "communists" and "subversives" as a way to slander opposing ideologies and subtly hint at racial issues rather than raise serious concerns about national security concerns.

Wallace also aligned with Courtney's crusade against civil rights in the name of

---

[199] White, *The Making of the President 1968*, 160.

[200] Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber, November 25, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[201] Pamphlet, Kent Courtney, "George Wallace: The People's Choice," CSA No. 18 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[202] Pamphlet, George C. Wallace, "Guidelines: A Socialist Blueprint for Federal Control of Education," CSA No. 13 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[203] Pamphlet, Kent Courtney, "George Wallace: The People's Choice," CSA No. 18 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

property rights and individual liberties. “But the Civil Rights Bill, in the name of civil rights, is trying to control people's property,” Wallace warned, “When you destroy property rights, you hurt all the people, regardless of race.”[204] According to Wallace’s ideals, the federal enforcement of civil rights and voting rights constituted more evidence of liberal-socialist control. *Los Angeles Times* writer Jack Nelson reported that Wallace saw “himself as the head of a new third-party movement that would draw nationwide support among whites and force the Democrats and Republicans into less sympathetic positions on equal rights for Negroes.” Furthermore, Nelson argued, “Wallace believes that continuing Negro riots and cries of black power will sustain a white backlash long enough for him to form a party big enough to disrupt the country’s two-party system.”[205] Perhaps Wallace’s most famous line that endeared him to right-wingers was his exhortation that “there is not a dime’s worth of difference between the Democrats and the Republicans.”[206]

Wallace was a red-baiting, racist demagogue, but his state-level fiscal liberalism represented the biggest schism between Wallace and far-rightists like Kent Courtney. Wallace implemented regressive taxes on gasoline and monetary transactions in order to expand Alabama’s budget enable social programs for his supporters.[207] According to *Los Angeles Times* columnist Jack Nelson, “[Wallace] has increased taxes, doubled the state's bonded indebtedness and boosted education and welfare spending.”[208] His economic policies did not

---

[204] Ibid.

[205] Jack Nelson, “Alabamian Ponders the Presidency: Wallace Could Be a ‘Chaotic’ Factor in 1968,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1966.

[206] Pamphlet, George Wallace, “There’s Not a Dime’s Worth of Difference,” CSA No. 20, 1960 in “Folder 34 - CSA Brochures,” Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[207] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 352.

align with the ardent economic conservatism of the New Right or far-rightists like Kent Courtney.[209] Wallace defended his liberal economic spending from conservative critics by asserting, "Where money has been borrowed in your State's name—it has been borrowed to invest in our children's future and in the highways of Alabama, so that Alabama may continue to build her arteries of transportation that feed the economic stream of our growing industry."[210] Yet Wallace tried to distance his own spending from Johnson's foreign aid programs. "[Alabama's tax money] has not been borrowed to build roads in Cuba or to furnish an Egyptian dictator with luxuries or to bolster the economy of a Communist country," Wallace bragged.[211] Jack Nelson observed that "rightists admire [Wallace's] relentless attacks on the federal government" despite his penchant for tax-and-spend dotage.[212] One such admirer was Kent Courtney.

After Wallace formally announced his candidacy Courtney transformed the CSA into the grassroots vanguard of the Wallace operation. Courtney supported Wallace doggedly, dismantling parts of his own organization to provide additional funding for Wallace's campaign. The CSA shuttered its radio programming in 1966 in order to fund "Wallace for

---

[208] Jack Nelson, "Alabamian Ponders the Presidency: Wallace Could Be a 'Chaotic' Factor in 1968," *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1966.

[209] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 352. For more on the movement for fiscal conservatism, see: Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Shane Hamilton, *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God and Wal-Mart* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2009).

[210] Pamphlet, "Wallace For President: Join in Freedom's Cause," CSA No. 12 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Jack Nelson, "Alabamian Ponders the Presidency: Wallace Could Be a 'Chaotic' Factor in 1968," *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1966.

President" clubs throughout the nation, and the organization started selling "Win With Wallace in 1968" buttons.[213] The *CSA Newsletter* provided members with constant updates regarding the minutiae of the election season, such as polls showing Wallace's favorable numbers in southern states.[214] Courtney also organized conventions throughout Louisiana in 1967, and he featured as the keynote speaker at the first Wallace for President Rally.[215]

Aside from encouraging CSA members to attend Wallace rallies, Courtney also started publishing *Wallace For President News*, which became the semi-official periodical of Wallace's campaign.[216] Courtney's publications pandered to the undercurrent of racism that permeated Wallace's supporter groups. For example, when Wallace visited Richmond, Virginia, in May 1967, he was greeted by a jeering crowd of civil rights advocates. Courtney detailed the encounter in *Wallace for President News*, describing one of the activists as a "buxom Negress" with "her hair standing on end like a fuzzy wuzzy" and "her eyes popping in all directions, her body contorted with a rhythmic rage."[217] The use of discriminatory and conspiratorial imagery attempted to contrast the supposed uprightness of Wallace's campaign with the perceived subversion of the civil rights movement. "If you closed your eyes you could image yourself in the deepest Africa far from any civilization," Courtney wrote, "These

---

[213] Ibid; Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscribers to Radio Edition, November 15, 1966 in "Folder 37 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1966," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[214] Kent Courtney, "Wallace Leads in 13 Southern States Over LBJ and Romney," *CSA Newsletter* in the *CSA Handbook*, May 16, 1967 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[215] CSA Press Release, March 27, 1967 in "Folder 38 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1967," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[216] Kent Courtney, "Gov. Wallace Hits Campaign Trail: C.S.A. Members Urged to Attend Events," *Wallace for President News* in the *CSA Handbook*, April 24, 1967 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[217] Kent Courtney, "On the Campaign Trail" Wallace Defines Treason," *Wallace for President News* in the *CSA Handbook*, May 16, 1967 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

chanting puppets of the red-black plague in America may have been trained at the Communist camp in Midvale, New Jersey, the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee, or at some local temple of the fanatically anti-white Black Muslims."[218] Despite the fact that none of these places were "communist camps," Courtney's imagery illustrated the linkage between anti-communism and segregationist, race-baiting rhetoric.[219]

Courtney's rhetoric mirrored that of Wallace, especially Wallace's willingness to deploy anti-communist conspiracy theories and "exploit the racial fears that gripped America."[220] Historian Dan T. Carter pointed out that Wallace's discriminatory platforms never materialized into a coherent philosophy, but it endeared Wallace to far-right conservatives like Kent Courtney. "Communists and their fellow-travelers are behind the cries of black power," Courtney wrote in a column that could have doubled as a Wallace speech, "They are behind the racial turmoil; they are behind the riots and the burnings of our cities."[221] An additional benefit to the harsh rhetoric was that it papered over the significant differences between Courtney and Wallace's fiscal ideals. Nevertheless, Courtney's fusion of "law and order" politics, race-baiting rhetoric, and anti-communist conspiracies appealed

---

[218] Ibid.

[219] For more on anti-communism and segregation, see: George Lewis, *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); Jeff Woods, *Black Struggle, Red Scare*. Historian Dan Carter argued that "only in the lurid settings of the 1950s Red Scare could Highlander be labeled a 'Communist training school,'" in *The Politics of Rage*, 158; Midvale Camp was created by the communists, but it served as an interracial children's summer camp rather than a training group. Orion A. Teal wrote about "The Moral Economy of Postwar Radical Interracial Summer Camping," in *The Economic Civil Rights Movement: African Americans and the Struggle for Economic Power* ed. Michael Ezra, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 60-61. A column in *Jet*, a periodical marketed toward African Americans, argued that Camp Midvale in New Jersey was targeted by segregationists because of its interracial character, Bobbie Barbee, "Negroes Help Smash Plot of White Hate Group," *Jet* (November 17, 1966): 17.

[220] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 297.

[221] Kent Courtney, "Kent Courtney Comments on the News: The Real Causes of the Riots and Revolution in America," *CSA Handbook*, undated in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

directly to the ultraconservatives undergirding Wallace's campaign.

Courtney's pandered to the national far-right networks that supported Wallace's candidacy. This coalition included activists like California Citizens Council official William I. Shearer to Wisconsin's Gerald L. K. Smith to nationwide Birch Society chapters.[222] Naturally, Wallace's organizers were especially dense in the South. Ultraconservatives like radio host Dan Smoot, Billy James Hargis, and former General Edwin A. Walker all voiced support for Wallace's presidential aspirations.[223] Courtney used the CSA's relationship with right-wing organizations and activists to increase the reach of the Wallace campaign. When the Wallace campaign asked for help in Connecticut, Kent and Phoebe Courtney sent out a letter to subscribers of *The Independent American* with instructions on how to join and support Wallace's political campaign locally.[224]

Courtney's operation constituted a far-right adjunct to Wallace's campaign, but Wallace appealed to even more unsavory ultraconservatives. "The Wallace campaign has attracted a substantially larger number of the hardcore radical right and bigots than the Goldwater campaign did four years ago, which was a high-water mark at that time," noted Wes McCune, a political analyst and Director of Group Research.[225] McCune also observed that the ultraconservatism undergirding Wallace's campaign even outpaced Thurmond's

---

[222] For more on Gerald L. K. Smith, see: Leo Ribuffo, *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983).

[223] Jack Nelson and Nicholas C. Chriss, "Radical Rightists Play Key Roles in Wallace Drive," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1968.

[224] Letter from Phoebe and Kent Courtney to Friend, April 18, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[225] Jack Nelson and Nicholas C. Chriss, "Radical Rightists Play Key Roles in Wallace Drive," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1968.

Dixiecrat Revolt of 1948 because Thurmond's support was largely confined to the South.[226] Wallace openly courted the militant, racist vote, especially among Klaverns and militias.[227] "Extremists do much of the hard work of organizing and raising funds for Wallace, but often remain in the background at rallies and seldom attract the attention of news media," wrote Jack Nelson and Nicholas C. Chriss of the *Los Angeles Time*, "Thus, the story of how substantially the radical right underpins his campaign has been slow to surface."[228] Indeed, the activism of men and women like Kent and Phoebe Courtney often went by unnoticed because of Wallace's bombast and the more vocal extremist supporter groups.

Wallace's overtures to far-rightists, combined with Courtney's grassroots operation, undercut support for the major political parties across the nation. Courtney chastised Nixon and the Republican Party for hewing too closely to the liberalism of Johnson and the Democrats. One of Courtney's pamphlets read, "Under no circumstances should Nixon be considered a Conservative or of any value to the Conservative cause."[229] This criticism continued throughout the election season with Courtney upbraiding Nixon for facilitating big government, supporting civil rights, promoting "phony anti-communism," and backing the United Nations.[230] However, Courtney's portrayal of Nixon as a "phony" anti-communist seemed disingenuous considering Nixon's legacy of fighting communism during the Alger

---

[226] For more on the Dixiecrat Revolt, see: Kari Frederickson, *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

[227] Jack Nelson and Nicholas C. Chriss, "Radical Rightists Play Key Roles in Wallace Drive," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1968.

[228] Ibid.

[229] Kent Courtney, "Nixon Selectively Rejected By Conservatives," *The CSA Newsletter* in the *CSA Handbook*, August 26, 1966 in "Folder 33 - CSA Handbook," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[230] Pamphlet, Conservative Society of America, "Nixon in '68?," CSA No. 5 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Hiss trial and as Eisenhower's Vice President.[231] The two issues that seemed to goad Courtney the most were Nixon's internationalist policies and support of civil rights during Eisenhower's administration. The CSA reprinted a 1964 pamphlet attacking Nixon during Wallace's campaign, in which Courtney argued, "There is however, nothing 'moderate' about approving, as he did, the illegal use of federal troops in Little Rock in 1957."[232] Even though Nixon had rebuilt his reputation after his devastating loss to John F. Kennedy in 1960, conservatives like Courtney continued to view Nixon as a creature of "Modern Republicanism."

The divided nature of the Democratic Party provided Courtney an equally fertile ground for aggressive red-baiting and anti-liberalism. Courtney referred to Lyndon Johnson's administration as a unique "brand of tyranny which in reality is state Socialism or national Socialism."[233] He blasted Vice President Humphrey as a "flaming liberal" that was "willing to destroy the Democrat Party in order to change it into an ultra left-wing party sympathetic to Communist causes."[234] While Courtney attacked Nixon's anti-communist credentials on one hand, on the other he slandered Democrats as outright communists. In one particularly libelous column Courtney asserted, "Hubert Humphrey is a man . . . who has spent his life promoting Socialism, promoting Communism, and dividing and destroying his party and his

---

[231] White, *The Making of the President 1968*, 167; Mason, *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*, 158; Perlstein, *Nixonland*, 29-33, 44-45.

[232] Pamphlet, Kent and Phoebe Courtney, "Nix on Nixon" 1964, Tax Fax No. 53 in "Folder 35 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1963," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[233] Letter from Kent Courtney to CSA Member, January 27, 1967 in "Folder 38 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1967," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[234] Kent Courtney, "Who Is Hubert Humphrey?," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 24 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

country."[235] Courtney also referred to Eugene McCarthy as "Red China's Trojan Horse," and frequently called McGovern "pro-Communist" for his involvement in the Food-for-Peace program, support of foreign aid, and advocacy for a negotiated solution to the Vietnam War.[236] Clearly Courtney rejected the policies and candidates of the two major political parties, and he harnessed the power of the CSA to publish and distribute propaganda to promote Wallace's campaign.

Courtney strenuously campaigned for Wallace, including accompanying Wallace on his tour of California in early 1968. During his travels Courtney noted the number of conservative activists, in particular CSA supporters, involved in the Wallace movement. In a letter to CSA members Courtney boasted that "members of the John Birch Society, of the [CSA], and subscribers of the Independent American [were] working in the Wallace Headquarters everywhere we went."[237] This prideful statement intended to drum up support from Courtney's constituency, but it also indicated the CSA's position within the grassroots vanguard of Wallace's campaign. By October 1968 Courtney received speaking invitations from other Wallace support groups, such as the Wallace for President Club in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Attendees were graced with Courtney's wishful speech titled "New Horizons for America: What the United States and the World Will Be Like After Wallace Has Been in Office Two Years."[238]

---

[235] Ibid.

[236] Kent Courtney, "Senator Eugene McCarthy: Red China's Trojan Horse," *CSA Info Memo*, No. 27 (undated): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU; Pamphlet, Kent Courtney, "Senator George McGovern: The 'Super Dove' Who Would Be President," CSA No. 25 in "Folder 34 - CSA Brochures," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[237] Letter from Kent Courtney to Member of the CSA, January 15, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Courtney's support for Wallace's campaign, along with the coalition of other far-right groups, underscored the significance of grassroots organizing to the far-right movement. Activists like Courtney were instrumental to galvanizing a national constituency and strengthening Wallace's national organization, which facilitated the former governor's rise in the polls.[239] Even though Courtney did not advocate violence, contemporary observers viewed the ultraconservative wing of Wallace's campaign as a liability. Contemporary analyst Jack Nelson believed that "[Wallace] fears the extremist label would kill him as a significant national figure."[240] Similarly, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak of *The Washington Post* argued, "Wallace's big problem is not LBJ but his own supporters in the lunatic right."[241] Without the activism on the right-wing fringe, however, Wallace's campaign might have faltered much earlier than the month before the election.

Ultimately multiple issues damaged Wallace's campaign, like the resuscitation of Hubert Humphrey's campaign, Strom Thurmond's support for Nixon, and the persistence of extremism in Wallace's ranks. In a speech in Salt Lake City on September 30, Humphrey broke away from the LBJ's party line on Vietnam, inching toward advocating a peaceful resolution. This led to a flood of support from northeastern labor unions and even won over some of the die-hard anti-war advocates.[242] While Humphrey solidified his liberal credentials

---

[238] Letter from Kent Courtney to Members of CSA, Subscribers to The Conservative Journal, Subscribers to The Independent American, October 11, 1968 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[239] Scholars have traditionally ignored or downplayed the impact of radical conservatives, the angry white agitators that Dan Carter ominously called the "night people," in *The Politics of Rage*, 362-363.

[240] Jack Nelson, "Alabamian Ponders the Presidency: Wallace Could Be a 'Chaotic' Factor in 1968," *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1966.

[241] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Inside Report: George Wallace Points North," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, February 3, 1967.

[242] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 414-416.

Nixon drifted slightly rightward in order to pick up swing conservative voters. Nixon reiterated his opposition to "forced bussing" in early October, and he advocated the "freedom-of-choice" education plan that reinforced de facto segregation.[243] Nixon's rightward turn took voters from Wallace, but even more detrimental to Wallace's campaign was Strom Thurmond's continued loyalty to Nixon. Thurmond canvassed southern states, detailing the similarities between Nixon and Wallace, and, more importantly, warning that voting for Wallace might ensure a victory for Humphrey.[244] At a campaign stop Thurmond cautioned Georgia crowds, "I don't know of a state of the South the third-party candidate will carry."[245]

Thurmond's advocacy shifted the Upper South and Border South toward Nixon, but the precipitous decline of Wallace's poll numbers in October was partially self-inflicted. Wallace tapped General Curtis LeMay as his running partner in early October, which he intended to be a nod to his ultraconservative supporters. Courtney provided relatively positive coverage of LeMay's nuclear solution for the Vietnam question.[246] However, Theodore H. White noted that LeMay "[brought] no strength or eloquence to the Wallace ticket" and risked upsetting the "enlisted man" atmosphere Wallace fostered.[247] LeMay's off-the-cuff speaking style and aggressive advocacy of nuclear weaponry scared voters and earned the Wallace-LeMay ticket a pithy nickname from Hubert Humphrey: "the Bombsy

---

[243] Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 363.

[244] United Press International, "Thurmond: Nixon's View Like Wallace's," *Boston Globe*, September 15, 1968.

[245] "Thurmond Says Wallace Cannot Win," *The Hartford Courant*, October 20, 1968.

[246] "Tell the North Vietnamese: 'Get out of town, we're going to drop the bomb' says Retired Gen. Curtis LeMay," *New Orleans States-Item* in *CSA Info Memo*, No. 11 (February 8, 1967): 1 in "Folder - CSA Memos," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[247] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 428-429.

twins."[248] The numbers poll numbers confirmed that LeMay was a disaster, and Wallace's poll numbers plummeted in the face of Humphrey's renaissance and Thurmond's support of Nixon. In September voters in favor of Wallace had polled as high as twenty-one percent, but after LeMay joined the ticket that number dropped to eighteen before settling at thirteen.[249] As political scientist Michael Nelson noted, LeMay's appointment "crippled" Wallace's campaign.[250]

On Election Day, November 5, 1968, roughly ten million Americans (13.5 percent) cast a ballot for George Wallace and the American Party.[251] Richard Nixon barely edged out Hubert Humprey in the popular vote, but the electoral margin was much greater, with Nixon claiming 301 (56 percent) votes from electors.[252] Yet Wallace's fate revealed that his ideologies were not sectional. He received 4.1 million votes, out of 9.9 million, from states outside of the South.[253] Wallace's campaign appealed to a constituency of disillusioned Americans, mostly white, working-class men. Theodore H. White concluded that one result of the 1968 election was an undeniable "swing to the right, an expression of a vague sentiment for a government oriented to caution and restraint."[254] Dan Carter referred to George Wallace as the "most influential loser in twentieth-century American politics"

---

[248] Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 360.

[249] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 425.

[250] Nelson, *Resilient America*, xvi.

[251] McGillivray, Scammon and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 21.

[252] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 462. McGillivray, Scammon and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 21.

[253] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 430. McGillivray, Scammon and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 21.

[254] White, *The Making of the President, 1968*, 465.

because his "politics of rage . . . had moved from the fringes of our society to center stage."[255] Wallace's loss, despite augering future gains, must have been bitter fruit for his most avid supporters.

The poor showing stunned Kent Courtney and immediately after the election Courtney lashed out at Wallace's campaign for having "a lot of slogans, but no solutions" and failing to organize effectively.[256] Courtney also excoriated Strom Thurmond for supporting Nixon. "The American people during the election were fed THE BIG LIE," Courtney bemoaned in a CSA mailer, "They were told that a vote for Wallace was a vote for Humphrey, when, as a matter of fact, a vote for Nixon was a vote for the continuation of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration."[257] Ultimately, Courtney blamed Nixon's victory and Wallace's lack of support on Strom Thurmond. One month after the election Courtney penned a scathing letter to Richard Nixon: "United States Senator Strom Thurmond deserves the highest kind of political appreciation and reward that you can bestow upon him, because it was largely through his efforts that the states of Florida, South and North Carolina, and Virginia were carried by you, instead of by George Wallace."[258] In some ways Courtney's assertion was correct. Thurmond's support of Nixon and fear-mongering of Humphrey's liberalism definitely hurt Wallace's campaign.[259] On the other hand, Wallace's campaign

---

[255] Dan Carter, *The Politics of Rage*, 468.

[256] George Lardner, Jr., "Wallace on Political Future: 'We'll Have to Play It by Ear,'" *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, November 7, 1968; Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Friends, "Put None But Americans On Guard," December 23, 1968, 2 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[257] Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Friend, November 15, 1968, 1 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[258] Letter from Kent Courtney to Richard Nixon, December 6, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

was well-organized for a third-party outfit, and Courtney's critiques appeared especially sour since the CSA was partially responsible for Wallace's grassroots momentum.

Wallace's decision to court extremists, like Goldwater before him, damaged his chances in a national election. Contemporary analyst Nicholas C. Chriss noted that Wallace's platforms were often superseded by "behind-the-scenes power plays among right-wing extremists, and bickering over John Birch Society issues."[260] *Los Angeles Times* columnist Jack Nelson suggested that support from other far-right opponents of integration like Orval Faubus, the Liberty Lobby, and local Klaverns surely alienated voters.[261] Michael Nelson agreed with this view because Wallace's campaign organizations at the state level were "dominated by self-nominated extremists from groups such as the right-wing John Birch Society and Minutemen in the North and the segregationist White Citizens' Council in the South."[262] While Thurmond's support of Nixon and the renaissance of Humphrey's campaigns contributed to Wallace's defeat, the extremists that built Wallace's national constituency also factored into his poor showing.

Wallace's loss was also a personal defeat for Courtney, but Courtney attempted to use the failure as an opportunity to continue his organizing efforts. "[Wallace] didn't have a big enough political organization at the grass roots to get out the vote and count it for him," Courtney proposed in a CSA mass mailer, "Therefore, we have to expand our organizational

---

[259] For example, Thurmond's home state of South Carolina favored Nixon over Wallace by less than 40,000 votes in 1968. Considering that Goldwater took South Carolina comfortably in 1964, Thurmond's support would have easily put Wallace over Nixon. McGillivray, Scammon and Cook, *America at the Polls, 1960-2004*, 21.

[260] Nicholas C. Chriss, "Members in Free-for-All at Wallace Convention," *Los Angeles Times*, February 3, 1969.

[261] Jack Nelson, "Alabamian Ponders the Presidency: Wallace Could Be a 'Chaotic' Factor in 1968," *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1966.

[262] Nelson, *Resilient America*, 205.

activities and increase the number of radio and television outlets which carry the news of the new party movement."[263] Courtney's capricious nature led him to attack Wallace's platforms after the election; he contended that fifty percent of Wallace's domestic policies were "too socialistic" at an Association of Wallace Voters meeting.[264] In particular, Courtney took issue with Wallace's fiscal liberalism and his support of Social Security and farm subsidies.[265] This fit the pattern of Courtney's activism. Courtney willingly backed right-wing candidates with whom he did not entirely agree, like Goldwater in 1964 or Wallace in 1968, and then repudiated their more liberal policies after the campaigns foundered.

Even in defeat Courtney believed in third-party politics. After all, Wallace won forty-eight percent of the popular vote in Louisiana, illustrating the appeal of ultraconservatism and the effectiveness of Courtney's organizing in his home state.[266] In the wake of the election Wallace's supporters moved to make the American Party a permanent institution. Kent Courtney was elected to the national committee, and he changed his official party affiliation from Independent to The American Party in Louisiana as a testament to his third-party principles. Stealing a line from Wallace, Courtney proclaimed, "I am joining The American Party of Louisiana because there is in reality not a dime's worth of difference between the programs and policies of the Democrat and Republican Parties."[267] Courtney contended that

---

[263] Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Friends, "Put None But Americans On Guard," December 23, 1968, 2 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[264] Nicholas C. Chriss, "Wallace Backers Balk at Leader's Principles: Many at Dallas Meeting Contend Domestic Policy of '68 Candidate 'Too Socialistic,'" *Los Angeles Times*, February 2, 1969.

[265] Arlen J. Large, "Wallace's Loyalists Meet to Shape Plans For Another Try in '72: Dallas Group Scores Nixon, Pledges Local Races in '70; But Rival Factions Bicker," *Wall Street Journal*, February 3, 1969.

[266] "Wallace Party Organizes in La.," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, December 3, 1968.

[267] CSA Press Release, December 9, 1968, 1 in "Folder 30 - CSA-Correspondence, 1961-1965," Box 5 - CSA Materials (1), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Americans will "suffer" under Nixon's administration just as they did under Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson. Clinging to hope after the election, Courtney wrote to his CSA constituency, "Nixon doesn't have a chance of getting re-elected in 1972 unless he adopts, or appears to adopt, the Conservative philosophy of George Wallace, and puts into action programs which will slow down the Communist conspiracy."[268]

Courtney's brave countenance after Wallace's defeat masked the financial problems plaguing the CSA. The CSA mass mailers had always asked for donation money, but the requests became more urgent because supporting Wallace's campaign nearly bankrupted the CSA. "Now we must pay our bills and settle up with our credit tours, repay our loans to the banks, and we have got to do it in the next few days or we will be forced to stop everything," Courtney wrote to CSA members in September, "I know that some of you may criticize me for imitating our government by going into debt, but the job just had to be done"[269] The CSA spent thousands of dollars promoting, publishing, and organizing for Wallace's campaign, and by late 1968 the organization was $34,000 in debt.[270] The organization limped into the 1970s but political changes, especially the growth of mainstream conservatism, rendered Courtney's third-party agitation obsolete.

The failure of Wallace's campaign also impacted Courtney's personal life. Kent and Phoebe Courtney legally separated in 1967, and officially divorced on April 21, 1972.[271]

---

[268] Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Subscriber, November 25, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[269] Letter from Kent Courtney to Friend, September 23, 1968 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[270] Mass Letter from Kent Courtney to Friends, "Put None But Americans On Guard," December 23, 1968, 3 in "Folder 39 - CSA Notebook Materials, 1968," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

[271] Biographical Data Sheet in "Folder 109 - Biography," Box 6 - CSA Materials (2), KCC, CGHRC, NWSU.

Kent Courtney continued stumping for the principles of the American Party in the build-up to the 1972 election, while Phoebe resumed the production of right-wing literature after relocating to Littleton, Colorado. Kent hoped Wallace would reprise his role as the American Party candidate in 1972, but Wallace decided to run for the Democratic Party's nomination rather than waging another third-party campaign. An assassination attempt by Arthur Bremer severely injured Wallace, dashing his campaign hopes, and George McGovern received the Democratic nomination in 1972.[272] However, Wallace's campaigns precipitated many of the themes of the New Right that emerged in the 1980s, and Courtney's strategies in 1968 indicated the importance of grassroots activism to the consolidation of conservative voters.[273]

Radical conservatives are often easily dismissed by contemporaries and historians as ineffective actors, but Courtney's activism illustrated that the far-right played a role, often as the villain, during the rise of midcentury conservatism. Courtney did not initiate the far-right surge of the mid-twentieth century, but he helped establish a network of ultraconservative organizations and activists that fought against the liberal consensus. Courtney's Conservative Society of America joined ranks with the Birch Society, Christian Crusade, and other groups trying to rectify the perceived leftist tilt of U.S. politics. Courtney's activism during the Goldwater and Wallace campaigns underscored the influence of grassroots coordination, especially in terms of building a right-wing base for future elections. The fact that the CSA flourished in the Sunbelt underscored that Courtney's anti-communism appealed to the

[272] Carter, *Politics of Rage*, 446-448.

[273] Ibid., 466.

region's far-right conservatives. Additionally, Courtney's rhetoric, like that of Welch and the Birch Society, acted as a foil for the Republican Party and helped to legitimize mainstream conservatism.

Courtney failed to get a "true" conservative in the White House, but he helped build local right-wing constituencies and, most importantly, his third-party aspirations influenced the strategies of the conservative revolution in the later decades of the twentieth century. His activism also underscored the gradual transformation within conservative ranks as mainstream conservatives eventually shunned the far-right's anti-communism for the religious and social conservatism epitomized by Ronald Reagan. Nevertheless, Courtney's anti-communism, hawkish foreign policies, antipathy toward liberalism, and coded race-baiting placed him within the fringe vanguard of modern conservatism. More prominent right-wingers like Ronald Reagan and evangelical Billy Graham spoke to a broader constituency, but Courtney's right-wing network provided an outlet for millions of Americans disillusioned by the direction of the United States in the mid-twentieth century.[274] Courtney's ideologies and organizational tactics galvanized the right-wing grassroots in an era when conservatism finally emerged from the wilderness.

[274] For more on the Religious Right and Billy Graham, see: Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*; Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015); Grant Wacker, *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2014); Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Conclusion

The Impact of the Radical Right

The organizational strategies and anti-communist, conspiratorial rhetoric of Radical Right leaders and groups highlighted the role of ultraconservatives within the mainstream conservative movement of the mid-twentieth century. Ultraconservatives impacted this movement in three major ways: by focusing on the Sunbelt as a new theater of political engagement, by building up grassroots activism, and by acting as a foil for mainstream conservatism. The U.S. economy boomed after World War II, leading to suburbanization and the development of the Sunbelt. The region became a stronghold for far-right groups like the John Birch Society and the Christian Crusade because anti-liberal, anti-statist traditions meshed with the Sunbelt's evangelical, affluent populace. Ultraconservatives presented a radical, but appealing, version of these socio-political mores, and emphasized grassroots activism as an avenue to achieve conservative gains. Local activism built up a numerically small, dedicated constituency of ideological warriors, but the red-baiting, bigoted rhetoric of far-right leaders led mainstream right-wingers, worried about the image of conservatism, to disavow the conspiratorial thinking of the Radical Right. Challenging, and eventually ostracizing, conspiracy theories and overt segregationism helped legitimize mainstream conservatism during the 1950s and 1960s. This legacy, of lending credibility to mainstream conservatism by making it seem less radical in comparison, constituted the most far-reaching and significant impact of the Radical Right.

The growth of the Sunbelt coincided with the rise of far-right politics during the mid-twentieth century. The Sunbelt region—roughly the southern half of the United States,

stretching from Florida and North Carolina on the east coast to the middle of California on the west coast—experienced rapid suburbanization, economic development, and population growth in the post-WWII era.[1] This economic maturation, animated by defense spending and highway construction, created a constituency typified by a resistance to change, a belief in entrepreneurialism, a distrust of economic regulations, and a devotion to "bootstrap" politics. These values defined Sunbelt conservatism.[2] Christianity augmented Sunbelt conservatism as fundamentalist evangelicals spread from the southern Bible Belt to the west coast.[3] Lisa McGirr defined Sunbelt "suburban warriors" as "men and women who rejected the liberal vision and instead championed individual economic freedom and a staunch social conservatism."[4] Sean P. Cunningham noted, "As the Sunbelt grew, many of its residents became increasingly committed to fighting communism abroad and protecting the free market at home."[5] Anxiety toward communism, both domestically and globally, stimulated the growth of Sunbelt conservatism.[6]

The ideologies of the Radical Right, particularly anti-communist conspiracy theories, flourished within the Sunbelt's right-wing environment.[7] The racial politics of the Deep

---

[1] Richard M. Bernard and Bradley R. Rice, eds., *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth Since World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 11-15; Sean P. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 7-10.

[2] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 18, 271. Bernard and Rice, eds., *Sunbelt Cities*, 20. Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 11-12.

[3] Darren Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011).

[4] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 12.

[5] Cunningham, *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt*, 18.

[6] Ibid., 17-18.

South complemented the Sunbelt's adherence to traditional cultural mores, especially after the initiation of the civil rights movement. Many ultraconservative groups targeted the anti-communist, traditionalist disposition of Sunbelt constituencies. The John Birch Society's headquarters resided in Massachusetts, but the core of its membership spanned the Sunbelt. The citizens of Texas and California, in particular, were fertile constituencies for the conspiratorial anti-statism proffered by Welch's Birch Society. J. Evetts Haley's leadership in the Jeffersonian Democrats of Texas illustrated an early manifestation of the ultraconservative backlash against FDR's New Deal, and his 1956 gubernatorial campaign highlighted the internecine struggles of the Democratic Party and the fight to maintain white supremacy and segregation. Haley's 1964 book, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, helped bring far-right conspiracy theories and Sunbelt dissatisfaction with Johnson's liberalism into the mainstream. Similarly, Kent Courtney's third-party activism highlighted the disillusion many Sunbelt residents felt toward the federal government and the two major parties. Courtney's Conservative Society of America supported two of the most influential conservative campaigns of the 1960s Sunbelt: Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater's (R-AZ) GOP nomination in 1964 and Alabama governor George Wallace's third-party crusade in 1968. The political campaigns waged by far-right activists often failed to achieve electoral victories, but their ideologies and strategies helped shape the core tenets of Sunbelt conservatism.

---

[7] Samuel C. Hyde, Jr., ed., *Sunbelt Revolution: The Historical Progression of the Civil Rights Struggle in the Gulf South, 1866-2000* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 3. Many other historians have discussed the importance of the Sunbelt and the Deep South to modern conservatism. For more, see: Joseph Crespino, *Strom Thurmond's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012); Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sun Belt*; Matthew Lassiter, *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); George Lewis, *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Joseph Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008); McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*.

The mid-century ultraconservative movement also appealed to the religious conservatism of the Sunbelt. The proliferation of southern evangelicalism politicized the Sunbelt's religious constituencies. Historian Darren Dochuk pointed out that many evangelical ministers "had no desire to operate on the margins" and became "convinced that they occupied the front line in a fight against liberalism."[8] This religious fervor combined with the anti-communist zeitgeist of the Cold War, creating a fruitful atmosphere for ultraconservative ministries. Billy James Hargis's combination of anti-communism and religious fundamentalism gained a following among the Sunbelt's evangelical constituency, and his Christian Crusade ministry provided a platform for disseminating Hargis's far-right views.[9] Hargis did not achieve the mainstream popularity of other ministers like mainstream evangelical Billy Graham, or even fellow far-rightist Fred Schwarz, but he pioneered new methods of grassroots activism and fundraising that galvanized the Sunbelt's fundamentalist population.[10] Similarly, Protestants and Other Americans United (POAU) appealed to the latent religious xenophobia and the growing convergence of religion and politics among Sunbelt constituencies.[11] POAU exploited the prejudices of Sunbelt constituencies, especially the anti-Catholicism that permeated southern culture.[12] For example, POAU

---

[8] Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, xxii, xxi.

[9] Ibid., 237; Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*, 195.

[10] Dochuk, *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt*, 230; Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 186-187.

[11] Kevin Kruse, *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), xvi; G. Scott Thomas, *A New World to be Won: John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and the Tumultuous Year of 1960* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011), 34, 227.

[12] As an example, Texas was a hotbed of anti-Catholic activity during the 1920s through the activities of the Ku Klux Klan. This legacy continued to shape Texas culture during the presidential election of 1960: Charles C. Alexander, *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), 14, 17, 28-29, 255; W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election* (Lawrence:

targeted Kennedy during the 1960 election by publishing and distributing anti-Catholic literature and organizing the campaign for anti-Catholic sermons on Reformation Sunday.[13] Groups like the Christian Crusade and POAU built a following among Sunbelt right-wingers through local outreach, mass publications, and national media strategies. The religious far-right, epitomized by men like Billy James Hargis, and the political ultraconservatism of groups like the Birch Society established a legacy of grassroots activism that capitalized on the Sunbelt's rightward tilt.

The Radical Right mattered because the leaders emphasized grassroots participation and stimulated local activism. Far-right activists expanded their presence at the local levels through a variety of methods, usually via mass media strategies, conspiratorial rhetoric, and by establishing national organizations with state and local chapters. Robert Welch's conspiratorial rhetoric galvanized far-right conservatives to fight against liberalism. Birch Society chapters flourished in middle-class, conservative hotbeds like Orange County, California, and its front organizations, like the Committee Against Summit Entanglements, engaged members in campaigns against issues like foreign diplomacy and segregation.[14] Billy James Hargis barnstormed across the nation promoting communist conspiracies, and his publications and radio shows claimed a following numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Protestants and Other Americans United tapped into underlying veins of religious bigotry during the 1960 election, and their periodicals reached over one hundred thousand readers. J. Evetts Haley helped foment grassroots activism by organizing mass mailing campaigns

---

University Press of Kansas), 2009; Robert Wuthnow, *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible-Belt State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014), 10, 115-116.

[13] Thomas, *A New World to be Won*, 227.

[14] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 76-77.

through Texans for America, and multiple outlets, including GOP branches and Birch Society chapters, disseminated his polemical book, *A Texan Looks at Lyndon*, during the 1964 election.[15] Kent Courtney and the CSA created Political Action Units across the nation to stoke local action, which was supported by his publishing empire and radio presence. The leadership of the Radical Right emphasized grassroots activism as a crucial theater of political engagement, which helped create a new generation, or at least attuned a new sector, of battle-hardened conservative warriors.

The far-right achieved little success at the ballot box, leading historian Sean P. Cunningham to describe its efforts in the Lone Star State as a "miserable failure."[16] However, the strategies of the far-right, like mass mailing campaigns, solidified an active constituency of hardline conservatives and influenced future conservative campaigns, which represented at least a small measure of success. For example, Billy James Hargis was on the "bottom floor of religious-political broadcasting" and pioneered mass fundraising tactics, which animated the grass roots and broadened his ministry's outreach.[17] The Conservative Society of America, John Birch Society, and Christian Crusade swapped mailing lists to facilitate networking and foster local activism. These strategies did not remain confined to the far-right, as historian Jonathan Schoenwald noted, "The strategies and tactics pioneered

---

[15] Donald Janson, "Extremist Book Sales Soar Despite Criticism in G. O. P.: Paperbacks Pushed by Goldwater Camp in Many Areas" *New York Times*, Sunday, October 4, 1964 in "Folder - 1964 II," Wallet - Correspondence and Clippings LBJ 1964 and undated, Box 1, Series III-E - Misc, J. Evetts Haley Collection (JEH), Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas (HML).

[16] Sean P. Cunningham, "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits: The Power, Influence, and Failure of the Postwar Texas Far Right," in *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*, eds. David O'Donald Cullen and Kyle G. Wilkison (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 113.

[17] Heather Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*, 186-187.

by extremists were often co-opted by the mainstream and updated to increase their efficiency."[18]

Ultraconservatives owed much of their grassroots success to the continued influence of red-baiting rhetoric. During the 1950s, and even into the 1960s, the ideological populism of anti-communism capitalized on long-standing anti-statist traditions. The modern history of anti-leftism in the United States dated back to Gilded Age labor conflagrations and the post-WWI Red Scare, but the growth of the Radical Right accelerated during the anti-communist consensus of the 1950s.[19] The crystallization of the Cold War, investigations of Joseph McCarthy, rise of business and religious conservatism, and inflammation of southern racial issues created an environment that abetted conspiratorial rhetoric. The anxiety toward communist subversion ebbed during the late 1950s, which led contemporary analysts like Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset to characterize staunch anti-communists of this period as anxiety-riddled kooks driven by status concerns.[20] Yet anti-communism continued to appeal to the antistatist populism of right-wingers. Far-rightists equated liberalism with communism, which appealed to citizens disillusioned with the direction of U.S. politics; however, red-baiting rhetoric fell out of favor during the 1960s and mainstream

---

[18] Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 260.

[19] Historian M. J. Heale defined the anti-communist consensus of the 1950s: "The principal organs of government, the major political parties, the trades union movement, leading church spokesmen, and many public and private institutions across the land were agreed that Communists had no legitimate role in American society." M. J. Heale, *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 167.

[20] Daniel Bell, "Interpretations of American Politics (1955)," and Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Sources of the 'Radical Right' (1955)" in *The New American Right*, ed. Daniel Bell, (New York: Criterion Books, 1955); Heale, *American Anti-Communism*, 198.

conservatism moved away from irresponsible conspiracy theories, which confirmed the electoral limitations of ultraconservatism during the Cold War.

The conspiratorial, red-baiting rhetoric of the mid-century Radical Right acted as a foil for mainstream conservatism, helping to differentiate the "responsible right" from the far-right extremists.[21] The conservative movement disowned the conspiratorial mindset of men like Welch and Hargis, which lent credibility to the values of the New Right during the 1970s. The New Right coalesced around a distrust of welfare spending, a firm belief in the free market, the growth of "family values" rhetoric, the rise of religious conservatism, and an antipathy toward taxation and large government.[22] Anti-communist rhetoric and blatant segregationism seemed out of touch by the late 1960s, alienating the Radical Rightists of the 1950s and 1960s from the conservative mainstream.

---

[21] Jonathan Schoenwald argued that the presence of right-wing extremism "outside of the core of the GOP made the party seem more judicious:" Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing*, 257. On the other hand, Sean P. Cunningham more cautiously noted that the "wealth and paranoia" of the Texas far-right might have influenced mainstream conservatism, but he questions the validity of a continuous strain of ultraconservatism from the Cold War to the modern day, in "The Paranoid Style and Its Limits: The Power, Influence, and Failure of the Postwar Texas Far Right," 115. Rick Perlstein contended that the breaking point was William F. Buckley's attempt to distance the Birch Society from the conservative movement, in *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 156-157. Many other historians similarly contend that the Radical Right legitimized mainstream conservatism: Hendershot, *What's Fair on the Air?*, 215; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 76-77; D. J. Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 189; Daniel K. Williams, *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4-7.

[22] The historiography charting the coalescence of the New Right has focused on grassroots actors, mainstream politicians, and ideological shifts. Donald Critchlow pointed out the importance of grassroots activists, in this case Phyllis Schlafly, in constructing the conservative movement, in *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005). William Link and Sean Wilentz contended that prominent conservatives, in this case Jesse Helms and Ronald Reagan, embodied the ascent of modern conservatism, in Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008) and Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: Harper, 2008). Laura Kalman argued that the New Right coalesced, in part, because the American public, already skeptical after Watergate, tired of the crisis of the 1970s, in *Right Star Rising: A New Politics, 1974-1980* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010). Dominic Sandbrook focused on the angry populism that propelled Americans away from the liberalism of the 1960s, in *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011). Robert O. Self charted the transition toward family values ideals as the energizing force behind the ascent of modern conservatism, in *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012).

This disaffection legitimized conservative political thought by casting the far-right as irresponsible in comparison to the mainstream tenets of the New Right. During the 1950s, anti-communist rhetoric served as a powerful weapon for attacking liberalism and building up the conservative base, but by the early 1960s the efficacy of anti-communism waned. Mainstream right-winger William F. Buckley, Jr., signaled this shift by openly rebuking the conspiratorial worldview of Welch and the Birch Society in the pages of the *National Review.*[23] Conservatives like Buckley grew concerned that right-wing extremism and conspiratorial ideologies would damage the legitimacy of the right-wing movement, but they did not want to spurn the far-right's grassroots warriors.[24] As historian D. J. Mulloy noted, "The Birch Society had demonstrated that there was a large, active, and highly motivated constituency for conservatism even in the midst—or perhaps because of—liberalism's seeming ascendancy."[25] Many ultraconservatives funneled into the mainstream movement as right-wingers united under the banner of the Republican Party. The Radical Right's constituency followed as conservatism shifted away from anti-communism and toward the "family values" conservatism of the New Right.

Additionally, the gradual transition away from segregationist rhetoric bolstered the credibility of the mainstream conservative movement. Mainstream conservatives eschewed the overt racism of far-right southern segregationists during the 1960s and 1970s, fearing it might damage the public's perception of right-leaning values.[26] The 1956 Texas

---

[23] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 77-80.

[24] Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 140.

[25] Mulloy, *The World of the John Birch Society*, 189.

[26] Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 186-187; Lowndes, *From the New Deal to the New Right*, 5.

gubernatorial election provided early evidence of this transition because segregationist candidates J. Evetts Haley and former governor W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel's were soundly defeated while their opponents benefited from avoiding overt race-baiting rhetoric.[27] George Wallace captured a significant percentage of the vote as a third party presidential candidate in 1968, but his background as a staunch segregationist turned away many voters.[28] The New Right avoided these pitfalls by moving toward more subtle, coded racial rhetoric that appealed to a "broader, non-sectional audience."[29] Previously staunch segregationists like Wallace and Strom Thurmond moderated their positions in the 1970s to reflect the shifting conservative consensus.[30] J. Evetts Haley transitioned from a southern Democratic segregationist to a Reagan Republican, and he urged former George Wallace supporters in Texas to shift toward the GOP.[31] Ostracizing the anti-communist and segregationist rhetoric of the Radical Right allowed mainstream conservatism to consolidate the right-wing movement that had flourished, in part, through the grassroots efforts of ultraconservatives.

Ronald Reagan's landslide victory in 1980 solidified mainstream conservatism as the dominant political force in U.S. politics. The banishment of the Radical Right influenced conservatism's transformation from a marginalized ideology to an electoral juggernaut. The far-right lost nearly all of their elections during the mid-twentieth century, save for the

---

[27] George Norris Green, *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 174-175.

[28] Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 466.

[29] Lewis, *Massive Resistance*, 187.

[30] Sandbrook, *Mad as Hell*, 134.

[31] Newspaper Clipping, Roland Lindsey, "'Texan Looks at Lyndon' Author Backing Reagan," *The Monitor* (McAllen, Texas), July 8, 1976 in "Folder-14 - Clippings, Misc.," Series-K - Articles About JEH, JEH, HML; Magazine Clipping, "Names in the News," *Conservative Digest* (July 1976): 23 in "Folder-14 - Clippings, Misc.," Series-K - Articles About JEH, JEH, HML.

occasional victory by a Bircher like Representative John Rousselot (R-CA), but their influence extended far beyond the ballot box. During the 1950s and 1960s ultraconservative activists and organizations tapped into a vein of anti-statist, anti-communist populism that established active right-wing constituencies, especially within the burgeoning Sunbelt. The grassroots agitations of the far-right empowered conservatives to fight against liberalism, even as the rhetoric of anti-communism and segregationism faded from use, and the organizational and fundraising strategies transferred over to a new generation of mainstream right-wingers. Ultimately, the Radical Right provided an outlet for disillusioned right-wingers until the mainstream conservative movement coalesced within the Republican Party.

Bibliography

Archives

Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas
- Central Files
  - Alphabetical Files
  - President's Personal Files
- Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Post-Presidential Papers, 1961-1969
  - 1962-63 Signature Files
  - 1965 Signature Files
  - 1965 Principal Files
  - 1966 Signature Files
  - Augusta-Walter Reed Series
  - Convenience Files, 1945-1969
  - Secretary's Series
  - Special Names Series
- Mamie Doud Eisenhower Papers, 1894-1970
  - 1964 Files Series
- Office of Dwight D. Eisenhower
  - Principal Files
- Papers of Leonard V. Finder, 1930-1969
  - Awards & Contests-Calif. Newspaper Publishers Assn.
  - Extremist Assns: John Birch Society

Haley Memorial Library and History Center, Midland, Texas
- James Evetts Haley Papers
  - Current Events and Affairs Series
  - Series III-A: Jeffersonian Democrats
  - Series III-B: Texas For America
  - Series III-C: Governor's Campaign
  - Series III-D: Institute of Americanism
  - Series III-E: Misc.
  - Series IV: Literary Productions

Cammie G. Henry Research Center, Northwest State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana
- Kent Courtney Collection
  - Domestic Policy
  - CSA Materials
  - Subject Files
  - Correspondence
  - Pamphlets

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum
Pre-Presidential Files
Presidential Campaign Files, 1960
Religious Issue Files of James Wine

Princeton Theological Seminary Library
The Carl McIntire Manuscript Collection

Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas
Marshall Formby Papers
J. Evetts Haley Papers
George Mahon Papers
Texas Tech – Scrapbooks

Special Collections, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas
Billy James Hargis Papers

FBI Freedom of Information Act Files

Robert H. W. Welch Jr.

Newspapers

Boston Globe
Chicago Defender
Chicago Tribune
Christian Science Monitor
Dallas Morning News
Hartford Courant
Houston Chronicle
Houston Post
Los Angeles Times
New York Times
The Sun (Baltimore, Maryland)
Washington Post

Published Primary Sources

Blanshard, Paul. *American Freedom and Catholic Power*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1950.

Broyles, J. Allen. *The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.

Courtney, Kent and Phoebe. *The Silencers: How the Liberals are Suppressing Conservative Opposition in the U.S.A.* New Orleans, La.: Conservative Society of America, 1965.

Courtney, Phoebe. *The Federal Monster: How Federal Regulations, Decrees and Edicts are Strangling the Free-enterprise System and Personal Liberties*. Littleton, Colo.: The Independent American Newspaper, 1976.

Creedon, Lawrence P. and William D. Falcon. *United for Separation: an Analysis of POAU Assaults on Catholicism*. Milwaukee, Wisc.: Bruce Publishing Company, 1959.

Epstein, Benjamin R. and Arnold Forster. *Report on the John Birch Society, 1966*. New York: Vintage Books, 1966.

———. *The Radical Right: A Report on the John Birch Society and Its Allies*. New York: Random House, 1966.

Haley, J. Evetts. *A Texan Looks at Lyndon: A Study in Illegitimate Power*. Canyon, Tex.: Palo Duro Press, 1964.

———. *Charles Goodnight: Cowman and Plainsman*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949.

Hargis, Billy James. *Communist America . . . Must It Be?*. Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1960.

———. *Is the School House the Proper Place to Teach Raw Sex?*. Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1968.

———. *The Real Extremists: The Far Left*. Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1964.

———. *The Facts About Communism and Our Churches*. Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1962.

———. *Why I Fight for a Christian America*. New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1974.

Johnson, Lyndon B. *The Vantage Point: Perspectives on the Presidency, 1963-1969*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1971.

Lowell, C. Stanley. *Embattled Wall—Americans United: An Idea and a Man*. Washington, D.C.: Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1966.

O'Brien, Father William. "General Clark's Nomination as Ambassador to the Vatican: American Reaction." *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 44, No. 4 (January 1959): 421-439.

Penabaz, Fernando. *Crusading Preacher from the West*. Tulsa, Okla.: Christian Crusade, 1965.

Weeks, Oliver Douglas. *Texas in the 1960 Presidential Election*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961.

Welch, Robert H. W. *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. Belmont, Mass: John Birch Society, 1959.

———. *The Life of John Birch*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1954

———. *The New Americanism and Other Speeches*. Boston: Western Islands, 1966.

———. *The Politician*. Belmont, Mass.: Western Islands, 1963.

Secondary Sources

Alexander, Charles C. *The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995

Allitt, Patrick. *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993.

Ambrose, Stephen E. *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*. Revised Edition. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.

Anderson, Carol. *Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Anderson, Karen. *Little Rock: Race and Resistance at Central High School*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Andrew III, John A. *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

———. *Power to Destroy: The Political Uses of the IRS from Kennedy to Nixon*. Chicago, Ill.: Ivan R. Dee, 2002.

Arsenault, Raymond. *Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Gordon, Sarah Barringer. "'Free' Religion and 'Captive' Schools: Protestants, Catholics, and Education, 1945-1965." *DePaul Law Review*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (Summer 2007): 1177-1220.

Bell, Daniel. *The New American Right*. New York: Criterion Books, 1955.

———. *The Radical Right: The New American Right Expanded and Updated*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963

Bell, Jonathan. *The Liberal State on Trial: The Cold War and American Politics in the Truman Years*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.

Bergman, Jerry. *Teaching About the Creation/Evolution Controversy*. Bloomington, Ind.: Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation.

Bernard, Richard M. and Bradley Robert Rice. *Sunbelt Cities: Politics and Growth since World War II*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983.

Bernstein, Irving. *Guns or Butter: The Presidency of Lyndon Johnson*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Blanchard, Margaret A. *Revolutionary Sparks: Freedom of Expression in Modern America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Blumenson, Martin. *Bloody River: The Real Tragedy of the Rapido*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

Borstelmann, Thomas. *Apartheid's Reluctant Uncle: The United States and Southern Africa in the Early Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

———. *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Bowler, Peter J. *Evolution: The History of an Idea*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

Bothmer, Bernard von. *Framing the Sixties: The Use and Abuse of a Decade from Ronald Reagan to George W. Bush*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2010.

Boylan, Mary Anne. "The Origins and Ideological Developments of Protestants and Other Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1945-1969." Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1970.

Branch, Taylor. *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988.

Brands, H. W. *The Strange Death of American Liberalism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Brennan, Mary C. *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the GOP*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.

Brinkley, Alan. *The End of Reform: New Deal Liberalism in Recession and War*. A Borzoi Book; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995.

———. “The Problem of American Conservatism.” *American Historical Review*, 99 (April 1994), 409-29

Brophy, Alfred L. *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Brown, Norman D. *Hood, Bonnet, and Little Brown Jug: Texas Politics, 1921-1928*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1984.

Burns, Jennifer. *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*. Oxford, England ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Buzzanco, Robert. *Vietnam and the Transformation of American Life*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Carleton, Don E. *Red Scare!: Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, And Their Legacy in Texas*. Austin, Tex: Texas Monthly Press, 1985.

Carlson, Paul H. and Bruce A. Glasrud. eds. *West Texas: A History of the Giant Side of the State*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014.

Caro, Robert A. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Means of Ascent*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990.

———. *The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Path to Power*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982.

Carpenter, Joel A. *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981.

Carter, Dan T. *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of The New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995.

Casey, Shaun A. *The Making of a Catholic President: Kennedy vs. Nixon 1960*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Chapman, Lee Roy. “The Strangelove of Dr. Billy James Hargis: How a Tulsa Preacher and an Army General Created America’s Religious Right” *This Land*, Vol. 3, No. 21 (November 1, 2012).

Clabaugh, Gary K. *Thunder on the Right: The Protestant Fundamentalists*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall Publishers, 1974.

Cohen, Warren I. and Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, eds. *Lyndon Johnson Confronts the World: American Foreign Policy, 1963-1968*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Cohodas, Nadine. *Strom Thurmond and the Politics of Southern Change*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

Conner, Claire. *Wrapped in the Flag: A Personal History of America's Radical Right*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2013.

Cox, Patrick L. and Edward M. Kennedy. *Ralph W. Yarborough: The People's Senator*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002.

Craig, Douglas B. *After Wilson: The Struggle for the Democratic Party, 1920-1934*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

Crespino, Joseph. *In Search of Another Country: Mississippi and the Conservative Counterrevolution*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2007.

———. *Strom Thurmond's America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012.

Critchlow, Donald T. *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: a Woman's Crusade*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Cullen, David O'Donald and Kyle G. Wilkison. eds. *The Texas Right: The Radical Roots of Lone Star Conservatism*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014).

Cunningham, David. *Klansville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights Era Klan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Cunningham, Sean P. *American Politics in the Postwar Sunbelt: Conservative Growth in a Battleground Region*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

———. *Cowboy Conservatism: Texas and the Rise of the Modern Right*. Lexington, Ky: University Press of Kentucky, 2010.

Dallek, Robert. *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2003.

———. *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times 1961-1973*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

———. *Lone Star Rising: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1908-1960*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

———. *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Davies, Gareth. *From Opportunity to Entitlement: The Transformation and Decline of Great Society Liberalism*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996.

Davies, Richard O. *Defender of the Old Guard: John Bricker and American Politics*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1993.

Dawley, Alan. *Changing the World: American Progressives in War and Revolution*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003.

———. *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991.

Delton, Jennifer A. *Rethinking the 1950s: How Anticommunism and the Cold War Made America Liberal*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Dierenfield, Bruce J. *The Battle over School Prayer: How* Engel v. Vitale *Changed America*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

Divine, Robert A. *The Johnson Years: Foreign Policy, the Great Society, and the White House*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1987.

Dochuk, Darren. *From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain-Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Rise of Evangelical Conservatism*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011.

Dobbs, Ricky F. *Yellow Dogs and Republicans: Allan Shivers and Texas Two-Party Politics*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005.

Doherty, Thomas Patrick. *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Doyle, Stanton. "The Watchman on the Wall," *This Land*, Vol. 3, No. 21 (November 1, 2012).

Dower, John W. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

Dudziak, Mary L. *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000.

———. "Desegregation as a Cold War Imperative." *Stanford Law Review* 41 (1988): 61–120.

Durham, Martin. *White Rage: The Extreme Right and American Politics*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Edwards, Lee. *William F. Buckley Jr.: The Maker of a Movement*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2010.

Epstein, Lenore A. and James C. Callison. "Financing Health Care for the Aged." *Law and Contemporary Problems*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (Winter, 1962): 102-132.

Estes, Steve. *I Am a Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Ezra, Michael. ed. *The Economic Civil Rights Movement: African Americans and the Struggle for Economic Power*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Fairclough, Adam. *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000*. New York: Viking, 2001.

———. *Race and Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1995.

———. *To Redeem the Soul of America: The Southern Christian Leadership Conference and Martin Luther King, Jr*. Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

Farber, David and Jeff Roche, eds. *The Conservative Sixties*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003.

Feldman, Noah. *Scorpions: The Battles and Triumphs of FDR's Great Supreme Court Justices*. New York: Twelve, 2010.

Feurer, Rosemary. *Radical Unionism in the Midwest, 1900-1950*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Findlay, James F. *Church People in the Struggle: The National Council of Churches and the Black Freedom Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Fitzgerald, Thomas E. *The Ecumenical Movement: An Introductory History*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004.

Flamm, Michael W. *Law and Order: Street Crime, Civil Unrest, and the Crisis of Liberalism in the 1960s*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Formisano, Ronald P. *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Fraser, Steve, and Gary Gerstle. *The Rise and Fall of the New Deal Order, 1930-1980*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Frederickson, Kari. *The Dixiecrat Revolt and the End of the Solid South, 1932-1968*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Freeman, Susan K. *Sex Goes to School: Girls and Sex Education Before the 1960s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Fried, Richard M. *Nightmare in Red: The McCarthy Era in Perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Gage, Beverly. *The Day Wall Street Exploded: a Story of America in Its First Age of Terror*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Garcia, Ignacio M. *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 2000.

Gelman, N. I. "Religion in Politics." In *Editorial Research Reports 1959*. Vol. II. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1959.

Gil, Troy. *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Gill, George J. "The Truman Administration and Vatican Relations." *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 73, No. 3 (July 1987): 408-423.

Gill, Jill K. *Embattled Ecumenism: The National Council of Churches, the Vietnam War, and the Trials of the Protestant Left*. DeKalb, Northern Illinois University Press, 2011.

Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. Reprint. W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Gleijeses, Piero. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

Goldberg, Robert Alan. *Barry Goldwater*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995.

Goldman, Ralph M. *The Democratic Party in American Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1966.

Goldstein, Robert Justin. ed. *Little 'Red Scares': Anti-Communism in the United States, 1921-1946*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014.

Gordon, Colin. *New Deals: Business, Labor, and Politics in America, 1920-1935*. Cambridge ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Gosse, Van. *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretative History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Gould, Lewis. *1968: The Election that Changed America*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993.

Grant, James. *Bernard M. Baruch: The Adventures of a Wall Street Legend*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

Green, George Norris. *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938-1957*. Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1979.

Green, James R. *Death in Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006.

Greenberg, Cheryl. *"Or Does It Explode?": Black Harlem in the Great Depression*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1997.

Haines, Gerald K. and David A. Langbert, *Unlocking the Files of the FBI: A Guide to Its Records and Classification System*. Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1993.

Hale, Grace Elizabeth. *A Nation of Outsiders: How the White Middle Class Fell in Love with Rebellion in Postwar America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Hamburger, Philip. *Separation of Church and State*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Hamby, Alonzo L. *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1973.

———. *Man of Destiny: FDR and the Making of the American Century*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.

Hamilton, Shane. *Trucking Country: The Road to America's Wal-Mart Economy*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Harrison, Robert. *Congress, Progressive Reform, and the New American State*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Hartz, Louis. *The Liberal Tradition in America: An Interpretation of American Political Thought Since the Revolution*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955.

Hawley, Ellis Wayne. "Herbert Hoover, the Commerce Secretariat, and the Vision of an 'Associative State,' 1921-1928." *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 61, No. 1 (June 1974): 116-140.

———. *The New Deal and the Problem of Monopoly: a Study in Economic Ambivalence*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1969.

Heale, M. J. *American Anti-Communism: Combating the Enemy Within, 1830-1970*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Hefley, James C. *The Truth in Crisis: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention*. Dallas, Tex.: Criterion Publications, 1986.

Hendershot, Cynthia. *Anti-Communism and Popular Culture in Mid-Century America*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003.

Hendershot, Heather. *What's Fair on the Air? Cold War Right-Wing Broadcasting and the Public Interest*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Herzog, Jonathan P. *The Spiritual-Industrial Complex: America's Religious Battle Against Communism in the Early Cold War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New York: Atheneum, 1963.

Hofstadter, Richard. *The Age of Reform; from Bryan to F.D.R*. First edition. New York: Knopf, 1955.

———. "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," *American Scholar* 24 (Winter 1954-1955): 11-17.

Hogan, Wesley C. *Many Minds, One Heart: SNCC's Dream for a New America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Holscher, Kathleen A. "Habits in the Classroom: A Court Case Regarding Catholic Sisters in New Mexico." Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2008.

———. *Religious Lessons: Catholic Sisters and the Captured Schools Crisis in New Mexico*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Horne, Gerald. *Fire This Time: The Watts Uprising and the 1960s*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995.

Hyde, Samuel C. *Sunbelt Revolution: The Historical Progression of the Civil Rights Struggle in the Gulf South, 1866-2000*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003.

Isserman, Maurice and Michael Kazin. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Isserman, Maurice. *If I Had a Hammer . . . : The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left*. New York: Basic Books, 1987.

Jacobs, Meg. *Pocketbook Politics: Economic Citizenship in Twentieth Century America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005.

James, Rob B. *The Fundamentalist Takeover in the Southern Baptist Convention: A Brief History*. Timisoara, Romania: Impact Media, 1999.

Jeansonne, Glen. *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Jenkins, Philip. *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Johnson, David K. *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Johnson, Robert David. *All the Way with LBJ: The 1964 Presidential Election*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Joseph, Peniel E. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

———. *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2006.

Kabaservice, Geoffrey. *Rule and Ruin: The Downfall of Moderation and the Destruction of the Republican Party, From Eisenhower to the Tea* Party. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Kallenbach, Joseph E. and Jessamine S. Kallenbach, eds. *American State Governors, 1776-1976: Volume I*. Dobbs Ferry, N.Y.: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1977.

Kalman, Laura. *Right Star Rising: a New Politics, 1974-1980*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2010.

Katznelson, Ira. *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of our Time*. New York: Liveright Publishing Corps, 2013.

Keller, Robert R. "The Role of the State in the U.S. Economy during the 1920s." *Journal of Economic Issues*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (June 1987): 877-884.

Kelley, Robin D. G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.

Kendall, Nancy. *The Sex Education Debates*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Kennedy, David M. *Freedom From Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Kintz, Linda. *Between Jesus and the Market: The Emotions that Matter in Right-wing America*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997.

Kinzer, Stephen. *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*. New York: Times Books, 2006.

Klatch, Rebecca E. *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 1999.

Kornweibel, Theodore. *"Seeing Red": The Federal Campaigns Against Black Militancy, 1919-1925*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998.

Korstad, Robert Rodgers. *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-twentieth-century South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Krenn, Michael L. *Race and U.S. Foreign Policy During the Cold War*. New York: Garland, 1998.

Kruse, Kevin. *One Nation Under God: How Corporate America Invented Christian America*. New York: Basic Books, 2015.

———. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Kusch, Frank. *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2004.

Lassiter, Matthew D. *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Layton, Azza Salama. *International Politics and Civil Rights Policies in the United States, 1941-1960*. Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Leffler, Melvyn P. *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992.

———. *For the Soul of Mankind: The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Cold War*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.

Leuchtenburg, William E. *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Lewis, George. *Massive Resistance: The White Response to the Civil Rights Movement*. New York: Hodder Arnold, 2006.

———. *The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism, and Massive Resistance, 1945-1965*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004.

Lichtman, Allan J. *Prejudice and the Old Politics: The Presidential Election of 1928*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979.

———. *White Protestant Nation: The Rise of the American Conservative Movement*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008.

Link, William A. *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008.

Logevall, Frederick. *Choosing War: The Lost Chance for Peace and the Escalation of War in Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Lowndes, Joseph E. *From the New Deal to the New Right: Race and the Southern Origins of Modern Conservatism*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.

Luker, Kristin. *When Sex Goes to School: Warring Views on Sex—and Sex Education—Since the Sixties*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.

MacLean, Nancy. *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Maier, Pauline. *From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1972.

Manela, Erez. *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Marable, Manning. *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*. New York: Viking, 2011.

Martin, William C. *With God On Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America*. New York: Broadway Books, 1996.

Mason, George. *The Republican Party and American Politics from Hoover to Reagan*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Massa, Mark J. *Anti-Catholicism in America: The Last Acceptable Prejudice*. New York: The Crossroads Publishing Company, 2003.

Mattson, Kevin. *When America Was Great: The Fighting Faith of Postwar Liberalism*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Matusow, Allen J. *The Unraveling of America: a History of Liberalism in the 1960s*. New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

McGillivray, Alice V., Richard M. Scammon, and Rhodes Cook. *America at the Polls, 1960-2004: John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005.

McGirr, Lisa. *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001.

McMahon, Robert J. ed. *Major Problems in the History of the Vietnam War*. Fourth Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

Michelmore, Molly C. *Tax and Spend: The Welfare State, Tax Policies, and the Limits of American Liberalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

Miller, Edward H. *Nut Country: Right-Wing Dallas and the Birth of the Southern Strategy*. Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Miller, Scott. *The President and the Assassin: McKinley, Terror, and Empire at the Dawn of the American Century*. New York: Random House, 2011.

Minutaglio, Bill. *Dallas 1963*. New York: Twelve, 2013.

Modisett, Bill. *J. Evetts Haley: A True Texas Legend*. Midland, Tex.: Staked Plains Press, 1996.

Moran, Jeffrey P. *American Genesis: The Antievolution Controversies from Scopes to Creation Science*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Moreton, Bethany. *To Serve God and Wal-Mart*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.

Morgan, Iwan and Philip Davies. *From Sit-ins to SNCC: The Student Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012.

Mulloy, D. J. *The World of the John Birch Society: Conspiracy, Conservatism, and the Cold War*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014.

Murray, Robert K. *Red Scare; a Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1955.

Nash, George H. *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, since 1945*. New York: Basic Books, 1976.

Nelson, Michael. *Resilient America: Electing Nixon in 1968, Channeling Dissent, and Dividing Government*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2014.

Nielsen, Kim E. *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001.

Nickerson, Michelle M. *Sunbelt Rising: The Politics of Place, Space, and Region*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011.

Nurser, John. *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005.

Ogbar, Jeffrey Ogbonna Green. *Black Power: Radical Politics and African American Identity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

Oshinsky, David M. *A Conspiracy so Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy*. New York: Free Press, 1983.

Parrish, Michael E. *Felix Frankfurter and His Times: The Reform Years*. New York: Free Press, 1982.

Paterson, Thomas G. *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Patterson, James T. *Congressional Conservatism and the New Deal; the Growth of the Conservative Coalition in Congress, 1933-1939*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967.

———. *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

———. *Mr. Republican: A Biography of Robert A. Taft*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1972

Payne, Charles M. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle, With a New Preface*. University of California Press, 2007.

Perlstein, Rick. *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2001.

———. *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. New York: Scribner, 2008.

Phillips-Fein, Kim. *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

Plummer, Brenda Gayle. *Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935-1960*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

———. *Window on Freedom: Race, Civil Rights, and Foreign Affairs, 1945-1988*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.

Poole, Mary. *The Segregated Origins of Social Security: African Americans and the Welfare State*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Powers, Richard Gid. *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism*. New York: Free Press, 1995.

Rable, George C. *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984.

Radosh, Ronald. *Prophets on the Right: Profiles of Conservative Critics of American Globalism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975.

Record, Wilson. *Race and Radicalism: The NAACP and the Communist Party in Conflict*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1964.

Redekop, John Harold. *The American Far Right: A Case Study of Billy James Hargis and Christian Crusade*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Reichard, Gary W. *Politics as Usual: The Age of Truman and Eisenhower*. Arlington Heights, Ill.: Harlan Davidson, 1988.

Ribuffo, Leo P. *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983.

Richardson, Heather Cox. *To Make Men Free: A History of the Republican Party*. New York: Basic Books, 2014.

Robinson, Chandler A. ed. *J. Evetts Haley and the Passing of the Old West*. Austin, Tex.: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1978).

Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1974.

Rorabaugh, W. J. *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009.

Rosen, Elliot A. *The Republican Party in the Age of Roosevelt: Sources of Anti-Government Conservatism in the United States*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014.

Rosenfeld, Seth. *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.

Rossinow, Douglas C. *Visions of Progress: The Left-liberal Tradition in America*. Philadelphia, Pa.: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

———. *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.

Rossiter, Clinton. *Conservatism in America; the Thankless Persuasion*. New York: Knopf, 1962.

Rutland, Robert A. *The Democrats: From Jefferson to Carter* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979.

Ryan, Erica J. *Red War on the Family: Sex, Gender, and Americanism in the First Red Scare*. Philadelphia, Penn.: Temple University Press, 2015.

Rymph, Catherine E. *Republican Women: Feminism and Conservatism from Suffrage Through the Rise of the New Right*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Sagovsky, Nicholas. *Ecumenism, Christian Origins, and the Practice of Communion*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Sandbrook, Dominic. *Eugene McCarthy: The Rise and Fall of Postwar American Liberalism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.

———. *Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of The Populist Right*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011.

Schlesinger, Stephen C. *Act of Creation: The Founding of the United Nations*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Schmidt, Regin. *Red Scare: FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States, 1919-1943*. Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2000.

Schneider, Gregory L. *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right*. New York: New York University Press, 1998.

———. *Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.

Schoenwald, Jonathan M. *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Schrecker, Ellen. *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998.

Schultz, Kevin M. *Buckley and Mailer: The Difficult Friendship That Shaped the Sixties*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2015.

Self, Robert O. *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2013.

Shaffer, H. B. "Church-Related Education." in *Editorial Research Reports 1958*. Vol. I. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 1958.

Shogan, Robert. *Backlash: The Killing of the New Deal*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006.

Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992.

Skowronek, Stephen. *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Bureaucratic Capacities, 1877-1920*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Smith, Jason Scott. *Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Smith, Lee Carraway. *A River Swift and Deadly: The 36th "Texas" Infantry Division at the Rapido River*. Austin: Eakin Press, 1989.

Solomon, Mark I. *The Cry was Unity: Communists and African Americans, 1917-1936*. Jackson, Miss.: University Press of Mississippi, 1998.

Sparrow, James. *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sprague, Stacey. "James Evetts Haley and the New Deal: Laying the Foundations for the Modern Republican Party in Texas." Master's Thesis, University of North Texas, 2004

Stern, Sheldon M. *Averting 'The Final Failure:' John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Storch, Randi. *Red Chicago: American Communism at Its Grassroots, 1928-35*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Storrs, Landon R. Y. *Civilizing Capitalism: The National Consumers' League, Women's Activism, and Labor Standards in the New Deal Era*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

———. *The Second Red Scare and the Unmaking of the New Deal Left*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

Sugrue, Thomas J. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House, 2008.

———. *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Temkin, Moshik. *The Sacco-Vanzetti Affair: America on Trial*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Thomas, G. Scott. *A New World to be Won: John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and the Tumultuous Year of 1960*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011.

Thompson, Michael. *The Politics of Inequality: a Political History of the Idea of Economic Inequality in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Toplin, Robert Brent. *Radical Conservatism: The Right's Political Religion*. Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 2006.

Troy, Gil. *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Van DeBurg, William L. *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture, 1965-1975*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993.

Volanto, Keith. *Texas, Cotton, and the New Deal*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005.

Von Eschen, Penny M. *Satchmo Blows up the World: Jazz Ambassadors Play the Cold War*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.

Wacker, Grant. *America's Pastor: Billy Graham and the Shaping of a Nation*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014.

Waldman, Tom. *Not Much Left: The Fate of Liberalism in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Walker, Fred L. "The 36th Was a Great Fighting Division." *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (July 1968): 40-59.

Warren, Heather A. *Theologians of a New World Order: Reinhold Niebuhr and the Christian Realists, 1920-1948*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Webb, Clive. *Rabble Rousers: The American Far Right in the Civil Rights Era*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010.

Weigand, Kate. *Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women's Liberation*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

White, Theodore H. *The Making of the President, 1960*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1961.

———. *The Making of the President, 1964*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1965.

———. *The Making of the President, 1968*. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1969.

Wildavsky, Aaron. "TVA and Power Politics." *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (September, 1961): 576-590.

Wilentz, Sean. *The Age of Reagan: a History, 1974-2008*. New York, NY: Harper, 2008.

Williams, Daniel K. *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Wilson, Joan Hoff. *Herbert Hoover: Forgotten Progressive*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1975.

Wolfskill, George. *The Revolt of the Conservatives; a History of the American Liberty League, 1934-1940*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1974.

Woods, Jeff. *Black Struggle, Red Scare: Segregation and Anti-communism in the South, 1948-1968*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2004.

Woods, Randall B. *LBJ: Architect of American Ambition*. New York: Free Press, 2006.

Wunderlin, Clarence E. *Robert A. Taft: Ideas, Tradition, and Party in U.S. Foreign Policy*. Lanham, Md.: SR Books, 2005.

Wuthnow, Robert. *Rough Country: How Texas Became America's Most Powerful Bible Belt State*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Volanto, Keith. *Texas, Cotton, and the New Deal*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005.

Young, Nancy Beck. *Why We Fight: Congress and the Politics of World War II*. Lawrence, Kan.: Univ. Press of Kansas, 2013.

Zelizer, Julian E. *Governing America: The Revival of Political History*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012.

Zetterberg, J. Peter, ed. *Evolution Versus Creationism: The Public Education Controversy*. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press, 1983.