

endorsements of the idea of negotiating peace with the Soviet Union. Then, on August 26, 1946, Norman Thomas, speaking at an annual picnic of the Wisconsin Socialist Party, red-baited the Democratic Senatorial candidate, Howard J. McMurray. Thomas in particular accused McMurray of being endorsed by the *Daily Worker*, an accusation that McCarthy picked up eagerly a few weeks later. McCarthy had gotten the bit in his teeth; he had learned how from a veteran of the internecine struggles on the Left.<sup>3</sup>

McCarthy's crusade effectively transformed the mass base of the right wing by bringing into the movement a mass of urban Catholics from the Eastern seaboard. Before McCarthy, the rank-and-file of the right wing was the small-town, isolationist Middle West, the typical readers of the old *Chicago Tribune*. In contrast to the old base, the interest of the new urban Catholic constituency in individual liberty was, if anything, negative; one might say that their main political interest was in stamping out blasphemy and pornography at home and in killing Communists at home and abroad. In a sense, the subsequent emergence of Bill Buckley and his highly Catholic-ish *National Review* reflected this mass influx and transformation. It is surely no accident that Buckley's first emergence on the political scene was to coauthor (with his brother-in-law, L. Brent Bozell, a convert to Catholicism), the leading pro-McCarthy work, *McCarthy and His Enemies* (1954). To the McCarthy banner also flocked the increasingly powerful gaggle of ex-Communists and ex-leftists: notably, George Sokolsky, a leading McCarthy adviser, and J.B. Matthews, who was chief investigator for McCarthy until he stepped on too many toes by denouncing the supposedly massive "infiltration" of the Protestant clergy by the Communist Party.

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<sup>3</sup>On this instructive episode, see John Steinke and James Weinstein, "McCarthy and the Liberals," in *For a New America: Essays in History and Politics from Studies on the Left, 1959–1967*, James Weinstein and David Eakins, eds. (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 180–93.

Not seeing this transformation process at work at the time, I myself was a McCarthy enthusiast. There were two basic reasons. One was that while McCarthy was employing the weapon of a governmental committee, the great bulk of his victims were not private citizens but government officials: bureaucrats and Army officers. Most of McCarthy's red-baiting was therefore "voluntary" rather than "compulsory," since the persons being attacked were, as government officials, fair game from the libertarian point of view. Besides, day in and day out, such Establishment organs as the *New York Times* kept telling us that McCarthy was "tearing down the morale of the executive branch"; what more could a libertarian hope for? And "tearing down the morale of the Army" to boot! What balm for an antimilitarist!

Recently, I had occasion to see once again, after all these years, Emile D'Antonio's film of the McCarthy censure hearings, *Point of Order*. Seeing it with an old-time member of the Circle who had also abandoned the right wing long since, we were curious about how we would react; for neither of us had really rethought the long-dead McCarthy episode. Within minutes, we found ourselves cheering once again, though in a rather different way, for that determined symbol of the witch-hunt. For the film began with McCarthy pointing as his basic premise to some crazed map of the United States with the "international Communist conspiracy" moving in a series of coordinated arrows against the United States. (It was for all the world like some '50s issue of the Harvard *Lampoon*, satirizing an absurd military "menace.") But the crucial point is that McCarthy's Army and Senatorial adversaries never contested this absurd axiom; and once given the axiom, McCarthy's relentless logic was impeccable. As Steinke and Weinstein point out, McCarthy did not invent witch-hunting and red-baiting. "Nor, as many liberals complain, did he abuse or misuse an otherwise useful tool; he simply carried it to its logical conclusion." Indeed, he took the liberals' own creation and turned it against them, and against the swollen Leviathan Army officials as well; and to see them get at least a measure of comeuppance, to see the liberals and centrists hoisted on their own petard, was sweet indeed. In the words of Steinke and Weinstein, McCarthy

rode the monster too hard, turning it against its creators, and they, realizing finally that their creation was out of control, attempted in flaccid defense to turn it back upon him.<sup>4</sup>

As a bit of personal corroboration, I fully remember the reaction of a close acquaintance, an old Russian Menshevik, a member of the Russian Social Democratic Federation and veteran anti-Communist, when McCarthy's movement began. He was positively gleeful, and ardently supported the McCarthy crusade; it was only later, when he "went too far" that the old Menshevik felt that McCarthy had to be dumped.

But there was another reason for my own fascination with the McCarthy phenomenon: his populism. For the '50s was an era when liberalism—now accurately termed "corporate liberalism"—had triumphed, and seemed to be permanently in the saddle. Having now gained the seats of power, the liberals had given up their radical veneer of the '30s and were now settling down to the cozy enjoyment of their power and perquisites. It was a comfortable alliance of Wall Street, Big Business, Big Government, Big Unions, and liberal Ivy League intellectuals; it seemed to me that while in the long run this unholy alliance could only be overturned by educating a new generation of intellectuals, that in the short run the only hope to dislodge this new ruling elite was a populist short-circuit. In sum, that there was a vital need to appeal directly to the masses, emotionally, even demagogically, *over the heads* of the Establishment: of the Ivy League, the mass media, the liberal intellectuals, of the Republican-Democrat political party structure. This appeal could be done—especially in that period of no organized opposition whatever—only by a charismatic leader, a leader who could make a direct appeal to the masses and thereby undercut the ruling and opinion-molding elite; in sum, by a populist short-circuit. It seemed to me that this was what McCarthy was trying to do; and that it was largely this appeal, the open-ended sense that there was no audacity of which McCarthy was not

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

capable, that frightened the liberals, who, from their opposite side of the fence, also saw that the only danger to their rule was in just such a whipping up of populist emotions.<sup>5</sup>

My own quip at the time, which roughly summed up this position, was that in contrast to the liberals, who approved of McCarthy's "ends" (ouster of Communists from offices and jobs) but disapproved of his radical and demagogic means, I myself approved his means (radical assault on the nation's power structure) but not necessarily his ends.

It is surely no accident that, with their power consolidated and a populist appeal their only fear, the liberal intellectuals began to push hard for their proclamation of the "end of ideology." Hence their claim that ideology and hard-nosed doctrines were no longer valuable or viable, and their ardent celebration of the newfound American consensus. With such enemies and for such reasons, it was hard for me not to be a "McCarthyite."

The leading expression of this celebration of consensus combined with the newfound fear of ideology and populism was Daniel Bell's collection, *The New American Right* (1955). This collection was also significant in drawing together ex-radicals (Bell, Seymour Martin Lipset, Richard Hofstadter, Nathan Glazer) along with an antipopulist liberal "conservative" (Peter Viereck), into this proelitist and antipopulist consensus. Also noteworthy is the book's dedication to S.M. Levitas, executive editor of the Social Democratic *New Leader*, the publication that bound "responsible" red-baiters and liberals into the postwar Cold War consensus.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>It is precisely this sort of analysis that has made many astute members of the New Left in a sense sympathetic to the George Wallace movement of recent years. For while the Wallaceite *program* may be questionable, his *analysis* of the Establishment and his tapping of middle-class sentiment against the ruling elite that oppresses them earns from the New Left a considerable amount of sympathy.

<sup>6</sup>Daniel Bell, ed., *The New American Right* (New York: Criterion Books, 1955). The book was updated eight years later, with new chapters

The peak of my populist and McCarthyite activities came during the height of the McCarthy turmoil, in the furor over the activities of Roy Cohn and S. David Schine. It was shortly after the founding of the Circle Bastiat, and the kids of the Circle, in their capacity as leaders of the still-functioning Students for America, were invited to address a massive testimonial dinner given for Roy Cohn upon his forced ouster from the McCarthy Committee at the Hotel Astor in New York on July 26, 1954. Major speakers were such McCarthyite leaders as Godfrey P. Schmidt, Colonel Archibald Roosevelt, George Sokolsky, Alfred Kohlberg, Bill Buckley, and Rabbi Benjamin Schultz. But the speech which drew the most applause, and which gained a considerable amount of notoriety, was the brief address given by one of our Circle members (George Reisman), which I had written. The speech asked why the intensity of the hatred against Cohn and McCarthy by the liberal intellectuals; and it answered that a threat against Communists in government was also felt to be a threat against the “Socialists and New Dealers, who have been running our political life for the last twenty-one years, and are still running it!” The speech concluded in a rousing populist appeal that

As the *Chicago Tribune* aptly put it, the Case of Roy Cohn is the American Dreyfus Case. As Dreyfus was redeemed, so will Roy Cohn when the American people have taken back their government from the criminal alliance of Communists, Socialists, New Dealers, and Eisenhower-Dewey Republicans.

Rabbi Schultz, presiding at the dinner, warily referred to the tumultuous applause for the Reisman speech as a “runaway grand jury,” and the applause and the speech were mentioned in the

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added from the perspective of the early 1960s. Daniel Bell, ed., *The New American Right: Expanded and Updated* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor, 1963). From a later perspective, it is clear that this was a proto-neoconservative book, Bell, Glazer, and Lipset becoming prominent neocons in the 1970s and 1980s.

accounts of the *New York Journal-American*, the *New York Herald-Tribune*, Jack Lait's column in the *New York Mirror*, the *New York World-Telegram and Sun*, Murray Kempton's column in the *New York Post*, and *Time* magazine. Particularly upset was the veteran liberal and "extremist-baiting" radio commentator, George Hamilton Combs. Combs warned that "the resemblance between this crowd and their opposite members of the extreme left is startlingly close. This was a rightist version of the Henry Wallace convention crowd, the Progressive Party convention of '48."

Particularly interesting is the fact that the by-now-notorious concluding lines of the speech became enshrined in Peter Viereck's contribution to the Daniel Bell book, "The Revolt Against the Elite." Viereck saw the Reisman phraseology as a dangerous "outburst of direct democracy" which "comes straight from the leftist rhetoric of the old Populists and Progressives, a rhetoric forever urging the People to take back 'their' government from the conspiring Powers That Be." Precisely. Viereck also explained that he meant by "direct democracy," "our mob tradition of Tom Paine, Jacobinism, and the Midwestern Populist parties," which "is government by referendum and mass petition, such as the McCarthyite Committee of Ten Million." Being "immediate and hotheaded," direct democracy "facilitates revolution, demagoguery, and Robespierian thought control"—in contrast, I suppose, to the quieter but more pervasive elitist "thought control" of corporate liberalism.<sup>7</sup>

Since I failed to understand the interplay of domestic and foreign red-baiting that was at work in the McCarthy movement, I was bewildered when McCarthy, after his outrageous censure by the Senate in late 1954, turned to whooping it up for war on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek in Asia. Why this turnabout? It was clear that the New Right forces behind McCarthy were now convinced that domestic red-baiting, angering as it did the Center-Right establishment, had become counterproductive, and that from now on

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<sup>7</sup>Peter Viereck, "Revolt Against the Elite," in *New American Right*, Bell, ed., pp. 97–98, 116.

the full stress must be on pushing for war against Communism abroad. In retrospect it is clear that a major force for this turn was the sinister figure of the millionaire Far Eastern importer, Alfred Kohlberg, a major backer of McCarthy who supplied him with much of his material, and boasted of his position as Dean of the powerful “China Lobby” on behalf of Chiang Kai-shek. While a failure in the short run, the McCarthy movement had done its work of shifting the entire focus of the right wing from libertarian, antistatist, and isolationist concerns to a focus and concentration upon the alleged Communist “menace.” A diversion from domestic to foreign affairs would not only consolidate the right wing; it would also draw no real opposition from liberals and internationalist Republicans who had, after all, begun the Cold War in the first place.

The short-run collapse of the McCarthy movement was clearly due, furthermore, to the lack of any sort of McCarthyite *organization*. There were leaders, there was press support, there was a large mass base, but there were no channels of organization, no intermediary links, either in journals of opinion or of more direct popular organizations, between the leaders and the base. In late 1955, William F. Buckley and his newly formed weekly, *National Review*, set out to remedy that lack.

In 1951, when Bill Buckley first burst upon the scene with his *God and Man at Yale*, he liked to refer to himself as a “libertarian” or even at times as an “anarchist”; for in those early days Buckley’s major ideological mentor was Frank Chodorov rather than, as it would soon become, the notorious Whittaker Chambers. But even in those early “libertarian” days, there was one clinker that made his libertarianism only phony rhetoric: the global anti-Communist crusade. Thus, take one of Buckley’s early efforts, “A Young Republican’s View,” published in *Commonweal*, January 25, 1952. Buckley began the article in unexceptionable libertarian fashion, affirming that the enemy is the State, and endorsing the view of Herbert Spencer that the State is “begotten of aggression and by aggression.” Buckley also contributed excellent quotations from such leading individualists of the past as H.L. Mencken and Albert Jay Nock, and criticized the Republican Party for offering

no real alternative to the burgeoning of statism. But then in the remainder of the article he gave the case away, for there loomed the alleged Soviet menace, and all libertarian principles had to go by the board for the duration. Thus, Buckley declared that the “thus far invincible aggressiveness of the Soviet Union” imminently threatens American security, and that therefore “we have to accept Big Government for the duration—for neither an offensive nor a defensive war can be waged . . . except through the instrument of a totalitarian bureaucracy within our shores.” In short, a totalitarian bureaucracy must be accepted so long as the Soviet Union exists (presumably for its alleged threat of imposing upon us a totalitarian bureaucracy?). In consequence, Buckley concluded that we must all support “the extensive and productive tax laws that are needed to support a vigorous anti-Communist foreign policy,” as well as “large armies and air forces, atomic energy, central intelligence, war production boards and the attendant centralization of power in Washington—even with Truman at the reins of it all.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, even at his most libertarian, even before Buckley came to accept Big Government and morality laws as ends in themselves, the pretended *National Review* “fusion” between liberty and order, between individualism and anti-Communism, was a phony—the individualist and libertarian part of the fusion was strictly rhetorical, to be saved for abstract theorizing and after-dinner discourse. The guts of the New Conservatism was the mobilization of Big Government for the worldwide crusade against Communism.

And so, when *National Review* was founded with much expertise and financing in late 1955, the magazine was a coming together to direct the newly transformed right wing on the part of two groups: all the veteran ex-Communist journalists and intellectuals, and the new group of younger Catholics whose major goal was anti-Communism. Thus, the central and guiding theme for both groups in this Unholy Coalition was the extirpation of Communism, at home and particularly abroad. Prominent on the new magazine were

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<sup>8</sup>William F. Buckley, Jr., “A Young Republican’s View,” *Commonweal* 55, no. 16 (January 25, 1952): 391–93.



leading ex-leftists: James Burnham, former Trotskyite; Frank S. Meyer, formerly on the national committee of the Communist Party and head of its Chicago training school; ex-German Communist leader William S. Schlamm; Dr. J.B. Matthews; ex-leftist Max Eastman; ex-Communist Ralph DeToledano; former leading German Communist theoretician Professor Karl Wittfogel; John Chamberlain, a leading leftist intellectual of the thirties; ex-fellow traveler Eugene Lyons; ex-Communist Will Herberg; former Communist spy Whittaker Chambers; and a whole slew of others.

The Catholic wing consisted of two parts. One was a charming but ineffectual group of older European or European-oriented monarchists and authoritarians: e.g., the erudite Austrian Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn; the poet Roy Campbell; the pro-Spanish Carlist Frederick Wilhelmsen; and the Englishman Sir Arnold Lunn. I remember one night a heated discussion at a conservative gathering about the respective merits of the Habsburgs, the Stuarts, the Bourbons, the Carlists, the Crown of St. Stephen, and the Crown of St. Wenceslas; and which monarchy should be restored first. Whatever the merits of the monarchist position, this was not an argument relevant to the American tradition, let alone the American cultural and political scene of the day. In retrospect, did Buckley keep this group around as exotic trimming, as an intellectual counterpart to his own social jet set?

The other wing of younger Catholics was far more important for the purposes of the new magazine. These were the younger American anti-Communists, most prominently the various members of the Buckley family (who in closeness and lifestyle has seemed a right-wing version of the Kennedys), which included at first Buckley's brother-in-law and college roommate, L. Brent Bozell; and Buckley's then favorite disciple later turned leftist, Garry Wills. Rounding out the Catholic aura at *National Review* was the fact that two of its leading editors became Catholic converts: Frank Meyer and political scientist Willmoore Kendall. It was the essence of *National Review* as an anti-Communist organ that accounted for its being a coalition of ex-Stalinists and Trotskyites and younger Catholics, and led observers to remark on the curious absence of American Protestants (who had of course been

the staple of the Old Right) from the heart of the Buckleyite New Right.<sup>9</sup>

In this formidable but profoundly statist grouping, interest in individual liberty was minimal or negative, being largely confined to some of the book reviews by John Chamberlain and to whatever time Frank Meyer could manage to take off from advocacy of all-out war against the Soviet bloc. Interest in free-market economics was minimal and largely rhetorical, confined to occasional pieces by Henry Hazlitt, who for his part had never been an isolationist and who endorsed the hard-line foreign policy of the magazine.

In the light of hindsight, we should now ask whether or not a major objective of *National Review* from its inception was to transform the right wing from an isolationist to global warmongering anti-Communist movement; and, particularly, whether or not the entire effort was in essence a CIA operation. We now know that Bill Buckley, for the two years prior to establishing *National Review*, was admittedly a CIA agent in Mexico City, and that the sinister E. Howard Hunt was his control. His sister Priscilla, who became managing editor of *National Review*, was also in the CIA; and other editors James Burnham and Willmoore Kendall had at least been recipients of CIA largesse in the anti-Communist Congress for Cultural Freedom. In addition, Burnham has been identified by two reliable sources as a consultant for the CIA in the years after World War II.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Garry Wills relates in his memoirs of the conservative movement that Frank Meyer, to whom he was close at the time, was convinced that the magazine was a CIA operation. With his Leninist-trained nose for intrigue, Meyer must be considered an important witness.

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<sup>9</sup>Thus, see George H. Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 127; and Samuel Francis, "Beautiful Losers: the Failure of American Conservatism," *Chronicles* (May 1991): 16.

<sup>10</sup>See Nash, *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, p. 372.

Furthermore, it was a standard practice in the CIA, at least in those early years, that no one ever resigned from the CIA. A friend of mine who joined the Agency in the early 1950s told me that if, before the age of retirement, he was mentioned as having left the CIA for another job, that I was to disregard it, since it would only be a cover for continuing Agency work. On that testimony, the case for *NR* being a CIA operation becomes even stronger. Also suggestive is the fact that a character even more sinister than E. Howard Hunt, William J. Casey, appears at key moments of the establishment of the New over the Old Right. It was Casey who, as attorney, presided over the incorporation of *National Review* and had arranged the details of the ouster of Felix Morley from *Human Events*.

At any rate, in retrospect, it is clear that libertarians and Old Rightists, including myself, had made a great mistake in endorsing domestic red-baiting, a red-baiting that proved to be the major entering wedge for the complete transformation of the original right wing. We should have listened more carefully to Frank Chodorov, and to his splendidly libertarian stand on domestic red-baiting: “How to get rid of the communists in the government? Easy. Just abolish the jobs.”<sup>11</sup> It was the jobs and their functioning that was the important thing, not the quality of the people who happened to fill them. More fully, Chodorov wrote:

And now we come to the spy-hunt—which is, in reality, a heresy trial. What is it that perturbs the inquisitors? They do not ask the suspects: Do you believe in Power? Do you adhere to the idea that the individual exists for the glory of the State? . . . Are you against taxes, or would you raise them until they absorbed the entire output of the country? . . . Are you opposed to the principle of conscription? Do you favor more “social gains” under the aegis of an enlarged bureaucracy? Or, would you advocate dismantling of the public trough at which these bureaucrats feed? In short, do you deny Power?

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<sup>11</sup>Frank Chodorov, “Trailing the Trend,” *analysis* 6, no. 6 (April 1950): 3. Quoted in Hamilton, “Introduction,” p. 25.

Such questions might prove embarrassing, to the investigators. The answers might bring out a similarity between their ideas and purposes and those of the suspected. They too worship Power. Under the circumstances, they limit themselves to one question: Are you a member of the Communist Party? And this turns out to mean, have you aligned yourselves with the Moscow branch of the church?

Power-worship is presently sectarianized along nationalistic lines. . . . Each nation guards its orthodoxy. . . . Where Power is attainable, the contest between rival sects is unavoidable. . . . War is the apotheosis of Power, the ultimate expression of the faith and solidarization of its achievement.<sup>12</sup>

And Frank had also written:

The case against the communists involves a principle of transcending importance. It is the right to be wrong. Heterodoxy is a necessary condition of a free society. . . . The right to make a choice . . . is important to me, for the freedom of selection is necessary to my sense of personality; it is important to society, because only from the juxtaposition of ideas can we hope to approach the ideal of truth.

Whenever I choose an idea or label it “right,” I imply the prerogative of another to reject that idea and label it “wrong.” To invalidate his right is to invalidate mine. That is, I must brook error if I would preserve my freedom of thought. . . . If men are punished for espousing communism, shall we stop there? Once we deny the right to be wrong, we put a vise on the human mind and put the temptation to turn the handle into the hands of ruthlessness.<sup>13</sup>

While anti-Communism was the central root of the decay of the Old Right and the replacement by its statist opposite in

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<sup>12</sup>Frank Chodorov, “The Spy-Hunt,” *analysis* 4, no. 11 (September 1948): 1–2. Reprinted in Chodorov, *Out of Step* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962), pp. 181–83.

<sup>13</sup>Frank Chodorov, “How to Curb the Commies,” *analysis* 5, no. 7 (May 1949): 2.

*National Review*, there was another important force in transforming the American right wing, especially in vitiating its “domestic” libertarianism and even its rhetorical devotion to individual liberty. This was the sudden emergence of Russell Kirk as the leader of the New Conservatism, with the publication of his book *The Conservative Mind* in 1953. Kirk, who became a regular columnist of *National Review* as soon as it was founded, created a sensation with his book and quickly became adopted as the conservative darling of the “vital center.” In fact, before Buckley became prominent as the leading conservative spokesman of the media, Russell Kirk was the most prominent conservative. After the appearance of his book, Kirk began to make speeches around the country, often in a friendly “vital center” tandem with Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

For Kirk was far more acceptable to “vital center” corporate liberalism than was the Old Right. Scorning any trait of individualism or rigorous free-market economics, Kirk was instead quite close to the Conservatism of Peter Viereck; to Kirk, Big Government and domestic statism were perfectly acceptable, provided that they were steeped in some sort of Burkean tradition and enjoyed a Christian framework. Indeed, it was clear that Kirk’s ideal society was an ordered English squirearchy, ruled by the Anglican Church and Tory landlords in happy tandem.<sup>14</sup> Here there was no fiery individualism, no trace of populism or radicalism to upset the ruling classes or the liberal intellectual Establishment. Here at last was a Rightist with whom liberals, while not exactly agreeing, could engage in a cozy dialogue.

It was Kirk, in fact, who brought the words “Conservatism” and “New Conservatism” into general acceptance on the right wing. Before that, knowledgeable libertarians had hated the word, and with good reason; for weren’t the conservatives the ancient enemy, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Tory and reactionary suppressors of individual liberty, the ancient champions of the Old Order of Throne-and-Altar against which the eighteenth- and

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<sup>14</sup>Kirk, too, was to follow other *National Review* leaders into Catholicism a decade later.

nineteenth-century liberals had fought so valiantly? And so the older classical-liberals and individualists resisted the term bitterly: Ludwig von Mises, a classical liberal, scorned the term; F.A. Hayek insisted on calling himself an “Old Whig”; and when Frank Chodorov was called a “conservative” in the pages of *National Review*, he wrote an outraged letter declaring, “As for me, I will punch anyone who calls me a conservative in the nose. I am a radical.”<sup>15</sup> Before Russell Kirk, the word “conservative,” being redolent of reaction and the Old Order, was a Left smear-word applied to the right wing; it was only after Kirk that the right wing, including the new *National Review*, rushed to embrace this previously hated term.

The Kirkian influence was soon evident in right-wing youth meetings. I remember one gathering when, to my dismay, one Gridley Wright, an aristocratic leader of Yale campus conservatism, declared that the true ideological struggle of our day, between left and right, had nothing to do with free-market economics or with individual liberty versus statism. The true struggle, he declared, was Christianity versus atheism, and good manners versus boorishness and materialistic greed: the materialist greed, for example, of the starving peoples of India who were trying to earn an income, a bit of subsistence. It was easy, of course, for a wealthy Yale man whose father owned a large chunk of Montana to decry the “materialistic greed” of the poor; was *this* what the right wing was coming to?

Russell Kirk also succeeded in altering our historical pantheon of heroes. Mencken, Nock, Thoreau, Jefferson, Paine, and Garrison were condemned as rationalists, atheists, or anarchists, and were replaced by such reactionaries and antilibertarians as Burke, Metternich, De Maistre, or Alexander Hamilton.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Letter to *National Review* 2, no. 20 (October 6, 1956): 23. Cited in Hamilton, “Introduction,” p. 29.

<sup>16</sup>Kirk himself never equaled the success of *The Conservative Mind*. His later columns in *National Review* were largely confined to attacks upon

With its formidable array of anti-Communists and Catholic traditionalists, *National Review* quickly took over the lead and direction of the New Right, which it rapidly remolded in its own image. The “official” line of *National Review* was what came to be called “fusionist,” whose leading practitioners were Meyer and Buckley; “fusionism” stressed the dominance of anti-Communism and Christian order, to be sure, but retained some libertarian rhetoric in a subordinate rank. The importance of the libertarian and Old Right rhetoric was largely political; for it would have been difficult for *National Review* to lead a conservative political revival in this country in the garb of monarchy and Inquisition. Without fusionism, the transformation of the right wing could not have taken place within the form, and might have alienated much of the right-wing mass base. Many of the other *National Review* intellectuals were, in contrast, impatient with any concessions to liberty. These included Kirk’s Tory traditionalism; the various wings of monarchists; and Willmoore Kendall’s open call for suppression of freedom of speech. The great thrust of Kendall, a *National Review* editor for many years, was his view that it is the right and duty of the “majority” of the community—as embodied, say, in Congress—to suppress any individual who disturbs that community with radical doctrines. Socrates, opined Kendall, not only *should* have been killed by the Greek community, but it was their bounden moral *duty* to kill him.

Kendall, incidentally, was symptomatic of the change in attitude toward the Supreme Court from Old Right to New. One of the major doctrines of the Old Right was the defense of the Supreme Court’s role in outlawing congressional and executive incursions against individual liberty; but *now* the New Right, as typified by Kendall, bitterly attacked the Supreme Court day in and day out, and for what? Precisely for presuming to defend the liberty of the individual against the incursions of Congress and the Executive.

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the follies of progressive education. To be fair, Nash’s work reveals that Kirk was really an isolationist Old Rightist during World War II; his shift to the New Conservatism in the early 1950s remains something of a mystery. Nash, *Conservative Intellectual Movement*, pp. 70–76.

Thus, the Old Right had always bitterly attacked the judicial doctrines of Felix Frankfurter, who was considered a left-wing monster for undercutting the activist role of the Supreme Court in declaring various extensions of government power to be unconstitutional; but now Kendall and *National Review* were leading the Right in hailing Frankfurter precisely for this permissive placing of the judicial imprimatur on almost any action of the federal government. By staying in the same place, Felix Frankfurter had shifted from being a villain to a hero of the newly transformed Right, while it was now such libertarian activists as Justices Black and Douglas who received the abuse of the right wing. It was getting to be an ever weirder right-wing world that I was inhabiting. It was indeed the venerable Alexander Bickel, a disciple of Frankfurter's at Yale Law School, who converted young professor Robert Bork from a libertarian to a majoritarian jurist.

At the opposite pole from the Catholic ultras, but at one with them in being opposed to liberty and individualism, was James Burnham, who since the inception of *National Review* has been its cold, hard-nosed, amoral political strategist and resident Machiavellian. Burnham, whose *National Review* column was entitled "The Third World War," was the magazine's leading power and global anti-Communist strategist. In a lifetime of political writing, James Burnham has shown only one fleeting bit of positive interest in individual liberty: and that was a call in *National Review* for the legalization of firecrackers!

On the more directly political front, *National Review* obviously needed a "fusionist" for its political tactician, for the direct guidance of conservatism as a political movement. It found that tactician in its publisher, the former Deweyite Young Republican Bill Rusher. A brilliant political organizer, Rusher was able, by the late 1950s, to take over control of the College Young Republicans, and then the National Young Republican Federation.

Heading a group called the "Syndicate," Rusher has managed to control the national Young Republications ever since. In 1959, *National Review* organized the founding of the Young Americans for Freedom at Bill Buckley's estate at Sharon, Connecticut. Young Americans for Freedom soon grew to many thousand strong, and



became in effect the collegiate youth-activist arm of the *National Review* political complex. Unfortunately, the bulk of young libertarians at the time stayed solidly in the conservative movement; heedless of the foreign policy betrayal of the Old Right, these young libertarians and semi-libertarians well served the purposes of *National Review* by lending the patina of libertarian rhetoric to such ventures as Young Americans for Freedom. Thus, Young Americans for Freedom's founding Sharon Statement was its only even remotely close approach to libertarianism; its actual activities have always been confined to anticommunism, including the attempted interdiction of trade with the Communist countries—and lately were expanded to attempting legal suppression of left-wing student rebellions. But the libertarian veneer was supplied not only by the title and by parts of the Sharon Statement, but also by the fact that Young Americans for Freedom's first president, Robert M. Schuchman, was a libertarian anti-Communist who had once been close to the old Circle Bastiat. More typical of the mass base of conservative youth was the considerable contingent at Sharon who objected to the title of the new organization, because, they said, "Freedom is a left-wing word." It would have been far more candid, though less politically astute, if the noble word *freedom* had been left out of Young Americans for Freedom's title.

By the late 1950s, Barry Goldwater had been decided upon as the political leader of the New Right, and it was Rusher and the *National Review* clique that inspired the Draft Goldwater movement and Youth for Goldwater in 1960. Goldwater's ideological manifesto of 1960, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, was ghostwritten by Brent Bozell, who wrote fiery articles in *National Review* attacking liberty even as an abstract principle, and upholding the function of the State in imposing and enforcing moral and religious creeds. Its foreign policy chapter, "The Soviet Menace," was a thinly disguised plea for all-out offensive war against the Soviet Union and other Communist nations. The Goldwater movement of 1960 was a warm-up for the future; and when Nixon was defeated in the 1960 election, Rusher and *National Review* launched a well-coordinated campaign to capture the Republican Party for Barry Goldwater in 1964.

It was this drastic shift to all-out and pervasive war-mongering that I found hardest to swallow. For years I had thought of myself politically as an “extreme right-winger,” but this emotional identification with the right was becoming increasingly difficult. To be a political ally of Senator Taft was one thing; to be an ally of statisticians who thirsted for all-out war against Russia was quite another. For the first five years of its existence I moved in *National Review* circles. I had known Frank Meyer as a fellow analyst for the William Volker Fund, and through Meyer had met Buckley and the rest of the editorial staff. I attended *National Review* luncheons, rallies, and cocktail parties, and wrote a fair number of articles and book reviews for the magazine. But the more I circulated among these people, the greater my horror because I realized with growing certainty that what they wanted above all was total war against the Soviet Union; their fanatical warmongering would settle for no less.

Of course the New Rightists of *National Review* would never quite dare to admit this crazed goal in public, but the objective would always be slyly implied. At right-wing rallies no one cheered a single iota for the free market, if this minor item were ever so much as mentioned; what really stirred up the animals were demagogic appeals by *National Review* leaders for total victory, total destruction of the Communist world. It was that which brought the right-wing masses out of their seats. It was *National Review* editor Brent Bozell who trumpeted, at a right-wing rally: “I would favor destroying not only the whole world, but the entire universe out to the furthestmost star, rather than suffer Communism to live.” It was *National Review* editor Frank Meyer who once told me: “I have a vision, a great vision of the future: a totally devastated Soviet Union.” I knew that this was the vision that really animated the new Conservatism. Frank Meyer, for example, had the following argument with his wife, Elsie, over foreign-policy strategy: Should we drop the H-Bomb on Moscow and destroy the Soviet Union *immediately* and without warning (Frank), or should we give the Soviet regime 24 hours with which to comply with an ultimatum to resign (Elsie)?

In the meanwhile, isolationist or antiwar sentiment disappeared totally from right-wing publications or organizations, as rightists hastened to follow the lead of *National Review* and its burgeoning political and activist organizations. The death of Colonel McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune* and the ouster of Felix Morley from *Human Events* meant that these crucial mass periodicals would swing behind the new pro-war line. Harry Elmer Barnes, the leader and promoter of World War II revisionism, was somehow able to publish an excellent article on Hiroshima in *National Review*, but apart from that, found that conservative interest in revisionism, prominent after World War II, had dried up and become hostile.<sup>17</sup> For as William Henry Chamberlin had discovered, the Munich analogy was a powerful one to use against opponents of the new war drive; besides, any questioning of American intervention in the previous war crusade inevitably cast doubts on its current role, let alone on New Right agitation for an even hotter war. Right-wing publishers like Henry Regnery and Devin-Adair lost interest in isolationist or revisionist works. Once in a while, a few libertarians who had not fallen silent about the war drive or even joined it expressed their opposition and concern; but they could only do so in private correspondence. There was no other outlet available.<sup>18</sup>

Particularly disgraceful was *National Review's* refusal to give the great John T. Flynn an outlet for his opposition to the Cold War. The doughty veteran Flynn, who had, interestingly enough, championed Joe McCarthy, bitterly opposed the New Right emphasis

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<sup>17</sup>Harry Elmer Barnes, "Hiroshima: Assault on a Beaten Foe," *National Review* 5, no. 19 (May 10, 1958): 441–43. See Murray N. Rothbard, "Harry Elmer Barnes as Revisionist of the Cold War," in *Harry Elmer Barnes: Learned Crusader*, A. Goddard, ed. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Ralph Myles, 1968), pp. 314–38.

<sup>18</sup>Thus, see the letters in the late 1950s of Roland W. ("Rollie") Holmes, and of Dr. Paul Poirot of the FEE staff, in Toy, "Ideology and Conflict," pp. 206–07.

on a global military crusade. In the fall of 1956, Flynn submitted an article to *National Review* attacking the Cold War crusade, and charging, as he had in the 1940s, that militarism was a “job-making boondoggle,” whose purpose was not to defend but to bolster “the economic system with jobs for soldiers and jobs and profits in the munitions plants.” Presenting figures for swollen military spending between the start of Roosevelt’s war buildup in 1939 and 1954, Flynn argued that the economy no longer consisted of a “socialist sector” and a “capitalist sector.” Instead, Flynn warned, there was only the “racket” of military spending, “with the soldier-politician in the middle—unaware of the hell-broth of war, taxes and debt.” The Eisenhower administration, Flynn charged, was no better than its Democratic predecessors; the administration is spending \$66 billion a year, most going for “so-called ‘national security’” and only a “small fraction” spent on “the legitimate functions of government.”

A fascinating interchange followed between Buckley and Flynn. Rejecting Flynn’s article in a letter on October 22, 1956, Buckley had the unmitigated chutzpah to tell this veteran anti-Communist that he didn’t understand the nature of the Soviet military threat, and condescendingly advised him to read William Henry Chamberlin’s latest pot-boiler in *National Review* describing “the difference in the nature of the threat posed by the Commies and the Nazis.” Trying to sugar-coat the pill, Buckley sent Flynn \$100 along with the rejection note. The next day, Flynn returned the \$100, sarcastically adding that he was “greatly obliged” to Buckley for “the little lecture.”

In this way, Buckley used the same argument for depriving Flynn of a publishing outlet that Bruce Bliven and the war liberals had employed when ousting Flynn from the *New Republic* in the 1940s. In both cases Flynn was accused of overlooking the alleged foreign threat to the United States, and in both cases Flynn’s attempted answer was to stress that the real menace to American liberties was militarism, socialism, and fascism at home, imposed in the name of combating an alleged foreign threat. Flynn denied the existence of a Soviet military threat, and warned prophetically that

the executive branch of the government was about to involve us in a futile war in Indo-China.<sup>19</sup>

Virtually the only published echo of the Old Right was a book by the redoubtable Felix Morley who, in the course of decrying the modern New Deal and post-New Deal destruction of federalism by strong central government, roundly attacked the developing and existing American Empire and militarism.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, *National Review's* image of me was that of a lovable though Utopian libertarian purist who, however, must be kept strictly confined to propounding *laissez-faire* economics, to which *National Review* had a kind of residual rhetorical attachment. There was even talk at one time of my becoming an economic columnist for *National Review*. But above all I was supposed to stay out of political matters and leave to the warmongering ideologues of *National Review* the gutsy real-world task of defending me from the depredations of world Communism, and allowing me the luxury of spinning Utopias about private fire-fighting services. I was increasingly unwilling to play that kind of a castrate role.

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<sup>19</sup>On Buckley's rejection of the Flynn article, see Ronald Radosh, *Prophets on the Right: Profiles of Conservative Critics of American Globalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), pp. 272–73; and Radosh, "Preface," in John T. Flynn, *As We Go Marching* (New York: Free Life Editions, 1973), pp. xiv–xv.

<sup>20</sup>Felix Morley, *Freedom and Federalism* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1959), especially the chapters "Democracy and Empire," "Nationalization through Foreign Policy," and "The Need for an Enemy."