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The Other Side of Vietnam:
The Conservative Movement and the Vietnam War

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Abstract of the Dissertation

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The conservative movement was one of the few political movements which supported the Vietnam War. This dissertation looks at the reasons why most conservatives supported the Vietnam War and how that affected the Right's political philosophy. The Right's anti-communist and anti-liberal identity explains much of the reasons why it supported the war, but supporting the unpopular war greatly affected the movement's makeup and ideology. Complicating movement cohesion was the presence of a conservative anti-war protest movement.

This dissertation's central argument is that the politics of supporting the war helped unravel the movement's various intellectual factions, largely resulting in the separation of conservatives who supported the war from those who did not. The Right's internal debates about the Vietnam War help explain why the American conservative movement underwent a significant ideological transformation in the wake of Barry Goldwater's defeat in the 1964 presidential election. The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed the rise of the Religious Right and the declining influence of libertarians.

By explaining how libertarians dissented against the Vietnam War, and examining the hateful rhetoric by mainstream conservatives toward libertarians, I argue that this helped weaken the connection between libertarians (who supported individual freedom) and the Right. Simultaneously, Christian anti-communists, who were often Christian Evangelicals, strongly endorsed the war. This helped strengthen ties between the Religious Right and conservatism, which developed into a fruitful relationship, forever changing the ideology of the conservative movement

To my family,
for your friendship through the years,
for offering me loving support,
and for helping me through my trying times.

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My personal journey began nearly a decade ago as an undergraduate student at McGill University. McGill's world-class history department inspired me to make the study of history my career and my passion. Edward Kohn, Gil Troy, and Leonard Moore inspired me with their teaching. I owe a special thanks to Leonard Moore, whose course on U.S. conservatism introduced me to a world and ideology which still fascinates me today. After graduating McGill and as a young graduate student, I met Donald Critchlow and Gregory Schneider at my first professional conference (back in 2006). You both took me under your wing and offered valuable guidance, helping me to focus my efforts on the Right and the Vietnam War. And to Nicole Hemmer, whose meetings over the last few years have shaped and refined my ideas about modern conservatism.

At Stony Brook University, I matured from a young and raw graduate student into a professional historian. Themis Chronopoulos and Gene Lebovics, among many others, have helped guide me along this long and trying path. Since my first year here, they have helped me expand my world and blossom professionally. Their thoughts, classes, and advice have changed the way I think about history. I also offer a special thanks to Alan Brinkley, whose seminar in 2006 was both challenging and interesting, and whose frequent meetings over the last few years have helped me keep the larger historiography in perspective. Finally, I owe significant gratitude to Michael Barnhart has who served as my advisor since 2004. Without his guidance and influence I doubt that I would have succeeded. If imitation is the greatest form of flattery, I hope to imitate Barnhart's teaching style. I have learned much from every faculty member and I thank you all.

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I did not conduct this journey alone, and to everyone in my life over the last six years, I am grateful.

Sincerely,

Seth Offenbach

Introduction:
The Other Side of Vietnam

In the introductory paragraph of Senator Barry Goldwater's political manifesto *The Conscience of a Conservative,* he expresses his outrage at Vice-President Richard Nixon who urged politicians to act as: "economic conservatives, but conservatives with a heart."[1] This comment echoes a common refrain—which holds true in contemporary society—that only liberals look out for the lower and middle classes. In 2000, Governor George W. Bush ran for president campaigning as a compassionate conservative, insinuating that others on the Right were cruel and indifferent. When conservative Senator Tom Coburn blocked a proposed extension for unemployment insurance, on concerns of adding to the federal deficit in April 2010, Democrats and media pundits derided his "callous" political stance.[2] Finally, the contemporary Tea Party movements frequently fights the claim that they are racist imbeciles who care little for the plight of the uninsured and those outside the middle class. The image of the conservative who cares little about others has survived since the end of the Herbert Hoover administration.

In addition to the refrain that they are heartless, conservatives must also contend with the label that they are war mongers. Early in the Cold War conservatives pushed for a tough-on-communism foreign policy. Since then, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, and drugs served as

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[1] Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, 22nd ed. (New York: MacFadden Books, 1964), 9.

[2] Carl Hulse, "Congressional Memo: What Is and Isn't Appropriate Deficit Spending?" *New York Times*, April 10, 2010: A16.

issues for conservatives to advocate for strict measures. Yet, there are consequences to this political calculation. Regarding the historical memory surrounding the Vietnam War, blame for starting and supporting the failed war effort often lies with the Right. This historical memory portrays liberal Democratic Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson as actors in an anti-communist political discourse largely created by conservatism. Kennedy and Johnson were trying to protect their identity as Cold Warriors while avoiding defeat in South Vietnam.[3]

These general assumptions fail to properly account for the Right's response to the Vietnam War. Ironically, in all of the vast literature covering the Vietnam War, few scholars have analyzed precisely what conservatives said about the war. A few chapters from larger books regarding conservatism in general, such as Donald Critchlow's *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism* and Rebecca Klatch's *A Generation Divided,* mention that the war divided the movement.[4] Yet, both works fail to delve deeper into the general historical assumption that the war placated the American Right. Historian Andrew Johns's *Vietnam's Second Front* inspects the politics of the Republican Party's response to the war. However, Johns work focuses on the politicians in Congress and in the Republican Party more than on the conservative movement.

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[3] One example of this is George Herring's masterful account of the Vietnam War, *America's Longest War*, where he blames America's involvement in the Vietnam War on the general containment policy. Although this does not specifically place blame on the Right, it does imply that the ardent anti-communism of the era (which the Right nearly unanimously endorses) was to blame.
Quote from: George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975*, Fourth ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2002), XIII.

In a more recent work, Andrew Johns chronicles how the Republican Party wanted to push Johnson into war: Andrew Johns, *Vietnam's Second Front: Domestic Politics, the Republican Party, and the War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

[4] Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (California: University of California Press, 1999).

Throughout the 1960s, most Republicans were not conservative, and most influential conservatives were not in Congress.[5] Partially because the historical scholarship on modern conservatism is relatively recent and small (compared to the historiography of the Left), no historian has yet set out to write a comprehensive narrative regarding the complexity behind the conservative response to the Vietnam War.

In focusing on foreign policy and the Vietnam War, my dissertation "The Other Side of Vietnam" inserts itself directly into a complex debate regarding the relationship between domestic politics and foreign policy. Many works trace the influence of domestic politics on foreign policy.[6] However this dissertation recognizes an opposite influence. This work recognizes how foreign policy events complicate domestic politics. For instance, conservatives' inability to alter the U.S. foreign policy during the war frustrated many within the movement. This frustration increased internal divisions, rendering the movement temporarily impotent.

This study seeks to expand historians' understanding of the Right's reaction to Vietnam through analyzing the changing discourse of conservatism. Far from simply supporting an expanded war effort, the conservative response was multifaceted and changed as the war progressed. Additionally, the movement altered its approach to the war because Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Richard Nixon did not endorse the conservative movement. Not having an outlet in the White House to espouse its proposals frustrated the movement and its leadership,

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[5] Johns, *Vietnam's Second Front*.

[6] Examples of works which follow this format are: Sandra Scanlon, "The Conservative Lobby and Nixon's 'Peace with Honor' in Vietnam," *Journal of American Studies* 43, no. 2 (2009); Jeremi Suri, "Detente and Its Discontents " in *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservate in the 1970s*, ed. Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008); Julian Zelizer, *Arsenal of Democracy: The Politics of National Security from World War Ii to the War on Terrorism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2009).

which hurt the movement's ability to expand. As this dissertation demonstrates, these shortfalls helped precipitate eventual changes in the movement's ideology.[7]

To help identify the Right's changing ideology, this work examines the national political movement from three perspectives: the elite and intellectual leaders of the Right, the cadre organizations which help bind the movement together, and the grassroots individuals and organizations. By inspecting these different views, I am able to identify how these groups interacted and how their political discourse evolved. This methodological approach is advantageous because it allows for an incorporation of the elite's views while moving beyond their narrative and incorporating the opinions and beliefs of others from this large and national movement.

This study tracks the transformation of a large and diverse movement's identity and ideology over ten years. In order to accomplish this task, I began my research by understanding the elite's general perspective through a close reading of the national leading conservative publications *National Review* and *Human Events*. This was advantageous because it allowed me to understand what many popular conservatives believed during this period. National leaders and organizations often present different opinions in public and private; I thus inspected the personal and professional correspondence of various groups and individuals. This included public figures such as William F. Buckley, Clarence Manion, Frederich von Hayek, and Walter Judd, as well as

[7] Although Nixon was a Republican, he was not a conservative, largely because his domestic policies differed from the conservative movement's philosophy, as did his foreign policy of détente. The divide between Nixon and the conservative movement will be expanded on in greater detail in Chapter Six.

influential leaders whose names were less well known, such as William Rusher, Roger Freeman, and Henry Regnery.[8]

Focusing exclusively on these influential conservatives ignores the thoughts and beliefs of the majority of conservative participants. To give a voice to the grassroots participants, I worked to incorporate local organizations. The archives at the Hoover Institute and the Group Research Papers at Columbia University were very helpful in this manner as they each house large collections of literature from small groups and local publications. This helps me give a voice to local conservative organizations that were influencing politics from the ground up.

The primary cadre organization of this period was the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). Young future leaders of the conservative movement populated YAF's National Board. Members of the board often had close relations with national leaders, notably members of *National Review*'s editorial board. Despite their close association with the elite, YAF leaders rarely viewed themselves as leading the Right in a new intellectual direction, instead their primary role was to lead a large network of grassroots supporters. Throughout this work, problems and changes to YAF's ideology and culture often foreshadowed future conflicts with

[8] This list is not exhaustive of all the persons or archives visited, more detailed list of sources, see Bibliography. William F. Buckley, an iconic conservative pundit wrote the nationally syndicated column *On the Right* and hosted the television program *Firing Line* for much of this period, has his personal papers at Yale University. Clarence Manion, a radio personality, left his papers to the Chicago Historical Society. Frederich von Hayek, an author and Nobel Prize winning economist, along with Walter Judd, a popular speaker and Congressman, left papers at the Hoover Institute at Stanford University. William Rusher was the publisher of the *National Review* and donated papers to the Library of Congress. Roger Freeman was an academic and occasional author while Henry Regnery was an important publisher of Right wing books, both men left their papers to the Hoover Institute.

the greater conservative movement, demonstrating the power the grassroots held over the organization and the movement.[9]

The Conservative Movement and the Vietnam War

At the heart of this work's argument resides an investigation how fundamental disagreements about the war altered the conservative movement. Political movements and ideologies change with time, but the radical events of the era forced equally drastic changes. These changes help explain the rise of the New Right—a newly re-formulated conservative movement—in the mid 1970s, post-Vietnam. The ideology and social networks of contemporary conservatism grew out of the New Right, and this study argues that the New Right was a direct response to the failure of the 1960s conservatism and divisions concerning the Vietnam War. One of the major changes analyzed in this study concerns the increased emphasis placed on religious values within the New Right compared to the ideology of the conservative movement before the Vietnam War.

The movement's response to Vietnam occurred during a tumultuous period for conservatives. As much of the recent historical scholarship about the Right has indicated, this was an exciting period of growth for conservatism. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, historical interest in conservatism after Goldwater's failed 1964 presidential bid has grown rapidly. This post-Goldwater period remains extremely important largely because it represents

[9] YAF published much material that is scattered throughout most of the archives I visited. Columbia University houses the largest collection of published materials from local YAF chapters, and the best collection of internal memos is in the Patrick Dowd Papers at the Hoover Institute Archives.

the rise of the New Right movement. The New Right is particularly relevant because it gave rise to Ronald Reagan's successful presidential campaign in 1980.[10]

Historical interest in Reagan has never been higher than it is today.[11] This curiosity partially derives from historians having difficulty placing Reagan's political legacy into a historical context. Reagan's presidency ushered in a quarter-century of conservatism in American politics to the White House. However, unlike President Franklin Roosevelt, whose election in the midst of the Great Depression ushered in thirty-five years of liberalism into American politics, Reagan had no major cataclysmic event to jump start his agenda. Conservatism appeared to have come out of nowhere. Certainly conservatives existed before Reagan, but few of them succeeded in politics. Amidst these revelations, Reagan needs explaining, and this work adds to the rapidly expanding historiography on the birth of modern conservatism.

"The Other Side of Vietnam" adds to the historiography of the New Right by arguing that the Right's transformation in the 1960s and 1970s was the by-product of internal turmoil. This work demonstrates that the movement changed radically between Goldwater and Reagan. Sixteen years separated their presidential bids and United States' longest war—the Vietnam

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[10] Examples are: Bruce Schulman and Julian Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound: Making America Conservative in the 1970s* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,2008); Adam Clymer, *Drawing the Line at the Big Ditch: The Panama Canal Treaties and the Rise of the Right* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2008); Philip Jenkins, *Decade of Nightmares: The End of the Sixties and the Making of Eighties America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[11] Some excellent examples of recent political biographies of Reagan include: Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (New York: Harper Collins 2008); John Patrick Diggins, *Ronald Reagan: Fate, Freedom and the Making of History* (New York: Norton, 2007); Gil Troy, *Morning in America: How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980's* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Cheryl Hudson and Gareth Davies, eds., *Ronald Reagan and the 1980s: Perceptions, Policies, Legacies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan,2008).

War—occurred during the interim. It stood as the greatest U.S. military defeat. The war provoked widespread internal turmoil about the legality and nature of the war, altering U.S. politics and culture for the rest of the century. In the midst of domestic upheavals, conservatism's philosophy changed. Conservatism's evolution helps explain why the 1970s were a special time for the movement and why the New Right was a new ideology. Even without the Vietnam War the conservative philosophy would have evolved, but the conflict sped up the process.

Most of the conservative movement supported U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War. This work expands upon the movement's logic for supporting the war in a clearer and more concise manner than previously done. Members of the Right supported the war because they believed that Vietnam stood as a pivotal battle in the Cold War to decide the fate of several other Southeast Asian nations. Additionally, throughout the war, and as late as 1971 (less than fifteen months before the United States and North Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accords), many on the Right believed that the United States could achieve a decisive victory. Understanding why conservatives stubbornly believed that the United States could prevail and why they supported the war will help scholars gain a fuller understanding of the domestic discourse and foreign policy of the era.

Between Goldwater's 1964 Republican presidential nomination and Reagan's 1980 presidential election, the Right proved unable to successfully nominate another conservative for president (despite repeated attempts). This failure partially resulted from an internal frustration about the course of the Vietnam War. The war consumed the attention of most conservatives. Support for the failed war proved detrimental to the movement's ability to expand. Additionally, conservatives focused their attention on fighting the anti-war Left. As a result, the movement's

ideology remained stagnant. The leadership frequently complained about a malaise that ran throughout the movement, but they could not shake it while the war lasted.

In addition to fighting the anti-war Left, the conservative leadership also had to contend with a growing anti-war Right movement emanating from the grassroots. While most conservatives supported the war, many libertarians, who composed a vocal minority of the conservative movement, disapproved of the war. This division caused a rift, which hastened a major change in the movement's ideology. The resulting change was the formation of the New Right; which was a new political philosophy largely because libertarianism was less central to the philosophy. Compared to the Goldwater movement, the Reagan revolution relied more heavily upon religious conservatives and less upon libertarians. Divisions about Vietnam help explain the initial impetus behind this transformation.

Libertarian anti-war advocacy is complex, and yet the historiography of the Right mostly minimizes it. Two separate essays by John Andrew and Jonathan Schoenwald in Marc Gilbert's *The Vietnam War on Campus* are some of the few works that expand the understanding of libertarians and Vietnam. However, both historians limit their studies to narrow aspects of the conservative response to the war. Schoenwald analyzes the student libertarian movement and its opposition to Vietnam, and Andrew focuses on the libertarian influence in the youth-centric conservative anti-draft movement.[12] Neither historian attempts to integrate student groups into

[12] John A. Andrew, III, "Pro-War and Anti-Draft: Young Americans for Freedom and the War in Vietnam," in *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums*, ed. Marc Jason Gilbert (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001); Jonathan M. Schoenwald, "No War, No Welfare, and No Damn Taxation: The Student Libertarian Movement, 1968-1972," in *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums*, ed. Marc Jason Gilbert (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001).

the greater conservative movement. Thus, their pieces are useful in shedding light on a new topic not extensively discussed in the historiography.

Prior to Andrew and Schoenwald's pieces, much of the historiography reflected commonly accepted conservative lore that the Vietnam War was never the most important issue for the movement. Sara Diamond's *Roads to Dominion*, along with other works, represents this opinion. Essentially these studies argue that conservatives in the 1960s focused their concerns on other issues, such as conservative support for small government or the movement's opposition to Civil Rights and/or the Supreme Court, ignoring foreign policy.[13]

Over the last few years I have had the privilege to meet many conservative activists from the 1960s and 1970s. In discussing my project with them, they have expressed the opinion that conservatives supported the war, and that there was little else to say on the subject. In some cases they have adamantly recommended that I pursue studies on a different topic. However, even a cursory inspection of the movement's literature throughout the 1960s and early 1970s shows that the movement devoted an extremely large portion of its time and energy to the war and that the subject is rather complex.

Lisa McGirr's groundbreaking work *Suburban Warriors* helped historians put grassroots conservatism into a clear perspective of post-World War II U.S. society. In her work, she documents internal changes taking place within the movement's philosophy, and she alludes to the role Vietnam played in shifting this philosophy. Specifically, she claims that the movement's

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[13] Diamond's work provides an excellent portrayal of post-World War II conservatism, but her only reference to the effects of the Vietnam War on the movement was a brief section on how the extremist John Birch Society became even more extreme because they believed the war was a communist plot to destroy America.
Sara Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1995), 147-48.

ideology changed its focus from anti-communism to morality. McGirr suggests that the war played a role in this philosophical shift, yet she does not discuss the war. In fact, like much of the historiography of conservatism, McGirr almost completely ignores the war.[14] This absence, by default, accepts the consensus that the Vietnam War played an important role in U.S. history, but that the conflict is nominally important for the history of the conservative movement.

The Birth of Modern Conservatism

Prior to the Vietnam War, the conservative movement's ideology grew out of a post-World War II ideology supporting a philosophy of smaller government, traditional community values, and an ardent anti-communism. Several academic works helped facilitate the rise of the Right. Fredrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*, Whittaker Chambers' *Witness*, and Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* serve as three of the more prominent works during the early years of the movement's rise. All three represent different aspects of the emerging conservative philosophy. They stand united with their advocacy for a society free from communism and government interference in private life. Conservatives also warned of the dangers exhibited by an over-expansionist government. They believed that if a government became too large, it was bound to become totalitarian.[15]

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[14] The only reference within McGirr's work to Vietnam was on page 186 where she wrote: "[the shift in the movement's philosophy] went hand in hand with the rise of the New Left… and the Vietnam War." After that, she did not mention Vietnam again.
Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 186.

[15] Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana* (Chicago: Regnery Co., 1953); Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York: Random House, 1952); Friedrich von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* examines the prospects the Western world faced in the early years of the Cold War. Hayek, whose later work earned him a Nobel Prize in economics, asserted that economic collectivism led directly to tyranny. The work stood as a warning to Western societies to avoid the trap of collectivism. Hayek became a leading promoter of libertarianism. One of his prominent causes was to oppose government expansion on ideological grounds. In his opinion, power inevitably seduces large governments, and they become tyrannical and destroy individual freedoms.

Whittaker Chambers's *Witness* is the only one of these three works that was an instant best seller. Chambers served as the star witness in the Alger Hiss case in 1948, accusing Hiss of spying for the Soviet Union. In *Witness*, a semi auto biographic account of his life as a communist, Chambers reveals his perception of the true nature of communism and warns Americans of the dangers it represents. Chambers describes the evils of Soviet purges and destruction. Although written in the early Cold War years, during the peak of mass-hysteria regarding communism, it retained its value and influence over the conservative movement for decades to come. Many conservative leaders credited *Witness* for having helped open their eyes to the seriousness of the Soviet threat.[16]

Finally, Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* places the rise of modern American conservatism into a larger political history. Kirk describes how modern conservatism extended the principles of Edmund Burke from eighteenth century England, and he connected 1950s conservatism and traditional values to an earlier period in Western European history. Kirk's work argues for the supremacy of traditional moral values in holding society together. Although

[16] One example is William Rusher, who wrote in 1984 that he was drawn to Chambers's anti-communism based largely on *Witness*: William A. Rusher, *The Rise of the Right* (New York: Morrow, 1984), 24.

Kirk's view differed with the libertarian tradition of individual freedom, the two philosophies were united behind an idea that communism worked to crush all freedoms. Most importantly, communism quelled individual and religious freedoms. Kirk's work helped add a religious and moral angle to conservatism, something anti-communism and libertarian economics lacked.

The three works represent different aspects of conservatism that came together in the mid 1950s. In 1955 the promising young scholar William F. Buckley founded a new conservative magazine, *National Review.* The magazine featured both Russell Kirk and Whittaker Chambers on its early editorial board. Frank Meyer, another editor, was also a former communist activist turned anti-communist and free-market libertarian. Meyer believed traditional values played a role in U.S. society and that conservatives should value them. Meyer helped convince Buckley and the *National Review* to embrace a newer form of conservatism, merging anti-communism, libertarianism, and traditional moral values into one philosophy called fusionism.[17]

Fusionism united the conservative elite in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Fusionism believed that *laissez-faire* economics, individual freedom through a small central government, and traditional moral values could unite behind an ardent opposition to communism. If Soviet Communism stood for an intrusive government removing freedoms from individuals, as conservatives believed communism did, then conservatives were united under the idea that their ideology was the most ardently anti-communist ideology in the United States. Fusionism united the three philosophies behind anticommunism and into one cohesive movement.

By 1960 much of the conservative elite solidly backed making the fusionism ideology work. Additionally, the ideology began trickling down to the grassroots level. Two prominent

[17] For an excellent and complete history of intellectual conservatism and fusionism, see: George Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

documents help demonstrate the hold fusionism had on most of the movement in 1960: Barry Goldwater's *The Conscience of a Conservative* and the Sharon Statement, the founding statement of principles of the Young Americans for Freedom. These are two of the clearest explanations of a fusionist ideology, and both became immensely popular with the newer generation of grassroots conservatives.[18]

Goldwater's work became an instant phenomenon within the movement. Ghost written by L. Brent Bozell, William Buckley's brother-in-law and an editor at *National Review, The Conscience of a Conservative* clearly articulated various conservative principles. Goldwater's work gave equal weight to the various intellectual strands behind conservatism. Written as a direct response to a common refrain of the era that conservatives were cold-hearted proselytizers of *laissez-faire* economics, without regard for the human suffering of the poor, Goldwater argued that conservatives were very compassionate. *Conscience* combined the ideas that people can only achieve happiness when granted spiritual and economic freedoms. Additionally, he turned the liberal argument upside down by arguing that liberals and communists (whom he paints with the same broad strokes) attempt to limit freedom by imposing economic restrictions on people. Thus, *Conscience* represents a philosophy clearly related to Meyer's fusionism.

The Conscience of a Conservative represented one of the best examples of the conservative leadership successfully propelling a young politician to the top of the movement. Although Goldwater was already a conservative leader when the book was published, his popularity soared immediately following the publication of *Conscience*. The book sold over 3.5

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[18] Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*.
A copy the Sharon Statement is published in the appendix of: John A. Andrew, III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997).

million copies within four years despite the fact that Victor Publishing Company, a small company based in Kentucky, with few previous successful works, initially published it. Millions of conservatives credited this work with transforming their lives, and they assert it changed their political outlook.[19] *Conscience* also propelled Goldwater to the top of the movement where he represented the undisputed face of the previously downtrodden political ideology. Within two years of the publication of *Conscience*, a grassroots draft-Goldwater movement arose convincing him to run for president. Much of his grassroots supporters stemmed directly from people influenced by this work.[20]

The same year Goldwater's book spread throughout the movement, the Sharon Statement was adapted as the founding statement of principles for the Young Americans for Freedom at its founding conference in September 1960. The delegation of 98 conservative youths comprised mostly college students, and it convened at Buckley's family estate in Sharon, Connecticut. At the Sharon Conference, these young conservative activists agreed to form a national conservative youth organization to educate and advocate for conservative principles. Over the course of the

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[19] Although bulk corporate consumption bolstered *Conscience*'s sales, many conservatives cited the book throughout the twentieth century as an inspirational force in their lives. Two works that support this view are: Klatch, *Generation Divided*, Chapter 3; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 134-36.

[20] Goldwater initially opposed the draft-Goldwater movement, but was quickly convinced not to squash it. Although the Draft Goldwater movement had clear leadership from within conservative circles (and from within the *National Review* leadership), it still received a tremendous amount of grassroots support from young conservatives who were moved by Goldwater's politics. Many of those individuals went on to lead conservatism throughout the remainder of the century, and they credited Goldwater's campaign, and his book, as having inspired their political careers. Two insider accounts of the Draft Goldwater movement are: Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*; F. Clifton White and William Gil, *Suite 3505: The Story of the Goldwater Movement* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1967).
For a historical account of the effects of Goldwater's movement on politics, see: Rick Perlstein, *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001).

next decade and a half, YAF served as one of the major organizations for conservative youths, allowing them to work together to help campaign for favored candidates (notably Goldwater and later Ronald Reagan). YAF also organized protests opposing the New Left and in support of the Vietnam War. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, YAF represented one of the largest grassroots organizations within conservatism.[21]

Written primarily by M. Stanton Evans, a young writer for the *Indianapolis Star* who later served as the president of the American Conservative Union in the 1970s, the Sharon Statement represents a clean and clear articulation of fusionism. Many members of the Right still view it as one of the most lucid articulations of conservative principles (despite its references to international communism).[22] The opening sentences of the statement encapsulate how conservatives used freedom and anti-communism to fuse together libertarian and traditionalist ideologies:

> THAT foremost among the transcendent values is the individual's use of his God-given free will, whence derives his right to be free from the restrictions of arbitrary force;
> THAT liberty is indivisible, and that political freedom cannot long exist without economic freedom;[23]

These statements make clear that religious values are important to individual freedom, but they also state the need for economic freedom. The Sharon Statement concludes with a call for Americans and the world to recognize that international communism is the "single greatest threat

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[21] For the most comprehensive works on YAF's history see: Andrew, *Sixties*; Klatch, *Generation Divided*; Gregory L. Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

[22] Richard Viguerie, an early member of YAF and an influential figure within the conservative movement throughout Reagan's presidency still has a copy of the Sharon Statement hanging in his office even though he was not at the Sharon Conference.

[23] Andrew, *Sixties*, Appendix A, 221.

to these liberties."[24] This statement serves as a warning that economic, religious, and individual freedoms are all lost under communism.

The fusionism ideology held strong within the conservative movement throughout the early 1960s. It was the ideological push behind Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential nomination. Although Goldwater is more closely associated with small government and states' rights libertarians, he held the roles of tradition and religion in society in high regard.[25] Most conservatives of the time supported Goldwater and fusionism.

Fate and the American public did not favor Goldwater in 1964. He lost the election by 15 million votes – the largest vote differential at that point in U.S. history. The first conservative nominated by a major party since the end of World War II miserably failed in the election. Losing landslide elections can often cause turmoil within political movements, and major defeats often result in an introspective review of the movement's strategy and ideology. But in this unusual case, the movement did not go through a period of introspection. Part of the reason was because conservatives were well prepared for Goldwater's defeat. In September 1964, less than two months before the election, William F. Buckley gave a speech at the YAF National Convention warning his young conservative followers of "the impending defeat of Barry Goldwater." Buckley understood the same thing as most American pundits. They recognized

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[24] *Ibid*, 221.

[25] Contemporary understanding of Goldwater has made it seem as though he was a leading libertarian. This view is not an accurate description of his ideology in the 1964 campaign. By the late 1970s, however, he split away from the conservative movement largely over disagreements regarding the role of religion and government, which makes some believe he was always a libertarian, however that misses a more nuanced understanding of his policy ideas in the context of the 1960s. For more on this misperception see: Erik B. Alexander, ed., "Goldwater a Libertarian?" (email discussion thread on H-Pol listserv July 2009) http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=lx&list=h-pol&user=&pw=&month=0906

Johnson rolling to an easy electoral victory. Hence, Buckley began preparing the younger generation for the pain of defeat.[26]

Much of the movement's leadership recognized Goldwater's impending electoral loss. Many leaders prepared for four more years of life with Lyndon Johnson in the White House, which helped keep the movement's leaders united in the face of defeat. In fact, many conservative organizations used the defeat to help begin membership drives. They productively rallied support behind Goldwater's success in winning the nomination, and they argued that with more effort the movement could defeat Johnson in 1968. Many conservative organizations expanded their membership in 1964 and 1965, demonstrating the resolve within the grassroots towards a greater support for the movement. In order to keep a movement going, ideologies need a leader and a cause. With another presidential campaign four years off, conservatives lacked both a cause and a leader.

Shortly after the election, Lyndon Johnson sent American combat troops to South Vietnam in an effort to end fighting there. Johnson sought to protect South Vietnam from falling into the hands of the Communist North Vietnamese. Considering that fusionism relied heavily upon anti-communism, this agenda appeared as a natural conservative rallying point. As this work demonstrates, the conservative movement utilized the expansion of the Vietnam War as a political tool to rally support. The war happened at a particularly opportune time for conservatives. They had just lost a major political election, and they needed a cause. Thus, the Vietnam War became a focal point within the movement.

In order to properly explain how the political discourse surrounding the Vietnam War affected the conservative movement's ideology, this work breaks down the topic thematically.

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[26] Schneider, *Cadres*, 85-86.

The first chapter explains why the conservative movement initially supported the expansion of the Vietnam War. It chronicles the conservative argument and the military strategy the movement's leadership recommended, including lobbying Johnson to consider using the atomic bomb. It also chronicles the rise of anti-war dissent within the movement, as well as the rise of a pro-war, anti-draft movement. The second chapter explains why the movement continued to support the war throughout Nixon's presidency. This chapter expands upon the movement's strategy recommendations, as well as the rising tensions within the movement. During these years, there was a rise in libertarian dissent against the war, and the chapter explains why many libertarians opposed the war. These chapters show how conservatives promoted relatively unpopular steps, such as expanding the war into Laos and Cambodia. By promoting unpopular policies, conservatives found it difficult to expand their political power or continue to dictate the Republican nominees.

The rest of the work is divided based upon the movement's ideology. Chapters Three and Four deal with the views of libertarians and traditionalists regarding the Vietnam War. Generally, libertarians became increasingly anti-war, and by 1969 a sizable number of libertarians forsook the conservative movement and formed their own political movement. Chapter Three explores how and why the war drove a wedge between the two previously unified groups. Meanwhile, traditionalists became increasingly hawkish as the war progressed. Chapter Four explores how, partially due to the loss of some libertarians, the war helped push traditionalists to coordinate more closely with Christian Evangelicals, who were ardent anti-communists and war hawks.

Chapters Five and Six explore the relationships that the conservative movement had with Presidents Johnson and Nixon. Throughout the early years of the war, conservatives did not have

a great influence in the political discourse. As Johnson's term progressed, the movement increasingly came to identify as his opposition on all issues. This made for a complicated identity since most conservatives supported the Vietnam War. This chapter argues that this complex relationship between conservatism, Johnson, and liberalism hindered conservatism's growth as a political movement.

Chapter Six illustrates how Nixon's victory did not help the movement. In 1971, the movement's leadership withdrew support for Nixon's Administration. The leadership continued to support Vietnam, even while they opposed Nixon. By withdrawing support for Nixon, the leadership drove wedges between themselves and the grassroots. This chapter inspects how the war no longer served as a unifying force within the movement. By 1971, many conservatives wished that the war would just go away. Throughout the later years of the war, a malaise within the leadership hurt the movement's political expansion. The malaise was associated with conservatism's inability to expand during the later years of the Vietnam War.

By the time of Ronald Reagan's presidential nomination in 1980, which the New Right promoted, the movement's ideology focused more on morality-based arguments than conservatism previously had. Abortion, homosexuality, and teenage sex played a larger role in politics in the 1970s then they had in the 1960s. The movement's discourse still focused on economics, but it moved away from supporting less governmental interference for the sake of individual liberty to promoting the Laffer Curve for the minimization of taxes.[27] The New Right believed that the Laffer Curve, which theorized that lower taxes helped expand the national

[27] The Laffer Curve is an economic idea that if governments cut taxes then economic production will increase, which will increase tax revenue. This idea would allow governments to decrease taxes without a decrease in tax revenue. The Laffer Curve was a popular idea on the Right in the late 1970s and early 1980s and is commonly associated with Ronald Reagan's policies.

economy and the tax base, was more important than libertarian ideals about freedom. At the heart of both theories was an abhorrence of large government, but the reasons for smaller government varied greatly. Libertarianism was an ideology that focused more attention to individual freedom than economic policy. Conversely, the New Right focused more on tax policies and the economics behind government policies. Meanwhile, the libertarians who split away from conservatives over disagreements about Vietnam, started their own political party. This newly formed party made the final split permanent.

Many individuals who were involved in conservatism throughout the Vietnam War ran the New Right and helped elect Ronald Reagan president in 1980. However, their experiences in handling the pressure of the war changed their outlook and helped push them from the New Right. Disagreements and other problems regarding Vietnam kept the movement as a minority movement throughout the war. This experience altered conservatism's makeup and its ideology, and out of the despair emerged a new political movement. This work challenges older notions of how the Vietnam War helped shape conservatism and how the New Right was formed.

Chapter 1:
Victory in Vietnam

In February 1964, James Burnham, the leading foreign policy columnist for the conservative magazine *National Review*, questioned the United States' policy in South Vietnam. According to Burnham, "It is true that the war in Vietnam, fought under the present strategic restrictions, is going to be lost. And if it is going to be lost anyway, why not pull out now and see what can be salvaged by diplomacy? You can't end up any *worse* off."[1] Burnham expressed the anger and frustration of many conservatives toward President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policy. Burnham, and much of the conservative movement, believed that Johnson was not fighting the war properly. They further believed that without a full-scale expansion and invasion of North Vietnam, the United States could not win the war. Under these circumstances, many conservatives repeatedly called on Johnson to end the war.

The *National Review* published Burnham's column before the United States expanded its investment of ground troops and funding to the Vietnam War. It demonstrates the complexity of the conservative movement's early views of the Vietnam War. Namely, Burnham recognized that victory would require an immense undertaking that most Americans would probably oppose. But he left room for the probability that he, and fellow conservatives, would support Johnson if he exponentially expanded the war.

[1] James Burnham, "The Third World War: Put Up or Shut Up," *National Review*, February 25, 1964.

The conservative movement had a complex relationship with the Vietnam War throughout the war's early years (1964 through 1968). The movement's arguments about the war constantly fluctuated throughout this period. In the beginning, many hesitated to support the war because they disapproved of Johnson's strategy. However, after the large troop buildup in 1965, most conservatives became vocal supporters of the war. Yet, by the end of Johnson's term many felt frustrated with their inability to alter the political and military reality surrounding the Vietnam War, the consequences of which are addressed in later chapters.

Anti-Communism and Vietnam

In the years before the war's escalation, the conservative movement united itself as an ideology grounded in anti-communism. Throughout the movement, voices argued that communism was the greatest evil in the world, and the conservative discourse claimed they stood as one of the last groups in the Western world standing in the way of its defeat. Anti-communism helped keep the movement united. As an example of the draw of anti-communism, when grassroots conservative John Berke wrote to conservative radio personality Clarence Manion, he praised Manion's anti-communism. Berke wrote to Manion, "I can say without reservation that your Manion Forum is the only really anti-Communist program to purify America's sometimes polluted airways."[2] Manion maintained popularity as a radio broadcaster because of his anti-communism, and Berke specifically praised Manion for this quality. This discourse serves as an example of anti-communist waves within the movement, leading to the popularity of groups like the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, the John Birch Society, and the *Mindszenty Report*. All

[2] From Berke to Manion, 29 November 1965, Box 21, Folder1, General Correspondence Nov 1965 Folder, Clarence Manion Papers (hereafter CMP), Chicago Historical Society.

three organizations had grassroots support throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s because they preyed upon fears of communists.

Aside from its anti-communism stance, the conservative movement stood as a disparate group of individuals with different ideological leanings, primarily made up of traditionalists and libertarians. In the early 1960s, academic and political pundit Russell Kirk exemplified traditionalists. Kirk, and other traditionalists, believed that society should to adhere to strong religious and communal values.[3] In contrast, libertarians followed the teachings of Fredrich von Hayek who argued that individual freedom, not communal values, was paramount in society.[4] The combination of these two ideologies marked the formation of the fusionism ideology, which helped guide conservatism prior to 1964.[5]

Though fusionism was a powerful force within conservatism in the late 1950s and 1960s, it took much effort to get the two sides working together. Historian and conservative intellectual George Nash's *The Conservative Intellectual Movement Since 1945*, describes the relationship between traditionalists and libertarians in the 1950s as a "simmering pot" filled with hostility and ill-will.[6] Traditionalists and libertarians generally distrusted the intentions of the other group. Libertarians feared that traditionalists would use the government to help enforce moral order

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[3] Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana*.

[4] von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*.

[5] For a clear definition of the conservative movement's ideology in the early 1960s, see Chapter Introduction or Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*.

[6] Ibid., 171.

while the atheism of many libertarian leaders appalled many traditionalists.[7] Traditionalists also believed that libertarian ideological rigidity led to extremism. Russell Kirk wrote in 1957 that libertarianism is "hostile toward religion, toward patriotism, toward the inheritance of property, and toward the past."[8] This exemplifies the distrust between the two sides.

Despite their animosity, as the 1950s continued, the groups began working together and cooperating on an increasing number of projects, including most notably the election of Senator Barry Goldwater. They recognized that their shared interests of working toward a limited government and a society with some structure outweighed their differences. Helping to ease their recognition of mutual interests was "the consciousness of a mortal enemy."[9] Communism, which was their mutual enemy served to unify these otherwise disparate groups.

Anti-communism was the key intellectual ingredient which helped traditionalists and libertarians come together under the mantle of fusionism. Throughout the late 1950s and into the early 1960s the Right remained staunchly anti-communist. This intense anti-communism manifested itself from a general fear that many conservatives had regarding the urgency of the threat communism posed the United States. Conservatives supported the idea that communists only understood force and violence, and they argued that the United States needed to fight in

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[7] In one incident described by historian Jennifer Burns, libertarian Ayn Rand walked up to William F. Buckley at a party in the 1950s and asked him, in her thick Russian accent: "you arrh too eentelligent to bihleef in Gott!" Buckley, a devout Catholic, was insulted by Rand's remark. Jennifer Burns, *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 139-40.

[8] W. Welsley McDonald, *Russell Kirk and the Age of Ideology* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2004), 154.

[9] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 179.

order to protect the free world. They also believed that the Cold War was going to be a long and harsh struggle between two different ideologies, with the ultimate goal of world domination.[10]

Senator Barry Goldwater, who served as the public face of the conservative movement, expressed the centrality of anti-communism to the fusionism ideology with his popular 1963 book *Why Not Victory?* In it, he argues that the United States "has been at war these past sixteen years with an enemy who has never hidden his objective of destroying us and all other people who cherish freedom."[11] Goldwater wanted to rally support behind the conservative movement's aggressive Cold War foreign policy recommendations. To gain backing, Goldwater asked Americans why the United States settled for a containment policy and not total victory in the Cold War.

Despite the conservative movement's strident anti-communism in the early 1960s, the movement split on the nature and advisability of the Vietnam War. Many conservatives retained their ardent anti-communist beliefs, leading them to support a fight against communists at any time in any corner of the world. These conservatives accepted as fact that the Cuban Missile Crisis was not the Cold War's final proxy battle between the United States and Soviet Union. With long-standing Cold War hot spots Cuba and Germany stabilizing, the fight to rollback communism needed a new battlefront. These conservatives viewed Asia, and specifically Vietnam, as the next logical battlefield.

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[10] The arguments that many conservatives viewed the Cold War as a long term term struggle came from examining their discourse throughout the era. Some specific examples of this are: James Burnham's bi-weekly column in the *National Review* was titled "The Protracted Conflict" Henry J. Taylor, "We Are Falling for Soviet 'Gradualism,'" *Human Events*, February 29, 1964: 12.

[11] Barry Goldwater, *Why Not Victory?*, Second ed. (New York: MacFadden Books, 1964), 15.

Many other conservatives, however, argued that the United States could not succeed in Vietnam without a remarkable effort. They understood that the American public would not tolerate a long and protracted conflict in a small Asian nation. Because of concern regarding public backlash, they argued that Vietnam should not be the destination of the next Cold War battle. The apprehension that some conservatives had regarding the war helps explain the movement's frustration with the lack of progress in later years.

The Right and Vietnam Before 1965

The movement's internal debate about supporting war in Vietnam began in the early 1960s. Before Johnson sent nearly half-a-million American troops into Vietnam in 1965, the South Vietnamese government fought against communist North Vietnam. To conservatives, this battle represented one of the many hot spots in the greater Cold War struggle between capitalism and communism. Every continent in the early 1960s had a major conflict between communist and anti-communist forces. Vietnam did not receive any more prominence within the movement's literature than Cuba, Latin America, Central and Eastern Europe, or Africa. Vietnam merely represented one of many worldwide struggles for liberation.

Although conservatives of this era were concerned with the Cold War and fighting communism, they did not know that Vietnam would be the location of the next major skirmish. Prior to 1965, the movement's discourse regarding African countries like Rhodesia, Zanzibar, and the Congo had more force and flair than discussions about Vietnam. Most likely conservatives viewed Africa as a location with many young governments, and they believed that they could influence African policies more easily than in other parts of the world. Although

conservatives showed concern for Vietnam, the African continent remained a higher priority for many.[12]

The intensive focus on Africa within the conservative movement's discourse indicates that conservatives may have believed the next major Cold War battleground would occur in Africa. With Cuba, Germany, Korea, and China, the sites of previous major skirmishes seemingly settled, conservatives might have believed that the United States could choose the next major battleground. The Right also probably focused on Africa because the greater political discourse in the United States was interested in Africa in the 1960s, caused largely by the Civil Rights and Black Power movements.[13] Additionally, at the time, because African governments were still relatively new, the continent may have appeared to offer some of the most advantageous conditions for victory over communism.[14]

The United States had the unique opportunity to try to make a decision about both the Cold War and Vietnam. The relative lull within the Cold War in 1964 allowed conservatives to formulate a clear policy regarding the next battle. When the discourse focused on Vietnam,

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[12] The subject of the Right's interest in African governance and African anti-communism is extremely interesting and important, but there are no academic works within the historiography helping to explain why conservatives devoted so much time and energy to Africa. My hypothesis is based on the prominence of conservative anti-communism in the early 1960s.

[13] One excellent work that analyzes post-World War II Civil Rights and relates it to a greater discourse about Africa is Peniel E. Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2006).

[14] Some examples of the conservative movement's interest in Africa:
A large percentage of the *National Review*'s foreign policy focus in the first half of 1964 was about Africa. The May 5, 1964, issue of the *National Review* was almost exclusively devoted to Africa.
Other journals, such as *Human Events* were also very interested in Africa. For instance, Senator Barry Goldwater's first editorial for *Human Events* after he announced his candidacy for president was: Barry Goldwater, "Prejudice Abounds in Africa," *Human Events*, January 18, 1964: 10. That article was about African decolonization and communism.

conservatives saw the United States' options as both stark and clear: fight without any strategic restrictions and win the war or get out and fight elsewhere. This rationalization radiated within the movement's literature. These conservatives appeared willing to concede Vietnam if the United States continued the Cold War in more favorable locations.

James Burnham's column, mentioned earlier, exemplifies the more cautious conservative views about engagement in Vietnam. Many within the movement endorsed his underlying belief that the war "is going to be lost." They understood that only a serious expansion of fighting could save South Vietnam. They also believed that Johnson needed a proper policy before he should seriously consider keeping U.S. soldiers in Vietnam.[15]

This wing of the conservative movement publicly sympathized about Johnson's quandary with the war, and their public stances show an internal conflict concerning the nature and advisability of expanding the Vietnam War. For instance, in September 1964 *Human Events*, a leading conservative publication, described the situation in Vietnam as "the wrong enemy, at the wrong time, and in the wrong place." The article described Johnson's options as "having to involve the United States in another Korean-type war or agree to a political Dienbienphu." This statement meant that either Johnson could fight a long war in another country without a realistic chance of victory, or the United States could pull out of Vietnam having lost face, as the French did when they retreated from Dien Bien Phu. Neither option benefited Johnson or the United States.[16]

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[15] James Burnham, "The Third World War: Put Up or Shut Up," *National Review*, February 25, 1964.

[16] From the Allen-Scott Report, "Wrong Enemy at Awkward Time: President Faces Dilemma in South Viet Nam," *Human Events*, September 26, 1964: 3.

The *National Review*, the other leading conservative magazine, also acknowledged the stark contrast Johnson faced. In March 1964, the magazine's editorial "News Brief" section stated that the war "can be lost but not won," and that: "The President's choice is cruel, for there are fearful difficulties, costs and dangers along either horn of the dilemma: either in withdrawal or in the war's enlargement… The truth is that either course would most certainly be unpopular: the shame of retreat or the blood and treasure and risk of bigger war."[17] In short, the *National Review* recognized that Johnson faced few good solutions. The magazine believed that Johnson needed to make a decision regarding Vietnam, but they also recognized that no good options existed.

Conservatives refused to give Johnson the benefit-of-the-doubt regarding any Vietnam decision he made, which made his situation even more difficult. Most of the movement's leadership remained relentlessly partisan, opposing most of Johnson's actions. Most likely they would have vigorously attacked Johnson if he tried to withdraw from Vietnam. As long as conservatism remained anchored on anti-communism, the movement would not allow an American president to back down from communist threats. Most specifically, a liberal Democratic president could not retreat without the Right attacking him. Johnson was stuck in a political minefield, and while the conservative movement understood his problem it had no intention of helping.

Part of the reason why conservative leaders refused to give Johnson any leeway regarding his Vietnam policy was their nearly uniform condemnation of the United States' complicity in

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In the 1960s and 1970s, the name Vietnam was split into two words and spelled: Viet Nam. Throughout this publication, all primary source quotes will spell the name as the primary sources did (usually as two words).

[17] News Brief Editorial, "Vietnamese Schizophrenia," *National Review*, March 10, 1964: 186.

the overthrow of South Vietnam's first President Ngo Dinh Diem in November 1963. Although the extent of involvement by President John Kennedy's Administration in Diem's assassination was not yet common knowledge, conservatives still blamed Kennedy and his successor (Johnson) for the failure of the United States to stop the assassination. In their opinion, Diem was the only South Vietnamese leader capable of staving off communist advances; without his authoritarian leadership in South Vietnam any efforts would fail. With the overthrow of Diem, and in the absence of strong South Vietnamese leadership, victory for the United States appeared unlikely. Since Diem's assassination occurred in a country where the United States was the primary military patron, the movement blamed Johnson for the failure in Vietnam long before the war escalated.[18]

When Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater solicited advice on Southeast Asia in 1964, he sought the aide of former Republican Congressman Walter Judd, an influential leader among the conservative elite in regards to Asian Cold War policy. Judd gave a telling response to Goldwater. He told Goldwater that South Vietnam lost a substantial amount of

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[18] There were at least five instances throughout 1964 where the *National Review* published a story proclaiming that the overthrow of Diem made victory in Vietnam difficult or impossible. One example is:
Editorial, "What's Ahead: Vietnam, Going, Going…" *National Review*, September 15, 1964: 4.

Other sources where conservatives were upset at the assassination:
Ted Lewis from New York *Daily News*, "Foreign Developments Could Defeat LBJ: Cuba, Panama, Viet Nam, Spell Trouble for President," *Human Events*, February 1, 1964: 12.

Clarence Manion, interviewing Suzane Labine, "Chronicle of Disaster in Vietnam: Facts Replace Fictions Fed Us From Our Asian Front Line," *Manion Forum*, December 13, 1964.

Speech by Walter Judd at unknown location, "What Could Have Been Done to Avert the Present Problem in Vietnam?," March 1965, Box 50, Folder 10, Walter Judd Papers [hereafter WJP], Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University (Palo Alto, California).

leadership capability with the assassination of Diem (which occurred a year earlier) and that the United States could not win the war because of it. He argued that:

> the sudden withdrawal of U.S. support from the legitimate government of Viet Nam (the Diem Government) in September of last year [was a major problem]. This withdrawal of support was a critical mistake, not only in terms of the struggle in Viet Nam itself but in terms of our country's reputation for integrity throughout Asia. It also represented an unwarranted retreat before a misinformed public opinion. Had this reversal of policy not been made -- had we stuck by our proven ally, the legal government of Viet Nam, in its widely-misinterpreted difficulties with the Buddhists last year -- we would by now, I believe, be well out of the woods there.

Judd added that due to this major setback, even if the U.S. gave Vietnam its best effort, victory would remain elusive. His assessment concluded that the situation looked grim and it did not warrant "substantially enlarging the area of armed conflict."[19] Almost a year after Diem's assassination, and six months before the troop buildup began, one of the conservative movement's leading Asian Cold War policy experts believed that the United States had already lost Vietnam. He resisted the idea of sending in more troops.

Many other conservative leaders, such as conservative organizer Phyllis Schlafly, agreed with Judd's assessment of the situation in Southeast Asia. However, they took it a step further and believed that, without wasting a substantial amount of resources and causalities, the U.S. could not win the Vietnam War. In the end, little sense could be made of the United States expending capital to take the Cold War to a new location where victory seemed unlikely. Many of these people stayed opposed to the war throughout its entirety on the pragmatic ground that it

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[19] Letter from Judd to Goldwater, 1964, Box 30, Folder 5, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Judd was also not advocating withdrawal from Vietnam. Instead, he recommended following Johnson's 1964 strategy of supplying arms to South Vietnam, helping them to fight the battle without American soldiers. Still, he admitted that success was "doubtful" and that a major military escalation by the U.S. was unwise.

was a distraction from the larger Cold War fight against the Russians and Chinese. They also believed that the United States could disengage from the war without any serious consequences. Still, this group of conservatives made up a dwindling minority of conservatives throughout the war years.

In 1964 most conservatives did not believe that the United States should expand the war because they believed that it was unwinnable. Still, they argued that the United States could not rapidly disengage from Vietnam. These conservatives argued for a middle ground. They wanted the United States to continue to support South Vietnam without putting American soldiers at risk. This middle ground proposal—advocated by many—would have provided military aid to the South Vietnamese with other Asian nations supplying the soldiers. The idea rested on the notion that Asian nations had more immediate security concerns with a communist regime in Vietnam. Conservatives believed that if South Vietnam lost the war, surrounding nations would most likely fall. Thus, these nations would fight harder than the United States.[20]

One of the leading advocates of this approach included conservative analyst and retired general Albert C. Wedemeyer. He believed surrounding Asian nations should lead any military offensive in Vietnam, specifically he named Chiang Kai-shek's Taiwan. In a November 1964 speech to a Bethesda, Maryland crowd, Wedemeyer said: "My concern about Southeast Asia is the dissipation of our resources—manpower and materiel. There are teeming millions in Asia. They should be given the opportunity to fight those Asiatic people who are tools of the Kremlin."[21] Wedemeyer advocated this argument throughout the war.

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[20] This policy is different from Nixon's Vietnamization because it would have required multiple Asian nations to offer troops, including Taiwan. Additionally, the United States would have provided more financial assistance to the South Vietnamese than the U.S. did in 1974 and 1975.

[21] Wedemeyer speech to Rotary Club in Bethedsa, MD, 17 November 1964, Box 20, Folder 1,

Wedemeyer believed his idea was controversial because of fears that including Taiwanese soldiers risked drawing China into the war, but he dismissed that risk.[22] In Wedemeyer's opinion, China would not enter the war because it understood the United States would aggressively defend Taiwan. More so, the Chinese really wanted to avoid a direct confrontation with the United States. He also believed that if the Taiwanese troops went in under the auspice of the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO)—the Southeast Asian equivalent of NATO—then the Chinese government would have less internal pressure to respond.[23] Wedemeyer's plan received a great amount of respect within the conservative movement and many members believed that he offered them a middle ground, an opportunity to oppose communism without entangling the United States in an intractable Asian war.[24]

Despite the popularity of Wedemeyer's approach, pockets of conservatives believed the United States needed to enter and expand the conflict. Unlike broader national organizations and magazines vested in the fusionism coalition, those organizations promoting the war's expansion

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Albert C. Wedemeyer Papers [Hereafter AWP], Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[22] The more prominent reason why political leaders rejected Wedemeyer's suggestion was because: "the Vietnamese fear and will not work with the [nationalist] Chinese."
Letter from Richard Nixon to Wedemeyer, 16 March 1965, Box 53, Folder 30, AWP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[23] John Chamberlain, "Strategic Choices in Viet Nam: While the war goes badly, the Administration ignores the advice of two Far East experts," *Human Events*, June 13, 1964: 10.
A more expansive view of Wedemeyer's argument from 18 months later was found in:
Letter from Wedemeyer to Nixon, 5 February 1966, Box 53, Folder 30, AWP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[24] Close correspondence between Wedemeyer and Walter Judd, Richard Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and other conservatives insinuates his personal relationship to many within the movement; archives located in AWP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Additionally, Wedemeyer was frequently quoted and referenced in print, for example:
Russell Kirk, "'War of Liberation': Strategy For Southeast Asia," *Human Events*, September 19, 1964: 12.

were mostly single-issue entities focused on anti-communism. Specifically, groups such as the American Security Council and American Legion supported a greater war effort almost from the conflict's inception. However, these examples of unconditional support of the war were in the minority within the overall conservative movement. Their ability to support an expanded war resulted partially from their singular focus on the Cold War and not on overall U.S. politics. Although many of these groups had widespread support within the conservative movement, they were not primarily conservative organizations. For example, the American Security Council was a think-tank organization with no stance on the size of the federal government or the role of religion in society. It focused its efforts on U.S. security and winning the Cold War. This garnered the American Security Council a large amount of respect and support among the conservative movement's elite, even though it did not support the broader conservative movement's philosophy.

These organizations supported an expansion of the Vietnam War in 1964 largely because they viewed it as part of the greater Cold War struggle. They also believed if South Vietnam fell to communism then—as Marilyn Manion the daughter of conservative radio commentator Clarence Manion said—"ultimately, we shall not have merely lost Vietnam, nor even 'just Southeast Asia.' If the Communists win Vietnam, it may well be the beginning of the end. Just look at a world map; Eastern Europe, Cuba, the Congo and other parts of Africa, China, Southeast Asia - there isn't too much left, is there? And that is why South Vietnam is so important."[25] The domino theory, which stated that if one Southeast Asian nation fell to

[25] Clarence Manion, and his daughter Marilyn, were the exception regarding supporting the war. Clarence spoke to a broad conservative audience and yet he appeared to support the war beginning in early 1964, however foreign policy was never his primary focus, making the reasoning behind his overall views harder to discern.
"Chronology of Disaster in Vietnam: Facts Replace Fictions Fed Us From Our Asian Front

communism then the rest would fall quickly, dominated conservative anti-communist thinking, and this helped keep some support within the movement toward expanding the Vietnam War.

One of the reasons why conservatives found it difficult to unite behind a single pro- (or anti-) Vietnam War stance was that the Right had no unified memory of the Korean War. There were frequent references to the Korean War throughout the debate about the Vietnam War. Several conservatives such as Phyllis Schlafly opposed the Korean War from its inception because it was a distraction from the greater Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union. Schlafly made essentially the same remarks about the Vietnam War, that it was a waste of military resources.[26] Others believed that the Korean War was a success because the United States achieved its goal of saving South Korea from an aggressive communist invasion.[27]

There were two lessons from the Korean War which most conservatives agreed. First, they believed that when the United States enters a war, it must fight with urgency and abandon. The Right expressed this view both early in the war and often throughout it. In May 1964, a

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Line," *Manion Forum*, 13 December 1964, Box 83, Folder 6, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[26] Schlafly's views on the Korean War: Critchlow, *Schlafly*, 52-56.
Example of Schlafly's belief that Vietnam War was an attempt by the Soviets to get the U.S. into a protracted conflict: Phyllis Schlafly, "The Key to Peace in Viet Nam: Anti-Missile System Would Thwart Red Plans for World Conquest," *Manion Forum*, 28 August 1966, Box 83, Folder 6, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[27] One person who expressed this view was Daniel Lyons, who was generally an optimist compared to many others on the Right. He rarely believed that the communists were on the verge of victory in the Cold War. Lyons argued that the U.S. military effort in Korea stopped an aggressive Chinese expansion.
Daniel Lyons, "What Should We Do With China?" *Human Events*, April 12, 1969: 16-17(240-241).
Note that beginning in 1966, *Human Events* ran two different numbers on each page. One sequential for each issue and one continuous set for the entire year. Hereafter I list both sets of page numbers, the first one is the new number for that issue and then in brackets the sequential number.

group of conservative activists, financed by Marvin Liebman, took out an advertisement which asked: "Why must we repeat the tragic errors of Korea – where 54,246 Americans gave up their lives in a war that we had no intention of winning? Must the same number be sacrificed for the same empty reasons in Viet Nam?"[28] Four years later, John Chamberlain, writing in *Human Events*, revisited the end of the Korean War and declared that the war ended once Dwight Eisenhower won the 1952 presidential election and threatened the Chinese with total nuclear war. In Chamberlain's version of history, Eisenhower's assertiveness and his increasingly aggressive military strategy forced the North Koreans into accepting the truce and ending the war.[29]

The second lesson which the Right took from the Korean War was that protracted negotiations with the communists hurt the United States. Conservatives believed that the communist strategy was to continue fighting during the negotiations to drag them out as long as possible to gain greater advantage at the bargaining table. Conservatives believed that the North Vietnamese were employing a similar strategy. Henry Taylor wrote in 1966 that Johnson was repeating the mistakes of Korea when he called for a cease-fire and negotiated settlement. In Taylor's description of the Korean War, "**The cease-fire talks finally began on July 8, 1951. Up to that date our casualties were 78,726 Americans dead, wounded and missing. The**

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[28] This quote was from a reprint of the advertisement. The reprint appeared in *Human Events*, May 30, 1964: np.

[29] For the information on the Chamberlain article, see: John Chamberlain, "Can Nixon Really End the War?" *Human Events*, April 6,1968: 1(209).
For more information U.S. military strategy in the Korean War, see: John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005); Francis H. Heller, ed. *The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas,1977); William Stueck, *Rethinking the Korean War: A New Diplomatic and Strategic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Reds talked and talked for nearly two years. Before they finished our American casualties were 104,383 dead, wounded and missing."[30] Taylor implored Johnson not to follow the mistake from Korea and not to agree to an open-ended negotiation.

Although conservatives believed that the United States did not fight the Korean War aggressively enough and that the U.S. devoted too much energy to negotiations, the most applicable lesson conservatives learned about the Korean War was that in future wars, the U.S. must do whatever is necessary in order to guarantee victory. In the early years of the Vietnam War, the Right frequently lambasted Johnson for not applying that lesson and for fighting the war with too many reservations about targets and tactics to avoid unnecessary civilian casualties. Pundit Elizabeth Churchill Brown summed up the comparison between Korea and Vietnam in 1966 when she wrote: "There is a big difference between the wars in Korea and Vietnam both in character and determination by Washington. In the former we fought to win; in the latter, from the first cautious aggression by the Communists, we fought to persuade the enemy to come to the conference table."[31] The Korean War taught conservatives that the U.S. could win a land war in Asia, but only if the U.S. utilized an appropriate and aggressive military strategy.

Following the Commander-in-Chief

Within one year of the 1964 presidential election, the majority of the movement transformed from opposing the war's unconditional expansion to defending it. The reason for the change was Johnson's March 1965 decision to send large numbers of U.S. ground troops into

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[30] The emphasis is from the original. Henry J. Taylor, "What Will United States Do at Viet Nam Conference Table?" *Human Events*, July 30, 1966: 6(486).

[31] Untitled writing by Brown, 19 January 1966, Box 6, Folder 7, Elizabeth Churchill Brown Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Vietnam. In March, Burnham penned the primary reason why Vietnam was important was because "so many people think it so."[32] He essentially argued that Johnson's actions made the war important. Burnham's column represented a remarkable turning point within the movement's literature because for the first time conservatives demonstrated fervent support for the war.

In early 1965, deciding to endorse Johnson's expansion of the Vietnam War was a relatively simply one which elicited little internal dissent or debate. The simplicity of this decision has allowed the historiography of modern conservatism to minimize its evolution. As the war progressed, many national conservative leaders stood as some of the most outspoken defenders of the war effort. Their actions led the historiography to view the conservative movement as synonymous with the pro-war movement. A more nuanced approach is required to properly understand why the movement supported the war and to understand those effects.

Conservative support for the Vietnam War, shortly after Johnson launched the campaign against Vietnamese communism, came naturally because the movement's ideology steeped itself in anti-communism and in a self-declared patriotism. A large part of the movement's anti-communism came from a conviction that their version of the traditional American way of life purported the best possible way of life, and they believed fighting communism best maintained their ideological lifestyle. Their definition of patriotism included an unrelenting defense of U.S. foreign policy, particularly when aggressing against communism. Once the United States engaged in a conflict, their patriotic and anti-communist ideology mandated uniform support for the war.

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[32] James Burnham, "The Third World War: While in That Corner," *National Review*, March 9, 1965: 186.

In addition to conservative's patriotism and anti-communism, they also endorsed the war because they believed that in 1965 Johnson put the United States' reputation on the line. The movement believed that the United States' reputation served as the most critical weapon in the Cold War, and the nation could not squander this asset. Accordingly, the United States had to uphold its promise to defend a client state (in this case South Vietnam) or its reputation would be soiled. Conservatives saw the use of reputation as vital because communists only respected force and honor, not hallow promises. In order to win the Cold War, the United States could not back down from a military conflict.

Conservatives believed that in March 1965 Johnson made a final decision to fight in Vietnam and that his decision needed support. Conservatives often repeated what they viewed as the lesson from the Munich Conference in 1938. Rather than follow the lessons learned from the Korean War—that the nation should only fight a war it was willing to win—the Right now focused on the lessons learned from Munich. This lesson was that world powers need to confront aggressive authoritarians with force, not compromise. Since the movement saw communism as a relentlessly expansionist and authoritarian ideology, violence was necessary. They believed that the U.S. could not reverse the decision to enter Vietnam because that would be like giving into the communists and giving them *carte blanche* to conquer the entire world. For conservatives in 1965, once Johnson made the Vietnam decision, they intended to line up behind it.

The movement's leadership supported the war for reasons beyond anti-communism. The movement found itself in the midst of a transition in 1965, and it needed the war to help get through this period. The disaster of the Goldwater presidential defeat in 1964 put the entire movement in flux. Conservatism had to change, but the meaning of that change remained unclear. By winning the Republican nomination for Barry Goldwater, the movement entered the

mainstream political conscience. Unfortunately, it was then handed the most embarrassing presidential defeat since President Herbert Hoover in 1932 (ironically the last conservative nominated for president by a major political party). The movement needed a cause to rally around after the Goldwater disaster.

A previously untapped reserve of grassroots conservative supporters nationwide helped Goldwater's campaign. Despite the movement's grassroots growth, the campaign still failed electorally. During the presidential campaign the movement rallied around Goldwater, but following the election it needed a new political issue to fire up supporters. Thus, Johnson's decision to send a significant amount of ground troops into Vietnam—almost immediately after his inauguration—helped create a natural issue which conservatives could use to their political advantage. Although Goldwater's defeat did not solely cause conservatives to support the war, the defeat did create an environment where the movement needed a message to rally around. The war served as a convenient message.[33]

Goldwater's campaign helped increase the number of Americans affiliated with conservative organizations nationwide. Despite Goldwater's defeat, conservative organizations were able to expand their grassroots networks. Donations for many conservative organizations skyrocketed through the election and the movement hoped to keep the momentum going throughout 1965. As two examples of this growth, both the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) and the John Birch Society announced the ambitious goal of doubling their membership

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[33] Examples of works that claim Goldwater's campaign reinvigorated American conservatives. These works also support the claim that the movement did not suffer an significant pot-election problems:
Mary C. Brennan, *Turning Right in the Sixties: The Conservative Capture of the Gop (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995);* Lee Edwards, *The Conservative Revolution: The Movement That Remade America (New York: The Free Press, 1999);* Perlstein, *Before the Storm.*

numbers in 1965.[34] They wanted to turn Goldwater's loss into an energizing factor because it exposed a greater number of people to the movement. People whom William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, believes that the 1964 campaign too "large numbers of previously dormant conservatives, [and] turned them into political activists."[35] According to Rusher, the election helped expand the movement.

The conservative movement gained a rejuvenating jolt of both workers and grassroots support from the Goldwater candidacy, but the movement needed more to sustain its momentum following the election. Vietnam played as an issue most conservatives could support. Although the war divided the movement in 1964, once Johnson decided to escalate the conflict those divisions eroded. Throughout early 1965, the movement's leadership worried about the future of conservatism and of retaining the support of grassroots networks. There was a serious fear of a malaise hitting the movement. The leadership feared that grassroots groups might become depressed following the election and retreat from politics. To avoid that situation, the leadership needed a major issue to galvanize all of the newfound supporters. In early 1965, when Johnson turned Vietnam into the next Cold War hotspot, conservatives found a new cause to rally around.

Conservative leaders began discussing how best to harness the long-term power of their newfound grassroots volunteers well before November 1964. Johnson's easy re-election did not

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[34] Membership numbers from both organizations are notoriously inaccurate and hard to determine. However, the fact that both had the serious goal of doubling their membership means they were not concerned with extinction in light of losing the election. The leading work on YAF also claimed that the organization's membership increased drastically after the election. Schneider, *Cadres*.
Group Research Information, "Stronger Than Ever - The Post-Election Right," 15 July 1965, Box 120, Group Research Papers [hereafter GRP], Nicholas Murray Butler Library, Columbia University (New York, New York).

[35] Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*, 162.

surprise most conservative pundits and leaders because the election result was obvious well before November; enabling leaders to prepare a strategy for the post-election period. One example of this planning was a memo by William Buckley in August 1964 ordering the *National Review* to plan on re-emphasizing anti-communism shortly after the election. Focusing on anti-communism boosted the movement's morale and would "Get [conservatives] back to hating the Devil." Buckley knew that finding a common enemy would easily rally supporters, as any "good conservative" loved to hate communism.[36] Buckley's idea of focusing on anti-communism became a victim of political events in early 1965. During the first two months of 1965, the *National Review* focused an unprecedented amount of print space to the fight in Vietnam, with at least one column a week about the topic. During this time, Vietnam replaced Africa, Cuba, and Europe as the magazine's primary foreign policy focus.

Other conservative organizations and publications found the expansion of the war as a bonanza for their organizations. In a retrospective article published in 1969, *Insight & Outlook* (a smaller conservative publication) proclaimed that the Vietnam War helped wean the magazine off a narrow and boring focus on economics. The magazine's 1969 editors believed this shift helped their magazine grow and flourish.[37] Additionally, YAF benefited from the war's outbreak. In 1965, a large percentage of its activities concerned rallies against communism or in support of the Vietnam War. These rallies coincided with a remarkable growth of YAF's

[36] From Buckley to William Rusher, 5 August 1964, Inter-Office Memo, William F. Buckley Papers [Hereafter WBP], Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University (New Haven, Connecticut).

[37] Jared C. Lobdell, "Insight & Outlook: The First Ten Years," *Insight & Outlook: A Journal of Conservative Student Opinion* 10, no. 3 (1969): 4-9, Box 174, Insight and Outlook Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

membership list and donations. The organization learned to use Vietnam and anti-communism to help rally grassroots support and to grow.

After Johnson sent hundreds of thousands of troops to Vietnam in 1965, the movement's interest in the war exponentially increased. Front-page headlines and articles focused on the war's progression and on strategies for improving the odds of America's victory.[38] The focus on the Vietnam War proved extremely intense, and it helped to unify conservatives in those years. The few members of the Right who opposed the war typically opposed it from the perspective that it was pointless to fight the war with all of President Johnson's restrictions.[39] Those opposing the war were in the minority as the majority of the movement believed that the United States needed to win the war.

The period immediately after Goldwater's defeat was a pivotal moment, when the movement could have otherwise been at its weakest. In many respects, the Vietnam War helped replace Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign as a uniting force within the movement. Besides anti-communism, most conservatives saw the war as a pressing issue requiring their

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[38] Examples of major conservative publications covering the war:
Walter Judd, "Special Report: Reflections on Asian Anti-Communists," *National Review*, January 11, 1965: 27.
"The Battleline Is Vietnam," *American Conservative Union Report*, April 1965, Correspondence with ACU 1964-April 1965 Folder, WBP, Yale University.
Senator Thomas Dodd, "Cover Story on Vietnam" *Human Events*, March 20, 1965.

[39] An example of this was a draft of an unnamed and dated article by Elizabeth Churchill Brown, where she wrote: "the reason our boys are fighting and dying in the war is to persuade the enemy to come to the conference table."
Churchill Brown, 1965, Box 6, Folder 5, Speeches and Writings 1965, Elizabeth Churchill Brown Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Some conservatives did continue to oppose the war during this period, the most notable example of which is Phyllis Schlafly. Schlafly believed that the Vietnam War served as a distraction from the more important goal of fighting Soviet communists.

attention and support. The majority of the movement agreed that Vietnam mattered, that the U.S. must fight with enough zeal to win, and there was no substitute for victory would suffice.[40]

Aside from supporting the United States' international reputation, immediate justifications for supporting the Vietnam War concerned the domino theory and fears of losing the Cold War. Many conservatives viewed communism as a rational, international organization that acted with ruthless expansionist aims. Accordingly, Vietnam and all of Southeast Asia looked like the next portal for communism's expansion. To win the Cold War, the United States needed to stop communism from expanding. The fall of Vietnam, according to James Burnham, represented the "loss of freedom" of 240 million people in Southeast Asia.[41] Like Burnham, conservatives believed that if Vietnam fell, then Laos and Cambodia would quickly follow. If Laos and Cambodia became communist nations, then the rest of Southeast Asia—including the democratic strongholds of Thailand, Taiwan, and Indonesia—would succumb next. This would inspire communist forces throughout the world, specifically those in places with larger communist organizations like South America, Africa, and Japan. This would lead to eventual world domination by communism. But, if the United States could save South Vietnam for the forces of freedom then the dominoes might fall in the other direction. Fear of falling dominoes

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[40] Examples of early support for the war include:
Billy James Hargis to Johnson, 25 February 1965, Hargis Folder, White House Central Files [hereafter WHCF], Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.
John E. Berke (an avid listener of Clarence Manion's radio program) to Manion, 29 November 1965, Box 21, Folder 1, General Correspondence Nov 1965 Folder, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.
Interview of Billy Graham by Max Goldberg (North American Newspaper Alliance), 25 September 1965, EX-ND19/CO 312, Box 217, National Security National Defense Folder, WHCF, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

[41] Speech written by Burnham for Senator Thomas Dodd, "Let Us Stand Firm in Vietnam!," written on 19 March 1965, Box 4, Folder 7, James Burnham Papers (hereafter JBP), Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

was prevalent throughout all layers of the movement. Both respectable mainstream conservative leaders, and those rightfully denounced as extremists, feared that the loss of Vietnam would create a negative international backlash.[42]

The Stench of Failure

Once conservatives decided that Vietnam stood as a crucial battle in the Cold War, the movement felt that the United States needed to expend every possible effort to achieve victory. This perpetuated a level of frustration with Johnson's leadership regarding the war. Specifically, despite his decision to expand the war, the movement never fully trusted that he wanted a military victory in Vietnam. They believed that he was fighting with the hope of gaining a quick and favorable peace treaty so that the United States could leave Vietnam. Conservatives believed that this withdrawal would bring devastating results, since they defined victory as domination over all of Vietnam and not two separate Vietnamese nations. Conservatives were unwilling to accept a similar outcome as happened in the Korean War, where after three years of fighting, there was no victor.[43]

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[42] Three examples of the domino theory throughout the conservative movement are:
Fred Schwarz, "Dilemma in Viet Nam" *Christian Anti-Communism Crusade* 15 March 15 1965, Box 10, Folder 42, Norman Allderdice Papers [hereafter NAP], Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Letter from Buckley to Judd, 10 January 1972, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
"The Key To The White House: A Pledge That Would Win The Presidency In '68," *Manion Forum*, 21 January 1968, Box 83, Folder 10, CMP, Chicago Historical Society
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[43] Three examples of conservatives unfavorably comparing the Korean and Vietnam Wars:
Henry J. Taylor, "Military Campaign Going Better in Viet Nam," *Human Events*, May 29, 1965: 9
Gen. Thomas A. Lane, "In Viet Nam: Total American Involvement Would Doom Communist China," *Human Events*, January 16, 1966: 7(39).
"Viet Win Gold Urged by Mindszenty Council," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 22 April 1969, Box

Thus, conservatives remained split over how to deal with Johnson. Part of the movement agreed with former Republican Vice-President Richard Nixon's March 1965 declaration:

> I am glad to see that Lyndon is standing up to the Fulbrights, Morses, etc. as well as to Lippmann and the New York Times. If he continues on this firm course, he will render a great service to the nation and to the cause of freedom…While the President will strengthen himself politically by his firm course of action in Vietnam he will also strengthen the country in the process and we should all be grateful if that turns out to be the case.[44]

At the same time, the movement assailed Johnson for not doing enough to win the war. As Charles Manley wrote in an August 1965 article: "Our air attacks in North Viet Nam were described by one of our most authoritative military sources as 'token strikes, actually peanuts in relation to the war-making capacity of the enemy or in relation to what we could do to destroy that capacity.'"[45] Conservatives wanted Johnson to attack North Vietnam with a full arsenal of U.S. military power, but Johnson sought a more surgical and minimal approach with his strategy.

Most of the movements' leadership criticized Johnson because they believed that the United States needed to attack communist targets inside Laos and Cambodia, and they argued that more targets located inside North Vietnam should be bombed, regardless of proximity to civilians. Conservatives argued that bringing the war to North Vietnam and sanctuaries inside Laos and Cambodia, would cripple the communist war-making capabilities.[46]

362, GRP, Columbia University.

[44] Letter from Richard E. Berlin, president of The Hearst Corporation, to Jack Valenti, Special Assistant to Johnson, 23 March 1965, EX-ND19/CO 312, Box 215, Folder ND 19/CO 312, WHCF, Lyndon Baines Johnson Library.

[45] Charles Manly, from Chicago *Tribune*, "War Seen Heading for 'Peace Phase:' Johnson Anti-Victory Policy Rules Out Hope of Solution to Vietnamese Conflict," *Human Events*, August 28, 1965: 8-9.

[46] Some examples of support for those strategy suggestions:
Gen. Thomas A. Lane, "A Military Expert Speaks Out: What Johnson Must Do to Win in Viet

Aside from expanding the war up north, conservatives discussed the possibility of using nuclear weapons. In their opinion, if victory was the goal, then the United States should use any means to achieve that end. Additionally, conservatives repeated two major tactical arguments in favor of using nuclear weapons. First, they argued that the North Vietnamese could mobilize more soldiers than the United States because they were fighting a defensive war. This assertion meant that the United States had to use its superior technological advantage over the North Vietnamese. Second, without a public debate about using nuclear weapons, the communists would never be scared enough to concede. In an August 1966 editorial, the *National Review* theorized that hitting a nominally populated economic target—such as Yen Bai in Northwestern Vietnam—coupled with a mild troop buildup would probably force the communists into a quick surrender.[47]

Despite their repeated requests for Johnson to expand the war, conservatives did not notice any changes to the Administration's strategy. Johnson did not fight the war with the urgency that conservatives believed he needed. Instead, much of his energies focused on passing his domestic legislation, known as the Great Society, which conservatives vigorously opposed because it expanded the size of the federal government. In one instance, the American

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Nam," *Human Events*, December 18, 1965: 9.
ACU press release "Ten recommendations for the Vietnam War," 26 April 1965, Box 9, American Conservative Union (1966-68) Folder, GRP, Columbia University.
James Burnham, "The Third World War: Knots of Our Own Tying," *National Review*, September 7, 1965: 762

[47] Three examples of conservatives advocating the use of nuclear weapons:
Editorial, "A Sixth Look," *National Review*, August 9, 1966: 757.
ACU press release "Ten recommendations for the Vietnam War," 26 April 1965, Box 9, American Conservative Union (1966-68) Folder, GRP, Columbia University.
James Burnham, "The Third World War: Knots of Our Own Tying," *National Review*, September 7, 1965: 762.

Conservative Union (ACU) connected Vietnam to the Great Society and derisively referred to Johnson as a magician:

> [Johnson] proclaimed that the United States can fight in Vietnam **and** build a bigger and better 'Great Society' at home for only $1.8 billion more than the Federal government will take in next year… next year's Federal budget will be $112.8 billion, some $13 billion higher than last year's spending level. But, declared Lyndon the Great while turning a handkerchief into a bouquet of flowers, the deficit will **only** be $1.8 billion because our 'soaring' economy will produce extra revenues and because we will have additional tax money - after the Congress has reinstated the excise taxes cut last year and approved a few other fiscal tricks.[48]

Conservatives understood that Johnson needed to increase spending on both the war and his domestic agenda, and they disapproved. The adamantly believed that he should focus on the Cold War.

Convincing the Increasingly Skeptical Public

After several years of attacking Johnson, but supporting his war, conservatives became increasingly dissatisfied with the political and military situation. By 1967, conservatives believed that they were stuck supporting a losing cause. Equally as frustrating, they believed that Johnson was ignoring their pressure to fight the war more aggressively. Thus, they were forced to support the war while opposing the strategy. That position became increasingly difficult to explain to the public, and it was a distinction that hindered the movement politically.

The movement justified its opposition to Johnson's strategy by proclaiming that Vietnam stood as the pivotal battle of the Cold War, and thus the U.S. should fight without remorse. In one instance, Walter Judd gave a speech to the American Security Council in October 1967 where he told the audience: "Vietnam is the test case that will determine the balance of world

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[48] "Johnson the 'Magician'" *ACU Report*, January-February 1966, Box 58, Folder 2, Marvin Liebman Papers (hereafter MLP), Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

power."[49] He fully believed, as did a large section of the conservative movement, that Vietnam could turn the tide of the Cold War. Just as Berlin and Cuba were key locations in the Cold War for past generations, he believed that Vietnam was the site of America's next great battle. If freedom could win in Vietnam, then perhaps the U.S. could permanently place communism on the defensive.

By 1967, Judd, along with the rest of the movement, recognized that the U.S. public needed convincing that the nation could win the war. In a letter to Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy in October 1967, Judd noticed that the morale of U.S. and South Vietnamese troops was extremely high. Comparatively, he could not foresee the North Vietnamese replacing all the munitions and soldiers they lost in previous years. Despite the advantageous tactical situation, he warned Bundy that the U.S. public was turning solidly against the war, if the administration could not convince the public that the nation could win the war, there was little chance for victory.[50]

Conservative literature of the era reiterated the problem of U.S. willpower. The movement remained very worried that before victory could be obtained, Americans would give up and begin opposing the Vietnam War. In a complete change of ideology from 1964, conservatives attempted to constantly remind Americans that "greatness" was on the line in Vietnam.[51] Conservatives wondered about the consequences for the nations' reputation if it lost

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[49] Judd speech delivered to American Securtiy Council in Borrego Springs, California, October 1967, Box 59, Folder 7, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[50] Judd to Bundy, "Visit to Vietnam – October 1-5, 1967," October 1967, Box 22, Folder 4, MLP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[51] Rusher to the Editors, 3 June 1969, Box 122, Folder 8, William Rusher Papers [hereafter WRP], Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.).

to a smaller and less powerful country. They claimed that the United States could not continue to proclaim itself a super-power if it could not defend South Vietnam from a weak nation like North Vietnam. Conservatives believed that the U.S. reputation could not be salvaged if it lost the war; they believed only victory would suffice.

Unfortunately for the movement, it suffered the consequences from its own beliefs and contradictions. Conservative anti-communism required a strong belief that the outcome of the Cold War would determine the future of humanity and that the Vietnam War could determine the outcome of the Cold War. Despite this stance, as early as 1964 conservatives understood that North Vietnam refused to surrender and that the United States' odds of success were low.[52] To counter this contradiction, the movement focused its energies on decrying the strategy—or as they believed the lack of strategy—employed by the Johnson Administration. They argued that Johnson's method of fighting spoke of failure and that he needed to change his strategy.

Aside from blaming the president, conservatives also became increasingly disenchanted with the military leaders who failed to provide real solutions for the war. Though Johnson was the political face of the war, and he had ultimate control of the military strategy, he was not controlling the day-to-day military operation. The Right recognized that despite Johnson's ineffective parameters for fighting the war (such as not bombing targets in Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam), the military needed to find a more effective execution of the military strategy. J. Bernard Burnham, in a January 1967 article in the *National Review*, viciously attacked the military planners. He argued that the military strategy of slowly and incrementally increasing the attacks on the North Vietnamese could not bring down the communists. Instead, the United

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[52] Editorial News Brief, "Vietnam Schizophrenia," *National Review*, March 10, 1964: 186.

States needed to attack the enemy in a way that it was "psychologically unprepared" for via atomic and biological weapons.[53]

When General William Westmoreland recommended that the United States send an even larger amount of troops over to Vietnam in late 1967 and early 1968, many political leaders within the conservative movement refused to support the request. They believed that increasing the number of troops would have validated the military and civilian leaders. Since the United States was losing the war, Johnson needed to hold the military leadership accountable. The best means of doing this would have been to withhold support for Westmoreland's requested troop increase. The Right also recognized that troop increases were particularly sensitive political topics because the draft and troop increases engendered the most severe anti-war protests; and conservatives were careful not to give a failing military and civil leadership *carte blanche* to call up an unlimited amount of troops.

Conservatives supported the war early on, and they believed they paid a political price for this support. They no longer wanted to give Westmoreland as many troops as he wanted without changes in military strategy. By 1967 the Right recognized the limitations of Westmoreland's military strategy and they were no longer willing to suffer the political consequences of agreeing with his requests for a seemingly unlimited number of soldiers. Conservative skepticism of the military strategy drove a wedge between them and the military leadership which was prosecuting the war.[54]

The lack of faith in Westmoreland was evident throughout much of the movement's discourse. In one instance, retired general Thomas A. Lane, a military expert with *Human*

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[53] J. Bernard Burnham, "Bit-By-Bit War," *National Review*, January 10, 1967: 35-37.

[54] For more on the problems suffered by the movement during the war, see Chapter Five.

Events, sarcastically questioned whether Westmoreland would require one million troops in order to pacify South Vietnam. Lane's point was that Westmoreland did not have a strong long-term strategy and that every time there were problems in Vietnam Westmoreland suggested sending in more troops.[55] The *National Review* agreed with Lane, while expanding the blame to both Johnson and Westmoreland. In March 1968, William F. Buckley and James Burnham made it clear that they no longer had faith in Johnson and Westmoreland. Burnham noted, "Politically and strategically there seems to have been no fundamental improvement since [1965].... It is hard to see how our sending two hundred thousand more men... will alter that stalemate."[56] They wanted to see more substantive strategy shifts before they were willing to accept more troops.

The criticism directed at Westmoreland and Johnson came from a larger issue within the conservative movement; namely, the movement's frustration with the war. Conservatives believed that during the war's first four years, Johnson and Westmoreland produced very few new suggestions or ideas regarding military strategy. By 1967, conservatives repeated their original ideas from 1965 without many fresh or new arguments. The discourse, both internal and external, curtly and dramatically exposed the sense of frustration within the movement, especially at the elite level, about the war's progression. Conservatives wanted the war fought properly, but they were unsure of how to convince the nation's leadership to change strategy.

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[55] Gen Thomas A Lane, "U.S. Will Need One Million Troops in Viet Nam: Unless Policies Change," *Human Events*, June 3, 1967: 7(343).

[56] Quote from: James Burnham, "The Third World War: Time for Some Answers," *National Review*, March 26, 1968: 282.
William F. Buckley, "On the Right: More Troops?" 19 March 1968, On the Right 1968 Folder, WBP, Yale University.

The Politics of Stubbornly Supporting the War

In 1968, as the military situation in Vietnam appeared to grow more ominous, the conservative leadership refused to give in to the growing public pressure and oppose the war. Instead, the movement's leaders turned against the war's opponents by claiming that the U.S. could win the conflict and that the country had noble aims. The domino theory continually served as a justification for the war. In an August 1968 editorial, the *National Review* wrote that even though the war was not yet won the entire region felt the benefits of the war. Specifically, it cited how morale amongst anti-communists in Indonesia, Laos, and Thailand reached an all-time high in 1968. Without any evidence to substantiate their claim, the *National Review* credited the United States' refusing to leave Vietnam as a factor.[57]

Even though conservatives remained outwardly optimistic regarding the results of the war, they recognized the internal turmoil the war caused in the United States in 1968. One of the most monumental events concerned Johnson's announcement that he would not run for re-election that year. Preceded by the Tet Offensive, a major military offensive by the North Vietnamese which turned many Americans against the war, 1968 was a tumultuous year. However, rather than re-evaluate their stance on the war following Tet, most conservative leaders remained ardently supportive of fighting. Shortly after the offensive, the *National Review* published a one-page article written by Colonel James W. Graham advocating that the Tet offensive was a disaster for the North Vietnamese and a major victory for the U.S. military.[58] Although this belief was not universal within the conservative movement, the movement's

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[57] Editorial, "Hold On," *National Review,* August 13, 1968: 788

[58] Colonel James W. Graham, "The Score for the Tet Match," *National Review*, March 12, 1968: 236.

response was not to support a withdrawal of troops and an ending for the war. Rather, conservatives advocated fighting with a more aggressive strategy. They repeated their old requests for more bombs in more places throughout Indochina.[59]

At the time that the Right fought to support the Vietnam War, some internal divisions occurred regarding the ideological legitimacy of the war. Most specifically, the draft system divided the movement. In late 1967, some libertarians began to realize that in order for the war to continue, the government must draft into military service hundreds of thousands of young Americans against their wishes. To many libertarians—who believed in keeping government as small as possible—Vietnam created an ideological paradox. Although fighting communists marked a good fight, they were uncertain of its merits when the communists threatened another country. The draft concerned them even more. Many of them believed that individual freedom could not be reconciled with conscription. In late 1967 and early 1968, many libertarians called the draft's legitimacy into question.

The debate about the draft system varied widely, and for a brief period it was very passionate. The most prominent anti-draft organization within the conservative movement was the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF). On April 17, 1967, David Franke, editor of YAF's national magazine *The New Guard*, testified before Congress in favor of an all-volunteer military. Franke based his anti-draft position on one major philosophical argument. He urged "respect for individual liberty and the principle that conscription is a last resort, to be used only

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[59] Three examples of renewed calls for a new strategy in Vietnam:
E. V. Kuehnelt-Leddihn, "Letter from Saigon: Vietnam's Internal Situation," *National Review,* March 26, 1968: 297.
Gen. Thomas A. Lane, "Hanoi's Escalation Requires Resumption of U.S. Bombing," *Human Events*, June 8, 1968: 6(358).
Editorial News Brief, *National Review,* April 16, 1968: 1-2.

when absolutely necessary for the national defense in time of war."[60] Libertarians became adamant that it was unjust to force an American teenager to fight in a war in Vietnam. They left open the possibility of a draft in the case of national defense—for instance if the United States and the Soviet Union had a direct confrontation between one-another—however, a proxy war did not directly threaten U.S. national defense. Thus it did not justify conscription.

The debate over the draft became remarkably contentious within the movement for several months in late 1967 through early 1968.[61] Debates about the draft brought about more public discord than possibly any other issue. Much of the pro-draft argument stemmed from the idea that opposition to the draft was a Trojan Horse argument to end the Vietnam War. Anti-draft libertarians vigorously opposed that accusation, claiming arguments about individual freedom and that they still supported the war. When defending his decision to oppose the draft, Frank Meyer reminded his readers that "I stand for a volunteer army so long as it is militarily feasible. And I stand not only for the intensification of the Vietnam War but for a firm policy against Communism conducted as aggressively as is advantageous to our interest."[62] Meyer believed that

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[60] Robert Hamlett Bremner, *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 220-21.

[61] The draft probably surfaced as the most prominent topic within the Right's discourse largely because liberal anti-war and anti-draft movements were pressuring the Right to take a stand on this issue, especially influencing libertarian conservatives who closely identified with the increasingly popular Students for a Democratic Society organization.
That libertarians and liberals were culturally similar is addressed in Chapter 5. For more on the relationship, and the causes of the increasingly vocal anti-draft liberal movement in 1967 and 1968, see Klatch, *Generation Divided*, Chapter 5.

[62] Frank Meyer, "Principles & Heresies: The Council for a Volunteer Military," *National Review*, July 11, 1967: 749.

individual freedom should be preserved as much as possible, even in times of military engagement.[63]

The debate over the draft served as one more issue that conservatives worried about toward the last year of Johnson's Administration. In addition to fighting the draft system, the movement was also fighting Johnson and the military over strategy. On top of that, conservatives constantly reiterated their arguments in favor of the war, which after three and a half years grew tiring. The movement's internal discourse remained remarkably stagnant throughout these years, with only the debate about the draft creating exciting new arguments. The ideology stagnated during this era, and the movement's growth suffered. Conservative leaders spent so much energy and time explaining their Vietnam policies and defending the war, that at times it dominated almost everything within the movement. Vietnam raged as an all-consuming topic, and conservatives looked forward to moving beyond the war. They hoped the 1968 presidential election would help change everything.

[63] In Chapter Three I offer a more robust discussion about the libertarian anti-draft movement.

Chapter 2:
A Lost Cause: Supporting Nixon's Vietnam War

The week before Richard Nixon's presidential inauguration in January 1969, retired-general Thomas A. Lane published an article in *Human Events* arguing that Nixon needed to redouble U.S. efforts in South Vietnam. In the article, Lane wrote that over the previous six years, President Lyndon Johnson used every available method to try to promote peace and yet he failed. At this point, Lane believed that Johnson's proclamations that the enemy was "exhausted" were "as unfounded now as when they were first made [in 1966]." Instead of offering peaceful gestures to the North Vietnamese, Nixon needed to change the "reality" of the war. According to Lane, this meant expansion everywhere—into North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, and a full blockade of North Vietnam's Haiphong Harbor. He believed that this strategy would essentially cut the North Vietnamese off from their allies, forcing surrender. Lane argued that this was the only strategy Nixon could use to end the war quickly.[1]

Lane's argument exemplifies a common strategy proposal made by conservatives during the first year of Nixon's presidency. In 1969, conservatives appeared hopeful that Nixon would aggressively prosecute the war and they often called for action similar to Lane's thinking. This chapter will chronicle how conservatives became increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress made toward victory in the Vietnam War during Nixon's Administration (1969 - 1973). As the movement became increasingly frustrated with Nixon, a self-described malaise settled

[1] Gen. Thomas A. Lane, "As Nixon Examines His 'Options:' Viet Nam, Weapons, Nuclear Treaty," *Human Events*, January 11, 1969: 6(22).

over the Right as the conservative leadership adhered to the same strategy proposals. This malaise was a period where the movement's leadership felt uncharacteristically incapable of leading the movement and offering up pro-active policy solutions, especially regarding the war. The Right's leadership often blamed Nixon, and his failure to win the war, as the cause of their troubles. Without a stronger leadership, the grassroots fractured as the Right lost much of its political influence. Much of the divisions within the grassroots emanated from debates concerning the nature and viability of the war. The movement's leaders tried to minimize the damage by focusing on other issues, primarily an aggressive foreign policy and opposing welfare, but this did little to diffuse the situation. Conservatives could neither unanimously support nor ignore the important issue of the Vietnam War during Nixon's presidency, which hurt their ability to expand their political reach.

Mr. Right vs. Mr. Vietnam

Despite conservatism's eventual failures during this period, the movement remained confident as the 1968 election approached. Lyndon Johnson announced in April 1968 that he would not run for re-election—wreaking havoc within the Democratic Party—and the Right believed this bode well for their movement. Without an incumbent president running for election, intense debates erupted about the impending Republican presidential nomination. The frontrunners were former-Vice President Nixon, California Governor Ronald Reagan, and New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller. The editors of the *National Review* devoted many forceful memos and meetings debating the relative merits of Reagan and Nixon's candidacy. Rockefeller was a moderate Republican whom most conservatives wished to remove from the party; thus, the

Right did not seriously discuss supporting his candidacy. Amongst conservatives, it was a choice between Reagan and Nixon.[2]

Reagan was the alluring candidate for many on the Right because of his ideological conservative approach. Reagan earned his political stripes in 1964 campaigning for Barry Goldwater. In October 1964, Reagan gave a speech titled: "A Time for Choosing." This speech was among the Goldwater campaign's most famous speeches, and in it he clearly articulated the principles of fusionism and conservatism.[3] Reagan's speech made him extremely popular among wealthy conservatives, several of whom helped him fund his successful 1966 California gubernatorial campaign. Following Goldwater's defeat, Reagan became the leading conservative politician in the United States and most on the Right greatly respected him.[4]

Although Reagan was a more ideologically pure conservative, Nixon's experience and his views about the Vietnam War complicated the debate. As 1968 progressed, the editors of *National Review* became increasingly convinced that Nixon had a serious strategy for victory in Vietnam. Despite the ambiguity in Nixon's actual Vietnam platform—during the campaign he

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[2] For more on the Right's hatred toward Rockefeller and how Rockefeller led the moderate and liberal wing of the Republican Party, see: Brennan, *Turning Right*; Critchlow, *Schlafly*; Nicol C. Rae, *The Decline and Fall of the Liberal Republicans from 1952 to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[3] Ronald Reagan, 1964, "A Time for Choosing," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/timechoosing.html.

[4] For more on Reagan and the Right in the 1960s, see: Matthew Dallek, *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); M. Stanton Evans, *The Future of Conservatism: From Taft to Reagan and Beyond* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968); Laura Jane Gifford, *The Center Cannot Hold: The 1960 Presidential Election and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2009); Gregory L. Schneider, *The Conservative Century: From Reaction to Revolution* (Lanham, PA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Jonathan M. Schoenwald, *A Time for Choosing: The Rise of Modern American Conservatism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

promised a secret plan for peace with honor—conservatives picked at the nuances in his statements and argued that he was going to redouble the United States' efforts in Vietnam.[5] Additionally, conservatives often cited Nixon's support for the Vietnam War, and Reagan's inexperience with foreign affairs, in order to rationalize why conservatives could set aside principle in this election and vote for Nixon instead of Reagan. *National Review* Editor Frank Meyer wrote in March 1968, that the magazine should support Nixon partially because: "His position on Vietnam seems to be firm."[6] Because Nixon spoke like a hawk on the Vietnam War he garnered support among conservatives.

Nixon gave conservatives hope that his presidency would know how to fight the Vietnam War. The prospect that Nixon might win the election and the war, while giving conservatives an audience in the White House, excited the movement's leadership and grassroots constituents. Nixon's campaign helped temporarily reenergize the conservative movement.

Although there was serious debate regarding Nixon before the Republican National Convention, conservatives quickly supported Nixon's general election candidacy once he secured the Republican nomination at the RNC in August 1968. Following the convention, the tone of much of the internal discourse was downright gleeful about Nixon winning. Conceding that the Right entered the convention as a split vote, conservative pundit M. Stanton Evans wrote

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[5] One example is an article by John Chamberlain where he writes that Nixon has a serious plan for peace. In this article, Chamberlain writes that Nixon would increase bombings and remove the offer to negotiate, thus fighting a total war. Additionally, he claims that Nixon would inform the Chinese that if the war didn't end quickly, the U.S. would reconsider its position regarding invasion of China.
John Chamberlain, "Can Nixon Really End the War?" *Human Events*: April 6, 1968.

[6] This memo was characteristic of much of the internal movement discourse regarding Nixon and the Right's general distrust of him coupled with their belief that he was a foreign policy hawk. Meyer to Buckley, 6 March 1968, Inter-Office Memos 1968, WBP, Yale University.

in *Human Events* that Nixon's victory came at the expense of moderate Republican Nelson Rockefeller and not at Reagan's. Additionally, "**Guiding Richard Nixon's presidential bid were such conservative stalwarts as Barry Goldwater, John Tower and Strom Thurmond. These were the men who decided that Nixon should be the candidate, and whose influence led directly to the choice of Spiro Agnew as Nixon's ticket mate** [emphasis original]."[7] Nixon was the nominee, he talked tough about Vietnam, and the movement fully supported him in the general election.

Frustrated by the War

Initially, with Nixon, conservatives believed they had a receptive politician in the White House, which they believed might help them influence the national political discourse and strategy in the Vietnam War. They had craved a receptive presidency for a long time. During the Kennedy and Johnson years conservatives lacked any substantive influence in the nation's political discourse. Mass media rarely respected their opinions, Johnson did not listen to their representatives, and Republicans (both moderate and conservative) never gained control in Congress. Although conservative leaders maintained a following—and they captured the Republican presidential nomination from moderate Republicans in 1964—the political establishment still did not believe that conservatism was a budding political movement, nor did the national elite agree with many of the Vietnam policies proposed by conservatives. The Right had a long way to go before the mainstream society respected it.

During Johnson's presidency, conservatives could not count on support from within their own party. Throughout much of the 1960s the Republican Party stood divided, and Senator Barry

[7] M. Stanton Evans, "The Meaning of Miami," *Human Events*, August 24, 1968: 8(536).

Goldwater's Republican presidential nomination did nothing to alleviate the tensions between the moderate and conservative wings of the party. As conservative pundit M. Stanton Evans wrote in his 1968 book *The Future of Conservatism*: "certain Republican strategists are advising the party to abandon its limited-government position. The GOP, they assert, must concede that the battle against welfarism has been lost, grant the final triumph of the big-government approach, and fashion its policies in the image of the opposition."[8] Although Goldwater won the 1964 Republican nomination, his historic defeat in the general election caused much turmoil in the GOP. Conservatives tried to stay in control of the party, and as some of the staunchest supporters of the Vietnam War, a victory in the war would help their cause.[9]

To help prod Nixon along, on his inauguration day in January 1969, the American Security Council (a Right wing anti-communist think-tank) published a strategic review of the Vietnam War. The article called Johnson's policies a "desperate" attempt to secure peace at any price. It also argued that the overall U.S. Cold War policy remained "schizophrenic" in an idealistic attempt to end the Cold War through détente, negotiation, and increased east-west trade. In the view of the American Security Council, Johnson's foreign policy left much for Nixon to clear up.[10]

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[8] Evans, *Future of Conservatism*, 13.

[9] For other studies that discuss the internal disputes between the conservative and moderate Republicans, see: Brennan, *Turning Right*, Chapter 6; Burns, *Goddess*, Chapters 6 and 7; Critchlow, *Schlafly*, Chapter 6.

[10] Détente was the policy of easing the Cold War tensions between the U.S. and Soviet Union. Primary means of promoting détente were promoting trade, increased bi-lateral summits, and negotiating international treaties such the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty. Further readings on détente see: Gaddis, *Cold War*; Jeremi Suri, *Power and Protest: Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003); Zelizer, *Arsenal of Democracy*.

Quote about ASC article: John Lewis, "America's Paper Tiger Image," *American Security*

Though fixing the failed Vietnam War was going to be a difficult undertaking, the Right did not help Nixon by reformulating their strategy proposals. Instead, the movement offered Nixon the same ideas which it offered Johnson over the previous four years. They continued to propose the use of 100,000 to 200,000 Taiwanese troops to assist in South Vietnam.[11] They also repeated prior calls for an invasion of North Vietnam, mining Haiphong Harbor, and invading Laos or Cambodia. They claimed that limiting the military was unnecessary and causing failure.[12] None of these suggestions were new, as the Right offered these ideas during the war's first year.[13] Throughout 1969, the conservative movement essentially restated their old ideas about the war.

While restating their strategy proposals, the Right maintained general support of Nixon's presidency in 1969 and 1970. Their most prominent critique was to urge Nixon to fight the war more aggressively and to win it quickly. They voted for him in 1968 largely because they

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Council: Washington Report, 20 January 1969, Box 231, Folder 4, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[11] I did not uncover any official documents demonstrating that Taiwan offered substantive troop support to the United States. According to secondary sources, the maximum contingent of non-U.S. troops assisting the South Vietnamese was 71,000 in 1969, and this number included Taiwan's contribution of "small, highly trained units for covert operations." Herring, *America's Longest War*, 181.
Even if Taiwan's offer was real, Nixon wrote to Albert Wedemeyer in 1965 that the South Vietnamese people would never accept help from a substantial contingent of Taiwanese soldiers because of the effects of colonization. Letter from Nixon to Wedemeyer, 16 March 1965, Box 53, Folder 30, AWP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[12] Daniel Lyons, "Proven In Practice: Free China Prospers Under Free Enterprise While Red China Grovels In Socialism," *Manion Forum*, 2 February 1969, Box 84, Folder 1, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.
Gen. Thomas A Lane, "Why Nixon Should Abandon Kissinger's Plan: No Viet Nam Victory in Sight," *Human Events*, August 9, 1969: 9(953)

[13] See Chapter 1 for more detail on conservative strategy in 1965.

believed he had a plan for victory in Vietnam, and they wanted to see him implement it expeditiously. As an offer of assistance to Nixon, the Right recycled older strategy proposals, hoping that Nixon would support their ideas more than Johnson had.

Though the Right supported their older strategy proposals, they appeared exhausted while discussing the war. Although conservatives recognized the difficult situation Nixon inherited, they demonstrated remarkably little patience with him. This created the contradictory situation whereby the Right simultaneously expressed frustration and sympathy with Nixon. In June 1969, four and a half months into his first term, the popular syndicated conservative columnist James Jackson Kilpatrick wrote a cover story for the *National Review* titled: "A Report Card for Richard Nixon." Writing in the style of political pundits, where he graded various areas (or classes) of Nixon's young administration, Kilpatrick wrote that Vietnam was the one "mandatory" course that Nixon had to take. In this class, he gave Nixon a grade of C+. Only if Nixon were able to gain a satisfactory ending to Vietnam in winter 1969 or spring 1970 would he earn an A. Kilpatrick gave Nixon no slack for the difficulty of the request. Kilpatrick felt that the United States needed to win the war quickly and he put pressure on Nixon to achieve that end.[14] Kilpatrick offered Nixon only six months to end the war largely because war fatigue had begun settling into the Right. By the end of 1969, the Vietnam War was over four years old and conservatives were tired of arguing in favor of it. Unlike at the beginning of the war, they could no longer use the war to potentially rally supporters.[15]

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[14] James Jackson Kilpatrick, "Report Card for Richard Nixon," *National Review*, June 3, 1969: 532-35.

[15] Using the war to rally supporters is a reference to William Buckley's strategy of focusing on anti-communism following the 1964 presidential election, see page 43 for more details.

While conservatives remained frustrated by Nixon's inability to win the war quickly, they were also experiencing disunity about the United States' overall war aims. In 1969, as frustration mounted with Nixon, conservative anti-war protests began springing up nationally. The roots of the conservative anti-war movement came from the Council for a Volunteer Military, a Left-Right alliance founded in 1967, focused on ending the draft. At the time it was formed, some pro-war advocates on the Right, such as James Burnham and John Chamberlain, feared the anti-draft position would turn toward anti-war protests. This happened in 1969. Although the Council had many prominent pro-war conservative supporters—including Milton Friedman, Barry Goldwater, and William Buckley—libertarians backed its creation, and by 1969 they were no longer satisfied with protesting an end to the draft. They wanted to end the war. This caused serious tensions within the conservative movement, mainly because the rest of the movement continued to endorse the war as a major battle in the fight against communism.

Libertarians rejected many of the basic conservative arguments in favor of the war. They did not believe that Vietnam could save the Far East and potentially turn the tide in the Cold War. Instead, they defined it as a war where a foreign government (the United States' government) caused untold destruction on a smaller nation (Vietnam) while attempting to impose a foreign economic system on the smaller nation. As Allen Brandstater, a member of the Young Americans for Freedom, wrote in a November 1969 memo, libertarians opposed the "fascist and statist war" of the United States in Vietnam. They believed that the war ran counter to the libertarian philosophy that each individual should have freedom and autonomy.[16]

[16] For more detailed explanation of the anti-war libertarian movement, see Chapter Three. Brandstater quote from: Brandstater to unnamed, 26 November 1969, Box 341, GRP, Columbia University.

In addition to opposing foreign policy ideals, personal relationships of the era stood as another key reason for the rising anti-war sentiment among libertarians. As historian Jonathan Schoenwald examined in "No War, No Welfare, and No Damned Taxation," the personal interactions between members of the libertarian movement and the New Left liberal movement on college campuses grew increasingly frequent between 1968 and 1971. Despite their ideological differences, both libertarians and the New Left rejected traditional structures of power and believed in individual autonomy, creating a sense of commonality between the two groups. Additionally, they both promoted free love and opposed drug regulations. They had many cultural similarities, especially when compared to the rest of the conservative movement which held to more rigid beliefs in opposing personal vices and a Christian religious-based morality. The similar culture between the New Left and libertarians created an atmosphere where they both frequently ran in the same social circles, and as the Vietnam War continued both became outspoken anti-war advocates.[17]

In 1969, it did not appear that there was any end date for the war in the near future. To counter the growing libertarian opposition to the war, and to help distract from their frustration with Nixon, many conservative publications tried to move the debate away from the war and onto other foreign policy topics after 1969. They hoped that topics such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty or the seemingly perpetual Middle Eastern conflicts might ignite passion within the movement. For instance, on Clarence Manion's radio program, conservative organizer Phyllis Schlafly promoted increased spending on missile defense programs. Schlafly argued that despite the fact that missile defense appeared technologically impossible, success could only

[17] Schoenwald provides one of the clearest analysis of the anti-war libertarian movement in: Schoenwald, "Vietnam on Campus," 20-53.

occur with research and development. She believed that missile defense successes could quell the Cold War in ways Vietnam could not.[18] Missile defense served as a major distraction for many conservative organizations, and it worked as a tool to discuss the Cold War while avoiding the failing war in Vietnam.

Many conservative leaders expanded upon Schlafly's call for a strong missile defense shield by endorsing the growth of the Military Industrial Complex (MIC). For example, in March 1969 Frank Meyer argued that expanding the MIC could help end the Cold War, making it more important than the Vietnam War. Writing in a prominent column in the *National Review*, Meyer was trying to get conservatives focused on the Cold War despite the bugaboo of Vietnam. One faulty war did not destroy Meyer's faith in the righteousness of the U.S.'s Cold War efforts.[19]

Dealing with Mr. Nixon

Throughout 1969 and 1970, the Right wanted to support Nixon and his Vietnam strategy. Nixon's rhetoric helped him appear as though he was persecuting the war more strategically and aggressively than Johnson had, which conservatives greatly appreciated.[20] He also promised to only accept peace with honor, which the Right believed was a prerequisite for ending the war. Conservatives believed that failure in the Vietnam War could lead to a communist take-over of Southeast Asia, threatening U.S. national security. Thus, the movement wanted to see the nation

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[18] Schlafly and Arthur G. Trudeau, "America: The World's Greatest Nuclear Colony: Proper 'Mix' of Offensive and Defensive Systems Can Prevent Blackmail or Death," *Manion Forum*, 4 May 1969, Box 84, Folder 1, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[19] Frank Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Anti-Missile Defense," *National Review*, March 25, 1969: 286.

[20] One example of this is: Editorial, "Now is the Time for All Good Men to Come to the Aid of Their President," *National Review*, May 19, 1970: 500-501.

fight as though national security was at stake, they wanted to see an all-out, aggressive military campaign.

While Nixon reiterated his commitment to the region, his Vietnamization strategy confounded the Right. Vietnamization was Nixon's policy of removing U.S. troops but offering up more aerial support and weaponry to the South Vietnamese military. Nixon's strategy allowed him to keep the war going with reduced risk to the lives of U.S. personnel. However, many conservatives believed that Vietnamization was too weak to assure victory. Despite Nixon's decision to increase bombings in Southeast Asia, the Right supported even larger bombing campaigns. They thought that more bombs in more places (and nations) would help assure victory. Additionally, Nixon's policy of gradual troop reductions split the movement.

Many conservative organizations openly criticized Nixon's policy of Vietnamization as an untenable retreat. These critics generally believed that only the U.S. military was capable of defending U.S. interests and security. Stefan Possony, in a report published by the American Security Council in November 1969, offered the clearest conservative argument against Vietnamization. Possony said, "We simply cannot risk defeat, and we cannot entrust U.S. security to others." Possony argued that Nixon's policy strove to convince the North Vietnamese to quit by attacking with South Vietnamese troops was destined to fail.[21]

Though conservatives wished to see the U.S. redouble its military commitment to South Vietnam, some on the Right recognized the political benefits to Vietnamization. Debating troop reductions greatly frustrated the Right because while the movement believed the approach was militarily wrong, they also recognized the political benefits. Namely, they hoped that as the

[21] Stefan Possony, "The Self-Fettered Giant," *American Security Council Washington Report*, 17 November 1969, Box 58, Folder 5, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

United States sent fewer soldiers to Vietnam, the anti-war protests would decrease. They hoped this could remove a major argument of anti-war supporters, allowing the military enough political room to devise a more complete and successful strategy.

The frustrating and tentative support for troop withdrawals is evident from *Human Events*' coverage of the war. In a 1970 front-page editorial analyzing Nixon's first year in office, *Human Events* wrote an unusually candid analysis of Nixon's policy: "The Vietnamization formula may yet prove a chimera, but it is difficult to deny that it has temporarily defused the war issue and with a bit of luck the formula could extricate us from Viet Nam with honor."[22] This statement was a blunt assessment of how luck could preserve victory in Vietnam, and Vietnamization's immediate benefit stood as the political gain made against the Left.

While troop withdrawals split the movement, the increased bombing campaigns helped Nixon retain support of the Right. For instance, fifteen months into his first term, on April 30, 1970, in a move which excited the Right, Nixon announced that the United States would begin a bombing campaign of North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia.[23] Almost immediately Nixon came under attack from the Left for expanding the war. Liberal anti-war protests increased while Congress began debating ceasing war funding. In the first issue of *Human Events* following Nixon's announcement, the magazine ran a front-page editorial titled: "Nixon Needs Country's Support: Conservatives Praise Cambodian Move."[24] Conservatives elated in the knowledge that

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[22] Front Page Editorial, "Nixon After One Year: Conservatives Worried," *Human Events*, January 24, 1970: 1 (57).

[23] For a more detailed account of Nixon's Cambodia strategy and the results of it, see: Herring, *America's Longest War*, 288-96.

[24] Front Page Editorial, "Nixon Needs Country's Support: Conservatives Praise Cambodian Move," *Human Events*, May 9, 1970: 1(353).

Nixon was finally following one of their prime strategy suggestions, expanding the Vietnam War and eliminating North Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia.

The conservative youth organization Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), supported Nixon's efforts with an open letter in an advertisement to him proclaiming: "We Stand Behind You, As President and as Commander-in-Chief, in Your Declaration that: 'We Will Not Be Defeated.'"[25] Following the Cambodian announcement, YAF began distributing pamphlets, pins, and bumper stickers expressing support for Nixon's policy. These actions were part of its nation-wide campaign of "sloganeering" in order to make its organization more visible to the general public.[26]

For the first time in the five year war, the president listened to conservative advice on how to fight the war. Although conservatives quickly endorsed Nixon's Cambodia strategy, the visceral response on many U.S. college campuses—including the violent response to those protests at Kent State—hurt conservatives politically. Unlike much of the nation, the Right was elated when Nixon initiated the invasion and the military retreat deflated the movement. Additionally, the social unrest, which the Kent State shooting represented, created even more disenchantment on the Right as the unrest demonstrated the depths of unwillingness of the U.S. public to support the war.[27]

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[25] Advertisement by YAF, *Human Events*, May 30, 1970: 31 (427).

[26] Teague to National Board of Directors, 15 May 1970, Box 2, Folder 3, Patrick Dowd Papers (hereafter PDP) Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[27] On May 4, 1970, after four days of anti-war protests on the campus of Kent State University, the Ohio National Guard shot four unarmed people on the campus. This created a nation-wide response of sympathy among many Americans.

For years conservatives argued that the United States needed to attack the North Vietnamese bases on neutral soil, and when the U.S. implemented the policy, it backfired politically. The Cambodian invasion lasted for only two months. Despite Nixon's proclamation that it was a success; conservatives realized that the U.S. and South Vietnamese troops retreated in the face of domestic opposition. Conservatives were disappointed that one of their major proposals ended in failure. Although the movement never publicly wavered from endorsing the war, the conservative discourse began to include the recognition that defeat was probable.

Letters between conservative leaders expressed the deep frustration they experienced at Nixon's failure to end the war with the bombings. Walter Judd articulated his resentment toward the entire anti-war protest movement in a letter written to Christopher Emmet, a prominent liberal anti-communist in July 1970:

> Neither the President's belated effort to fight the war intelligently by attacking the enemy in the places from which it has been illegally attacking South Vietnam, nor the killing of students in Ohio, tragic as that was, is the cause of the present upheaval in our country. Those events are merely the excuse that the trained agitators and managers-of-conflict know how to use so skillfully to promote their never-ending efforts to weaken and pull down the government of the United States. Why should anyone expect the enemy to want to cool things down here when heating things up is to its decisive advantage.[28]

Judd conveyed his frustration that the New Left anti-war protests helped sabotage the war effort. He was also upset that it took Nixon more than a year before he finally acted appropriately in Vietnam. More so, Nixon stopped the bombing campaign only two months after it began. This action frustrated Judd and much of the rest of the conservative movement—as it appeared to them that the Left controlled the political discourse. Judd also understood that U.S. domestic

[28] Judd to Emmett, 1 July 1970, Box 30, Folder 2, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

upheaval was giving North Vietnam hope that it could defeat the United States without negotiating.

Following the failed Cambodian invasion, a sentiment that the Vietnam War might be lost reverberated throughout the movement. Notably, an internal discussion mounted within YAF about the Vietnam War. On October 1, 1970, only a few months after the termination of the Cambodian invasion, Jerry Norton, a member of YAF's National Board, wrote a memo igniting a heated internal debate among the National Board about merits of the Vietnam War. Norton believed that YAF blindly endorsed Nixon's Vietnam strategy. He believed the organization should immediately oppose both Nixon and the war. Norton argued that the Vietnam War was a "disaster" for five major reasons. First, the war diverted money from national defense, which caused the United States to fall behind the Soviet Union in the arms race. Second, the war created a climate where liberals could claim easy political victories with large events, such as protesting the short-lived Cambodian invasion. Third, many young Americans died in Vietnam, and since this war did not serve in defense of an immediate national threat, the sacrifice outweighed the cost. Fourth, many American soldiers began using drugs in the military, and many YAFers did not approve of drug usage. Finally, he argued that the domino theory did not hold true. Norton believed that communism already controlled two-thirds of Laos and Cambodia, but he argued that Thailand and Malaysia remained strong enough to fight it. Norton's memo gave a scathing critique of the war, and it seriously questioned the underlying assumptions behind fighting it.[29]

[29] Norton to Randy Teague, "Re: A Queit YAF Withdrawal from Vietnam," 1 October 1970, Box 3, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Three weeks after Norton's original memo, and after other board members debated the issue, Ron Docksai, YAF's National Chairman, responded in a lengthy defense of both Nixon and Vietnamization. Docksai began his reply by announcing that he had disagreements with many of Nixon's other policies (unrelated to the war), but he defended Nixon's handling of Vietnam. On this matter, Docksai proclaimed Nixon a strong anti-communist who was not "ill informed" on foreign and military policy. By "ill informed," Docksai referred to a common conservative critique that the Left believed that the United States could reason with communists, whereas Nixon knew better. Docksai then proclaimed Vietnamization a success, due largely to the fighting spirit of the South Vietnamese. Mindless liberal dissent was the only reason Americans did not know of its strengths. Also, he argued that the media refused to be fair and report the facts. To prove his point, Docksai asked rhetorically, "Suppose one reporter... got on the air and interviewed these kids as if they were interviewing human beings rather than trained seals?" Thus, he accused the New Left college movement of ignorance and the media of culpability in covering it up. Finally, Docksai said that if YAF opposed the war it would not end the war. YAF dissent would only prove that the New Left was right to use violence against the state in order to promote its cause. Docksai unequivocally opposed withdrawing support for the war.[30]

YAF's lengthy internal debate about the Vietnam War helps demonstrate the problems conservatives had in late 1970 with supporting the war while finding flaw with the military strategy. Even though YAF never publicly wavered in its pro-war stance, the breadth and depth of the memos demonstrate that some members of the National Board seriously believed that the

[30] Docksai to Jerry Norton, "Re: A Quiet YAF Withdrawal from Vietnam," 22 October 1970, Box 3, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

largest national conservative youth organization should oppose the conflict. Docksai's memo stood as the last word on the matter, but his support for the war remained notable. He focused on the political problems YAF would encounter if they changed their stance. For Docksai, opposing the war meant that YAF agreed with the New Left, and agreeing with them would let liberals point to YAF's "moral limpness."[31] Politics trumped military strategy in YAF's debate.

These memos also indicate that YAF had no new ideas for ending the war. Docksai was one of the few who viewed Vietnamization as a viable strategy. Others were less sanguine, such as board member Dan Joy. Joy argued primarily in the negative, saying that the war was not the most important in history. Yet, "that does not mean that we ought not be fighting the war."[32] Joy was not making a decisive argument about Vietnam being a good war fought with a viable strategy. Instead, he relied upon the platitude that all wars against communists served good means. Despite their publicly avowed support for the war, by the end of 1970, Joy and much of the National Board had little enthusiasm for the war.

Within a few months of the conclusion of the Cambodian invasion, the Right's leadership recognized that the United States might lose the Vietnam War.[33] Nixon's military efforts

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[31] *Ibid*

[32] Joy to Jerry Norton, "Re: Withdrawing from Vietnam," undated [probably October 1970], Box 3, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[33] Three examples of the Right's belief that the U.S. might lose the war:
In a letter from Christopher Emmet to Henry Kissinger, Emmet complains that Nixon should not appear optimistic in future predictions because there was already a large enough "so-called credibility gap." Letter Emmet to Kissinger, 29 May 1970, Box 83, Folder 15, Christopher Emmet Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Complaints from *Human Events* opposing Nixon's eagerness to negotiation with communism. Front Page Editorial, "Is 'Era of Negotiation' Coming to an End?" *Human Events*, October 24, 1970: 1(817).
Article about how the U.S. policy in the Cold War is one of retreat. James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict: The Great Retreat," *National Review*, December 15, 1970: 1339.

(Vietnamization and the Cambodian invasion) were failures—just as all of Johnson's efforts failed—and conservatives became increasingly disappointed by the years they wasted supporting the war. Aside from YAF's internal debate about the war, most major conservative publications essentially ignored the war in late 1970. Rather than accept defeat, or use the war as a rallying cry, they chose to minimize its importance. The internal discourse focused more attention on race relations, anti-ballistic missiles, and supersonic travel (which they viewed as a Cold War matter instead of a transportation one) than it did on the war. In late 1970, Vietnam was less prevalent within the movement's public discourse than at any other period up to that point. Following the collapse of the Cambodian invasion, the movement's leadership tried to replace the war as the most dominant issue within their discourse.

In February and March 1971, the war again grabbed front-page headlines in many conservative publications. At the time, Nixon authorized U.S. aerial assistance for the South Vietnamese military invasion of North Vietnamese targets in Laos. As with the Cambodian invasion a year earlier, this offensive lasted only about six weeks, ending in American and South Vietnamese defeat. As happened following the Cambodian invasion, anti-war protests increased after the Laotian invasion, including a major meeting of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.[34] When the Laotian campaign ended in mid 1971, the movement felt dejected in the belief that the U.S. was not going to win a six year long war against a communist nation.

The Right's reaction to the Laotian campaign was markedly different from its response to the Cambodian invasion. Similarly to the Cambodian invasion, many conservatives immediately

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[34] This meeting solidified the role of the VVAW as one of the more effective anti-war organizations, and introduced the nation to future Senator and presidential candidate John Kerry, who testified in Congress on behalf of the VVAW against the war in April 1971.

endorsed the Laotian invasion. However, a significantly larger percentage of traditionalist and fusionist organizations had lost faith in Nixon's perseverance by 1971. If he was not going to invade Laos properly and successfully stymie the North Vietnamese military, then this faction within the Right was not going to endorse his war. In the war's sixth year, continuing to support the war proved divisive for the Right. Some conservatives were excited at the prospect of victory while the thought of another conservative proposal failing deflated the remainder of the movement.

One of the more excited conservatives for the Laotian campaign was Walter Judd, who wrote a congratulatory telegram to Nixon on March 26, 1971 because Nixon finally fought the war "intelligently and successfully… instead of continuing [Johnson's] policy of fighting it endlessly and fruitlessly."[35] Adding to Judd's excitement was Rev. Daniel Lyons, Editor of *Twin Circle.* Lyons, returning to the *Manion Forum*, reported that the campaign would help turn the tide in the war and that victory for the U.S. was inevitable.[36] Judd and Lyons' response to Nixon's strategic plans represent the glee which a vocal minority on the felt when discussing the possibility of victory in Vietnam.

This widespread sense of triumph was not universal. Many conservatives still felt betrayed by the failure of the Cambodian invasion and refused to forgive Nixon. For instance, the *National Review* took almost a month before it acknowledged the Laotian invasion. Even then, it gave only backhanded support to Nixon's strategy. Specifically, a March 23, 1971 editorial in the magazine called Nixon's handling of the war "defective," but it continued, "it

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[35] Telegram from Judd to Nixon, 26 March 1971, Box 31, Folder 16, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[36] Daniel Lyons, "The Tide Changes: North Viet Nam is Finally Forced to Fight a Defensive War," *Manion Forum*, 14 March 1971, Box 84, Folder 3, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

often also seems that even a poor strategy, so long as it is fairly specific, is better than none. We drifted into Vietnam, and throughout the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations there was never a clear definition of what specific military aims we had there."[37] Thus, Nixon's defective strategy was better than no strategy at all.

Fearing for the Future of Capitalism

For six years the conservative movement rigorously supported the Vietnam War. Although the movement rarely agreed with presidential strategy, it was still happy that Presidents Johnson and Nixon refused to surrender in the fight against communism. However, the failure of both the Cambodian and Laotian invasions demonstrated that the United States was not close to military success in 1971. This disenchanted the Right as it came to terms with potential defeat. After many years of arguing that victory was possible and necessary, it appeared to many conservatives that the U.S. was losing the war.

Ten weeks after ending the Laotian incursion, Nixon announced on national television that he was going to visit China. China was a symbolically important nation to communism, largely because it was one of the United States' closest Asian allies in World War II, until Mao Zedong and the communist party won the Chinese Civil War in 1950. The United States refused to recognize Zedong's China as the legitimate government of the Chinese people. Instead, the U.S. recognized Taiwan as the only government of the Chinese people, which helped Taiwan lay

[37] Editorial, "The Situation Along Route 9," *National Review*, March 23, 1971: 298

claim to a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council from 1949 through 1971. Thus, Nixon's trip to Communist China in 1972 appalled most conservatives.[38]

Nixon also disappointed conservatives with his continued negotiations of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT), which Nixon negotiated and signed. The Right believed that the United States should never trust communist nations and should avoid signing treaties with communists. They believed that Nixon's negotiation to limit U.S. nuclear weaponry threatened national security and opened the U.S. up to defeat in the Cold War. SALT and Nixon's China visit served as part of his détente policies which ran counter to the conservative movement's Cold War principles. These conservative principles demanded vigilance and a hard line against communism.

Within the span of one year, from early 1971 through early 1972, the Right felt as though Nixon was destroying any chance of victory in the Cold War. With the failure of the Laos campaign, Nixon announcing his visit to China, and progress made in the SALT talks reinforced the idea that Nixon was unfaithful to the conservative philosophy. Because of this, many on the Right turned against Nixon. In August 1971, magazine advertisements signed by several prominent movement leaders announced that they no longer supported the Nixon Administration. Leaders of *National Review*, the New York Conservative Party, the American Conservative Union, the Young Americans for Freedom, and *Human Events*, among other organizations, signed the declaration opposing Nixon because of a variety of issues, but the primary emphasis was on Nixon's China policy and SALT.[39] The ad mentioned that the group was grappling with

[38] For more on the symbolic importance of China and the conservative reaction to it, see Chapter 6.

[39] Among places where the ad can be found are: "A Declaration," *National Review*, August 10, 1971: 842.

his failure to fight the Vietnam War effectively and to successfully conclude the war. Something they had assumed he would be able to do when he was elected in 1968.[40]

At the same time that they began opposing Nixon, conservatives also had to come to terms with the fact that the United States was losing the Vietnam War. Different groups and individuals took this inevitability more dramatically and seriously than others did, but Nixon's overall foreign policy and his handling of the war depressed most people within the movement. For instance, in December 1971, Professor Gerhart Niemeyer of Notre Dame University—a member of the intellectual conservative group the Philadelphia Society—wrote to William Buckley that he awaited the upcoming year (1972) with deep "apprehension" because of the state of the Cold War. Niemeyer reiterated his faith in the domino theory by predicting that Nixon's policies would lead to Taiwan, Vietnam, and all of Southeast Asia being "sold out" to communism. Niemeyer's dreary letter concluded with the prediction that once Asia collapsed, it would lead to the eventual downfall of both NATO and Western democracy.[41]

By early 1972, Nixon could do little publicly to satisfy the movement. In a front-page editorial in January 1972, *Human Events* lambasted Nixon for his interview with CBS's Dan Rather. In the interview, Nixon implied that the purpose of the latest round of bombings served to obtain the release of the several hundred POWs held by North Vietnam. *Human Events* was furious at Nixon, claiming that undermined the whole purpose of the war and noted that Nixon's

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[40] For a more detailed account of how the Right's relationship with Nixon altered their movement politically and ideologically, see Chapter Six.

[41] Niemeyer to Buckley, 27 December 1971, Correspondence Niemeyer 1971, WBP, Yale University.

stance now looked "identical" to liberal Democratic Senator George McGovern (who opposed the war).[42]

Between the August 1971 declaration and the 1972 election, the Vietnam War ceased to be a unifying issue within the conservative movement. Although most conservatives still wanted to see the United States victorious and they wanted to see a redoubled effort by the United States military, they also recognized the futility of this perspective. Rallying around losing military campaigns is inherently difficult for political movements, and the Right in late 1971 and 1972 was no exception. Though Vietnam did not disappear from the movement's discourse there was a deepening resignation that it was a lost war.

Perhaps the most damning public statement about the war came from James Burnham on February 18, 1972. In his typical blunt style, Burnham used his bi-weekly column in the *National Review* to publicly acknowledge that the Vietnam War was a failure. Burnham was a long-time supporter of the war and was widely respected among the *National Review* readership, making his admission groundbreaking. Burnham wrote that Nixon's overtures to the North Vietnamese for free and fair national elections in South Vietnam were tantamount to surrender. Although Burnham was being dramatic, the rest of his writings in early 1972 showed that he did not believe the United States could win the war.[43]

Throughout the last year of the war, conservatives expressed no faith in Nixon or National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger. The Right believed that neither had the gumption to execute the war effectively, and that they were no better than Lyndon Johnson was, accusing

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[42] Front Page Editorial, "Nixon Rhetoric Confuses True Viet Nam Aims," *Human Events*, January 15, 1972: 1(33).

[43] James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict: I'll Tell You a Secret," *National Review*, February 18, 1972: 144.

Nixon and Kissinger of looking for a way out of Vietnam. In mid 1972 the North Vietnamese military invaded South Vietnam, only to be repelled a few months later. This United States success could have been a rallying point for renewed war support, since it was a military defeat for the North Vietnamese. Unfortunately for the Right, it was too late as they recognized that this was but a setback in South Vietnam's eventual military defeat. *Human Events* recognized that Nixon wanted to end the war before the 1972 presidential election. In its analysis of the situation, they wrote: "**there is a gnawing uneasiness that the President, in his quest for a generation of peace, in his zeal not to offend Peking or the Kremlin, will ease off on the enemy or relinquish at the bargaining table what the United States and the South Vietnamese are winning on the battlefield** [emphasis original]."[44] Conservatives now believed that Nixon's plan for victory in Vietnam included large concessions to the communists. Nixon believed this would help U.S.- Soviet relations and improve détente. The fact that the end of the war helped détente made it even more insulting since conservative strenuously disapproved of détente.[45]

Nixon's handling of both the Cold War and the Vietnam War helped keep conservatives on the sidelines of the 1972 presidential election. In their discussion of the upcoming election, some editors at the *National Review* discussed not endorsing anyone at all. Eventually they did endorse Nixon, but only because "*faute de mieux*" (lack of a better option). In the editorial announcing their reluctant decision to endorse Nixon, the magazine wrote: "[writer Hilaire] Belloc warned us that dangerous toys should not be given to little boys, and much too much hangs on the possible consequence of George McGovern's exercise of the power that has

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[44] Front Page Editorial, "Will Nixon Surrender Viet Nam Advantage? Airpower Turning Tide," *Human Events*, July 15, 1972: 1(506).

[45] Although disapproval of détente is explicit in the above quote, it is also covered in more detail in Chapter Six.

attached to the Presidency."[46] This statement was not a strong endorsement, and throughout the rest of the election the magazine took pains to point out how McGovern was too weak to fight the Cold War. Rarely did it praise Nixon or his policies.

The Paris Peace Accords

In the month before the 1972 presidential election, the pace of peace negotiations between Kissinger and North Vietnamese representative Le Duc Tho increased to a fervent pace. Conservatives feared the results of these negotiations, believing that Nixon would sign any accord proposed, regardless of whether or not it would benefit the United States. On October 21, 1972, *Human Events* published a front-page editorial proclaiming that Nixon was willing to accept a "unity" government in South Vietnam. A unity government was one that included participation by communists and anti-communists in government. To the conservative movement, which based its ideology on the idea that anti-communist governments could not give an inch to communist insurgents, accepting a unity government was tantamount to surrender.[47]

Three days before the presidential election, the front page of *Human Events* again focused on the peace negotiations. This time it called the rumored peace agreement "a diplomatic and military disaster."[48] The editorial explained that according to the agreement, the United States would need to leave South Vietnam, while the North Vietnamese military would stay in

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[46] Editorial, "Nixon-Agnew 1972," *National Review*, September 1, 1972: 934.

[47] Front Page Editorial, "Will Kissinger's Secret Diplomacy Undermine Saigon? Asian Experts Concerned," *Human Event*s, October 21, 1972: 1(769).

[48] Front Page Editorial, "Multiple Dangers in Viet Nam Peace Pact," *Human Events*, November 4, 1972: 1(817).

the territory it controlled. Additionally, the amount of U.S. supplies to South Vietnam would be limited, but the North Vietnamese could receive a limit-less amount of supplies from China and the Soviet Union. Many conservatives quickly recognized that after eight years of supporting the war effort, the Paris Peace Accords represented defeat for the U.S..

Conservatives did not support the Paris Peace Accords, signed in January 1973. Their arguments against the accord were scattershot. Some argued that victory for the United States remained a possibility, while others wanted a stronger DMZ line to help keep North Vietnamese troops out of Saigon.[49] Regardless, there was wide-spread conservative disapproval of the peace accords. They believed that fighting against communists required perseverance and strength, and they held fast that the United States could not give up the battle. After eight long years, they wanted to see the U.S. victorious, regardless of the overall costs.

The biggest difference between the conservative rationale for the war in late 1972 and when it first started, stood with the domino theory no longer being a central argument. The decline of the domino theory resulted from events that occurred shortly after the signing of the Paris Peace Accords. Specifically, at this time communist dictators took control of both Laos and Cambodia, but there was a strengthening of anti-communist forces in South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and other Southeast Asian nations, proving the domino theory false. Although the Right still believed that the United States needed to use force to oppose communism,

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[49] An example of a conservative who believed that the United States could still win is: Daniel Lyons, "Man On The Go: Expert On Southeast Asia Prospects For Peace Now," *Manion Forum*, 24 December 1972, Box 84, Folder 4, CMP Chicago Historical Society.

An example of a call for a more serious DMZ line is: Front Page Editorial, "Have Critical Changes Been Made in New Viet Pact?" *Human Events*, January 27, 1973: 1(65).

conservatives no longer used the domino theory as the major argument in opposition to the Paris Peace Accords.[50]

Even as late as March 1975, a full year after the final American soldier left Vietnam, conservative members founded the Emergency Committee for a Free Vietnam (ECFV). It sought to remind the American public of their agreement in the Paris Peace Accords, to continue to fund the South Vietnamese army in its fight against communism. Equally important to the committee was the need to get Vietnam back into the public discourse. Putting Vietnam back into the spotlight would help Americans understand that the United States could be victorious in South Vietnam without sending troops to Southeast Asia. They did not want to concede that Vietnam was a communist nation.[51]

Although the public purpose behind the ECFV was to help galvanize support for a Cold War fight, the committee aimed its rhetoric at liberals who helped push America out of Vietnam only a year earlier. Extolling the human suffering that was a consequence of North Vietnamese aggression, these conservatives tried to remind their liberal opponents that even after the United States withdrew its forces, fighting still took place. The committee formed long after the end of American involvement in the war, and the ECFV's internal communication implied that the

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[50] Although the Right did not use the domino theory to argue against the Paris Peace Accords, the movement still believed in the power of the domino theory. In one example, in January 1972, William F. Buckley wrote a letter to Walter Judd proclaiming that Nixon's visiting China, "promptly followed by movements in the same direction in much of the rest of the world… should end the debate about the misnamed Domino Theory. Of course, it was always a Domino Fact -- as even the blindest can hardly deny now."
Buckley to Judd, 10 January 1972, Box 29, Folder 11, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[51] *Group Research Report*, 26 March 1975, Box 119, Lee Edwards Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

committee's members understood that the organization was doomed to failure. In essence, it was a feeble attempt to remind the conservative grassroots of the hypocrisy of the Left.[52]

From 1965 through 1973, the Right had some of the most strident war hawks in U.S. politics. Using the conservative anti-communist ideology, they managed to identify various intellectual arguments in favor of the war. Overall, their general justification of the war was that Vietnam was one place where American influence could help roll back communism. Most conservatives genuinely believed that the war was both morally justifiable and politically necessary.

Unfortunately for the conservative movement, Vietnam stung as a failure. The domino theory disintegrated when Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, and most of Southeast Asia never turned toward communism. Additionally, the war was at the center of the conservative foreign policy discourse for much of the past decade, and it ended without a conservative success. The movement needed a new foreign policy to take the place of ardent and relentless anti-communism. During the war, conservatives grew tired of arguing over the importance of the Cold War and the nature of communism with the Left. The later Vietnam years brought about a fatigue and malaise among conservative leaders, weariness many of them quickly recognized in themselves. They did not want to continue supporting a failed war.

The movement remained relatively consistent in support of a more aggressive strategy, but serious long-term implications of that continuity plagued them. Libertarians opposed the war—often joining the New Left at protests and meetings. At the same time, the Right's leaders could not lead without another issue to guide them. The grassroots fought and debated the war,

[52] Letter from John Chamberlain to William Rusher, 22 January 1975, Box 19, Folder 5, WRP, Library of Congress.

while millions of U.S. soldiers entered the jungles of Vietnam. Vietnam was not a stable political situation, and it forced conservatives to begin re-evaluating their ideology and their role within the Republican Party. As the chapters ahead will demonstrate, the conservative ideology changed throughout the war largely because of the issues that arose from their continued support of the Vietnam War.

Chapter 3:
Dissent and Disunion: The Libertarian Exodus

Libertarians and traditionalist conservatives disagreed whether to support or oppose U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam War. The majority of conservatives supported the war; whereas most libertarians opposed it. Due to the important role libertarians played in the conservative movement, their opposition to the Vietnam War greatly affected the movement. This chapter explores the roots of the libertarian opposition to the war, along with those effects—which included a breakdown in the fusionism coalition. As fusionism became less tenable because of disputes regarding the Vietnam War, the conservative discourse shifted away from a focus on individual freedom and more toward religious and moral standards.

The libertarian philosophy served as an integral component to the formation of the modern conservative movement's philosophy. It provided valuable intellectual arguments capable of opposing the growth of the federal government, which was one of the key goals of the Right in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Libertarian leaders such as, Fredrich von Hayek and Frank Meyer helped provide the intellectual support for the formation of the fusionism coalition, which dominated conservatism beginning in the late 1950s. Fusionism combined libertarian beliefs of individual freedoms through a weak central government, traditionalist beliefs in the value of community standards, and strong anti-communism. During the 1950s and 1960s, libertarianism remained a popular ideology within conservatism. This libertarian pull also helped draw grassroots supporters into the conservative movement.

A central element of libertarian principles resided with the belief that individuals should have absolute freedom to do as they wish without government interference. Even among the variants of libertarianism, they all generally worked toward the maximization of individual freedom within society and the minimization of government intervention. They all opposed big government, with differences typically centering on how much government interference was acceptable. For instance, notable libertarians Ayn Rand and Hayek disagreed with one another about the role the government should play in shaping society. Hayek accepted some government economic regulation, including regulation of minimum wage while Rand stood more absolute in her belief that government economic interference steeped toward socialism.[1] Despite disagreements like these, libertarians still shared the belief that governments should remain small.

Libertarian grassroots activists made up a very vocal constituency within the conservative movement. Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign galvanized many grassroots activists, including libertarians, enabling them to increase their presence within the movement.[2] Conservatives in the 1960s were chiefly concerned with the growth of the federal government, and much of Goldwater's campaign centered on the idea that he was going to protect the individual from the growth of the government. Libertarians were integral partners with traditionalist conservatives in this period.

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[1] For a more comprehensive explanation of some of the disagreements between Rand and von Hayek, see: Burns, *Goddess*, 102-06.

[2] There is an extensive historiography regarding the role of grassroots activists helping Goldwater's campaign, some examples are: Donald T. Critchlow, *The Conservative Ascendancy: How the Gop Right Made Political History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 44-71; Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*, 129-59; Schneider, *Cadres*, 72-89; Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 181-210.

Fusionism Forms

Libertarianism was fully integrated within the conservative movement as early as the Great Depression. Conservatives needed an intellectual counterweight to the New Deal's expansion of the federal government's powers and libertarianism was an appropriate ideology capable of offering an alternative to an expanding government. Libertarians offered a comprehensive philosophy opposed to the government's rapid growth. Conservatives and libertarians worked together to oppose President Franklin Roosevelt's redevelopment of the federal government.

According to historian Jennifer Burns, libertarians adopted the name during the Great Depression as a means of protesting the New Deal. Led by author Albert Jay Nock, a disparate group of libertarians felt they needed a new name to describe their political philosophy. A new name was necessary because President Franklin Roosevelt began using the term liberal to describe the New Deal, and this group of classical liberals strenuously disapproved of Roosevelt's New Deal.[3] The American Liberty League was one of these groups which epitomized the libertarian opposition to the New Deal. Founded in part by the wealthy Du Pont family in the 1930s, the League sought "to teach the necessity of respect for the rights of persons and property as fundamental to every successful form of government."[4] While many Americans revered and praised Roosevelt and the New Deal, libertarians opposed it because it represented an expansive government and a curtailed free market. They recognized that expansive and

[3] Burns, *Goddess*, 48. Prior to the 1930s, the Left was associated with the Progressive Movement, not liberalism. Instead, liberalism referred to a classical liberal philosophy.

[4] Robert F. Burk, *The Corporate State and the Broker State: The Du Ponts and American National Politics, 1925-1940* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 143.

expensive governments required high taxation, which they compared to the state seizing private property. Finally, they believed government interference in the economy curtailed free choice and individual rights. This ideological opposition to the New Deal complimented the support many big businesses lent to conservative organizations during Roosevelt's presidency.[5]

Following World War II, those who had opposed the New Deal updated their ideology by attacking the growing welfare state. Conservative intellectual and historian George Nash, writing about the formation of the modern conservative movement in his book *The Conservative Intellectual Movement*, argues that millions of Americans joined the Right in the post-World War II era because they recognized the risk the state posed to individual freedoms. Nash describes the birth of modern conservatism as such:

> For those Americans who believed in the creed of old-fashioned, classical, nineteenth-century, liberal individualism, 1945 was especially lonely, unpromising and bleak. Free markets, private property, limited government, self-reliance, laissez-faire- it had been a long time since principles like these had guided governments and persuaded peoples.[6]

The government's size was growing exponentially during the post-war years. This created a small push-back by anti-government advocate and allowed both libertarianism and conservatism to grow.

The United States' rapid economic expansion of the early 1950s, coupled with the quick rise of McCarthyism, helped launch the careers of many libertarians as public intellectuals. For many in the rising middle class contingent, the post-war economic boom made government intervention and assistance unnecessary. Simultaneously, fears of communism grew throughout

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[5] For additional information on the American Liberty League and other anti-New Deal free-market organizations, see Burns, *Goddess*; Kim Phillips-Fein, *Invisible Hands: The Making of the Conservative Movement from the New Deal to Reagan* (New York: Norton, 2009).

[6] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 3.

this period. Cold War tensions aided the proliferation of libertarianism because its reliance on a small government helped it blend with anti-communism. Even after Senator Joe McCarthy's fall from grace, millions of Americans still worried about the growth of international communism. In this environment, libertarianism thrived as intellectuals like Rand and Hayek saw their works become popular, while Senator Robert Taft spent the period as a perennial Republican presidential candidate.[7]

The Right also developed intellectually during the early Cold War years. Possibly the most infamous conservative to come of-age in the early 1950s was William F. Buckley, Jr. By the 1970s he was one of the most well recognized faces of the Right, and he published his first book *God and Man at Yale* in 1951. In his first book Buckley introduced the world to his trademark writing style, integrating a disarming wit, a snobbish intellectualism, and serious conservative polemics into a popular work.[8] In his book Buckley viciously assailed the liberal establishment within his alma mater. One of his more poignant critiques came on his dissection

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[7] Although conservatism did not come to dominate politics during this period, there was a vast and robust literature on the Right in the late 1940s and early 1950s, much of which focused on communism. Examples of popular conservative literature during this period are: William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale* (Washington DC: Henry Regnery Company, 1951); Chambers, *Witness*; Kirk, *The Conservative Mind: From Burke to Santayana*; Herbert Philbrick, *I Led Three Lives: Citizen, "Communist," Counterspy* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1952). Examples of libertarian work during this period: Albert Jay Nock, *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* (New York: Harper Brothers 1943); von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*; Henry Hazlitt, *Economics in One Lesson* (New York: Harper & Brothers 1946); Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1943).

[8] The publisher of Buckley's book, the Henry Regnery Company, proudly promoted on October 31, 1951 that they sold out of first run copies of the book. Though self-reported, the book did sell well, and by February 1952, the *New York Times* called it a "much-discussed" book.
Milton Brackers, "Yale Survey Finds No Red Influence Or Threats to Academic Freedom," *New York Times*, February 18, 1952: 1.
Advertisement from Regnery Company – No Title, *New York Times*, October 31, 1951: 45.
Both articles from proquest.com

of the economics department at Yale University, about whom he wrote: "But if the recent Yale graduate, who exposed himself to Yale economics during his undergraduate years, exhibits enterprise, self-reliance, and independence, it is only because he has turned his back on his teachers and texts."[9] Although Buckley was no-doubt exaggerating in order to make his own political point, his accusation that one of the nation's elite universities promoted socialism found a receptive audience in conservative circles.

As the conservative movement became increasingly popular and began to occupy a larger place in American political discourse of the early 1960s, the libertarian philosophy became a driving force behind conservatism. Senator Barry Goldwater's 1960 work *The Conscience of a Conservative* introduced both conservatism and a heavy dose of libertarianism to millions of Americans. This work resonated throughout communities who began to fear the growth of the American government.

Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* warned Americans that the growth of the federal government would inevitably prove to be a serious problem. Reminding his audience of the old adage that "absolute power corrupts absolutely," Goldwater cautioned that the U.S. government had grown to such a degree that it was no longer controllable. Only those at the top level constrained the federal government, and Goldwater called this a recipe for disaster. He ominously warned that this, "leads [the government] to the acquisition of *all* power – whether in the hands of one or many makes little difference to the freedom of those left on the outside." Underlying his argument with tacit approval of libertarianism, Goldwater believed that the

[9] Buckley, *God and Man at Yale*, 45-46.

growth of the federal government would eventually lead to diminished freedoms for millions of Americans.[10]

While libertarian principles influenced both Goldwater and Buckley's works, neither individual was considered a libertarian at the time. Instead, their work epitomized the growing consensus within the broader conservative movement that the government should remain small, provide for a strong national defense, fight communism, and try to uphold the conservative understanding of traditional (Judeo-Christian) values. This mindset represented the fusionism philosophy which helped minimize differences between libertarians and the rest of the movement. In general, in the years immediately before Goldwater's 1964 presidential campaign, there was relative harmony within the movement as most conservatives agreed on similar principles.[11]

Developments in the larger political discourse probably contributed to the formation of the fusionism coalition. Specifically, the John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson presidencies, and the rise of the Civil Rights movements during the early 1960s led to a rapid expansion of the federal government. Libertarians had a well-developed philosophy connecting the federal government's expansion and the loss of personal freedom which made their intellectual contributions a cornerstone of conservative thought in this era. Many conservatives supported individual freedoms and smaller government for intellectual (as opposed to racial) reasons. Libertarians provided the intellectual backbone to this philosophy.[12]

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[10] Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*, 17.

[11] For more information on fusionism see Chapter Introduction.

[12] Southern conservatives usurped the small government rhetoric while opposing civil rights and integration. This meant that many grassroots members who resided in the South used similar language borrowed from the mainstream conservative movement. However much of the

Although conservatism was a broad political philosophy in the early 1960s, one can categorize much of the Right's literature as advocating for small government and a hawkish stance against communism. The former had its roots in the anti-New Deal conservatism and was an area where libertarians could openly embrace conservative principles. The problem arrived from the idea of taking a hawkish stance against international communism. Although libertarians opposed communism, they stood divided about the use of military strength to enforce capitalism. This philosophical divide became a problem for conservatives at the onset of the Vietnam War.

A common support for an aggressive U.S. Cold War policy helped unite the fusionism coalition in the 1950s and early 1960s. Writing in 1962, political scientist Victor Ferkiss argued that the radical patriotism and ardent anti-communism of the Right was an outgrowth of the America First isolationist movement of the 1930s.[13] Ferkiss believed that after World War II, anti-communist figureheads such as Senator Joe McCarthy gained support from former-isolationists in the Midwest and South. These conservatives "combined nationalism and neo-isolationism which emphasized the domestic Communist threat and presupposed an activist role in world affairs, although a unilateral one."[14] Ferkiss observed conservatism's transformation from an ideology focused on separating the U.S. from international politics to an ideology

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intellectual leadership did not focus attention on civil rights, nor does the historiography generally considered them as racist. Although I believe much still needs to be written on the topic, one can find more on the complicated relationship between non-racist based conservative ideals and opposition to the Civil Rights movement in: Burns, *Goddess*, 205-06; Critchlow, *Schlafly*, 142; Goldberg, *Goldwater*, 196-97.

[13] In years leading up to World War II, the America First organization was the largest isolationist organization in the United States. America First opposed U.S. involved in the European conflict and it drew support largely from conservatives.

[14] Victor C. Ferkiss, "Political and Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism, Right and Left," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 344, no. Nov. 1962 (1962): 5-6.

supporting intervention throughout the world. Fusionism was a successful ideology largely because most conservatives supported this newly aggressive nationalism.[15]

As the nationalistic and interventionist Cold War foreign policy increasingly dominated the Right, libertarian intellectuals—including Rand, Robert Taft, and Murray Rothbard—frequently stood as exceptions. Unlike the conservatives whom Ferkiss observed, they retained a strong connection to their America First isolationist roots and frequently opposed U.S. intervention against international communism long before the Vietnam War. Despite their refusal to support the Right's foreign policy, by the 1960s, many grassroots libertarians no longer subscribed to a strict isolationist position. However, they never felt comfortable with an aggressive U.S. foreign policy. They strongly disapproved of communism and accepted, as most conservatives believed, that communism had an aggressive nature, but these grassroots libertarians argued that the United States had no right to dictate economic and anti-communist policies to countries throughout the world. Thus, even though these grassroots libertarians were not isolationists, the majority of libertarian leaders opposed an aggressive and interventionist foreign policy. This caused major tensions with the rest of the conservative movement, which supported an aggressive anti-communism.[16]

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[15] Ferkiss's overall argument still remains valid, however I believe the area is ripe for more study and analysis as none have directly studied this transition from isolationism to interventionism. Among the works which confirm Ferkiss's findings are: Nicole R. Hemmer, "Messengers of the Right: Media and the Modern Conservative Movement" (Columbia University, 2010), Chapter 2; Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 85-86; Schneider, *Conservative Century*, 67-72.

[16] Examples of the tensions include an article about the problems caused by the growing rift between libertarians and the Right where Meyer lays blame on the shoulders of both Karl Hess and Rothbard: Frank Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Libertarianism or Libertinism?" *National Review*, September 9, 1969.

Pin-pointing precisely how much grassroots support the libertarian leaders retained for their anti-interventionist beliefs during the early 1960s is difficult.[17] Little evidence of grassroots opposition to aggressive Cold War policies prior to 1964 exists. For instance, even nominal existence of libertarian opposition to President John Kennedy's blockade of Cuba in 1962 has not been documented. However, Cuba posed a direct threat to the United States, and resolving the crisis required remarkably limited military intervention. Vietnam, however, was the defining foreign policy issue of the 1960s (if not of the Cold War). It labored on as a very unpopular war, leaving little surprise that far more grassroots libertarians wrote articles and protested against the Vietnam War than any previous war. By the end of the Vietnam War, most intellectual libertarian leaders and many grassroots libertarian supporters staunchly opposed both the Vietnam War and the conservative movement.

Young Americans for Freedom

During the Vietnam War the largest national conservative youth organization, the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) suffered a sharp divide about Vietnam policies. The tensions between libertarians and traditionalists within YAF demonstrate how the war divided the

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In a memo from William Rusher to Roger Milliken, Rusher described the chaos caused by libertarians who supported Hess when he opposed an aggressive foreign policy. Rusher to Milliken, 4 May 1970, Box 59, Folder 2, WRP, Library of Congress.

[17] Most of the secondary work on libertarians either focuses on the movement's leadership or begins the story with the birth of the late 1960s, immediately preceding the birth of the Libertarian Party in 1971. This broad interpretation of the secondary literature closely parallels much of the available sources in archives. For examples, see: Andrew, "Vietnam on Campus."; Jennifer Burns, "O Libertarian, Where Is Thy Sting?," *The Journal of Policy History* 19, no. 4 (2007); Godfrey Hodgson, *The World Turned Right Side Up: A History of the Conservative Ascendancy in America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996); Klatch, *Generation Divided*.

strongest and one of the most influential grassroots conservative organizations.[18] As a grassroots organization, YAF disseminated conservative principles nationwide. Throughout the war, the group's traditionalist-based leadership supported an aggressive anti-communist strategy in Vietnam, which was opposed by a vocal minority of YAFers (primarily libertarians). Eventually, in 1969, the two sides broke apart with the libertarians forming the Student Libertarian Alliance, their own short-lived national youth organization, and YAF beginning its decline.[19] YAF is an important organization to analyze both because it was the leader of the national grassroots conservative movement and because it was the only organization which can trace its downfall to the debate over the Vietnam War.

YAF played a unique and essential role within the conservative movement in the 1960s and early 1970s. YAF's mission strove to disseminate the existing ideology and not to create new philosophical arguments. As a grassroots organization, YAF's primary responsibility was to organize publicity campaigns in favor of conservative ideals. An example of this is its public protest against IBM and Firestone for conducting business with communist nations. It strove to connect the Right's intellectual elite with local conservatives. This important role helped YAF achieve a prominent place within conservatism. YAF was unique among grassroots organizations because of its national reach, influence, and fusionist philosophical outlook. The organization helps provide a window into the problems facing the greater movement.

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[18] YAF was one of the few national grassroots conservative organizations. In 1964, YAF proved that it was a powerful organization when YAFers served as active participants in Goldwater's campaign, flooding his campaign with volunteers.
For more information on YAF's influence, see: Andrew, *Sixties*; Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*; Klatch, *Generation Divided*; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*; Perlstein, *Before the Storm*; Schneider, *Cadres*.

[19] Although YAF still exists today, their membership declined rapidly beginning in the early 1970s. See Klatch, *Generation Divided*, Chapter 8.

At YAF's founding in 1960, fusionism dominated the conservative movement's discourse, and libertarianism was a key component of fusionism at the time. As an integral part of fusionism, libertarianism's influence is unmistakable. For example the Sharon Statement, YAF's founding statement, proclaimed: "liberty is indivisible, and that political freedom cannot long exist without economic freedom."[20] The association between economic and personal freedoms is an archetypal libertarian principle, demonstrating YAF's support for one of the primary libertarian ideals. Their downfall during this period is important to analyze because the organization represented the greater movement's philosophy and were the movement's foot soldiers.

Besides YAF, most of the other national conservative organizations focused on specific causes or individuals. For instance, an evangelical crusade against communism was the central focus of the Christian Crusade's philosophy. The John Birch Society was a secretive anti-communist social organization. Although conservatives dominated the rank-and-file of both, neither organization promoted broad fusionist philosophies. Instead, they had far narrower goals. For example, the John Birch Society did not focus on promoting the broader principles of conservatism, and primarily concerned itself with fighting communism and communist conspiracies.[21] Both groups organized the grassroots, but they also served narrower segments of the Right than did YAF. Additionally, several conservative leaders—like Clarence Manion and Phyllis Schlafly—had personal media outlets. Both individuals subscribed to broader-based ideas

[20] 1960, "The Sharon Statement," Young Americans for Freedom, http://www.yaf.org/statement.

[21] Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors* does an excellent job covering how the John Birch Society relied upon social interactions almost as much as political orientation. Additionally, she covers the movement's unique stances on issues, which include the belief that there are many world-wide communist conspiracies.

of conservatism than the John Birch Society or the Christian Crusade, but they were also independent leaders who did not always agree with broader fusionism principles. YAF's focus was not on any one person nor was it created to focus on any one specific philosophy within conservatism. Instead it centered on the entire fusionism philosophy.

YAF's focus on a broader-based fusionism helped it grow remarkably quickly in the early 1960s. Even after Goldwater's lopsided defeat in 1964—an election where YAF provided a large grassroots volunteer base—the organization continued to grow. One method of demonstrating YAF's rapid growth following the election is an examination of its financial success. According to the New York State Department of Social Welfare records, YAF's total income from July 1962 through July 1963 was approximately $118,500. In the year following Goldwater's defeat, July 1964 through July 1965, YAF raised about $464,500, a tremendous increase in donations. In both years, the bulk of YAF's income came from individual and corporate donations.[22] Additionally, within weeks after Goldwater's defeat, YAF announced its intention to double total membership in one year.[23] Although actual YAF membership numbers are extremely hard to find (if they ever existed), it is evident from the internal memos and from their financial statements that YAF was a strong and active organization in the immediate aftermath of Goldwater's 1964 defeat.[24]

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[22] YAF's national headquarters were located in New York State in the mid 1960s. Report by New York State Department of Social Welfare, 1965, Box 341, GRP, Columbia University.

[23] *Group Research Information Newsletter*, 15 July 1965, Box 120, GRP, Columbia University.

[24] There are no official YAF archives or papers. Many individual leaders, however, have donated their papers to various archives. None of those papers that I encountered have reliable membership numbers. Gregory Schneider, who wrote the most comprehensive work about YAF, discussed this problem of membership in his work, *Cadres for Conservatism*. Based on his evidence, which included interviews with former YAF leaders, he noted that the problem of

Following Goldwater's defeat, YAF quickly followed other fusionist organizations in endorsing a hawkish stance in the Vietnam War. Its 1965 position was in-line with its 1963 belief that the United States should fight for a free Vietnam.[25] Within a year of Goldwater's defeat, YAF founded many subsidiary organizations with purposes to promote a more vigorous Vietnam policy. One such organization, the Student Committee for Victory in Vietnam claimed to have organized, "pro-American rallies in over one hundred campuses."[26] This student committee, along with others such as the World Youth Crusade for Freedom and Tell-it-to-Hanoi, affiliated closely with YAF. These subgroups help demonstrate the totality of the support by YAF's leadership for pro-war policies.

YAF was a very top-heavy, fusionist organization, with the national board dictating much of the group's official policies. Still, strong evidence shows that much of the local membership supported the group's pro-Vietnam position. This pro-Vietnam stance is particularly notable at the start of the war. Examples from local YAF chapters are commonplace. One example from Lakeville, Connecticut in May 1965, the local YAF chapter called for a more aggressive U.S. policy in the war. The Hotchkiss School *Patriot,* a student paper, is remarkable because the tone and quality of the arguments indicate that YAF's National Board probably had little to do with the paper's publication.[27] Many of the local YAF chapters had their own papers, and they all had

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membership numbers plagued the organization throughout its existence. Schneider, *Cadres*, 41 & 199.

[25] Robert G. Harley, "South Viet Nam: Asian Battleground," *New Guard*, January 1962, 14-15.

[26] YAF Advertisement, 1965, Correspondence 1965, YAF Folder, WBP, Yale University.

[27] I believe that local YAFers wrote this article because it used crude grammar and its logic was relatively unclear. By comparison most of YAF's material was highly polished.
Article: John S. Canino, "An Affirmative Program for Foreign Affairs," *The Patriot* (page 2-3), 7 May 1965, Box 341, GRP, Columbia University.

a unique voice. These papers were one of the few areas where local YAFers were capable of getting their voices heard.

Grassroots YAFers' early support for a more vigorous Vietnam policy is easy to understand within the historical context of the era. The organization required an ardent anti-communist stand to hold its various strands together. The Sharon Statement espouses both minimal government interventions in society as well as traditional beliefs in values and morality, even though the two ideas occasionally opposed one another. Despite the variety of ideas and philosophies within the Sharon Statement, it concludes by tying the fusionism philosophy via anti-communism. It proclaims that: "the forces of international Communism are, at present, the greatest single threat to these liberties."[28] The founders of YAF understood that the one issue uniting YAFers was anti-communism.

The problem with relying on anti-communism to bind the organization was that most interpreted it as a rigid philosophy with little leeway to offer sympathy toward communists. This ardent anti-communism started to crack in early 1966; that year a large minority of libertarians within the movement began questioning whether communism was the greatest threat to freedom in the United States. They criticized the U.S. government and wondered whether the expanded federal government was more dangerous to freedoms than international communism. They argued that American anti-communism was equally as aggressive in its expansionist philosophy as communist nations. Thus, they viewed both communism and anti-communism as similarly oppressive ideologies.[29]

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[28] "The Sharon Statement."

[29] Frank Meyer, "Principles & Heresies: The Draft," *National Review*, August 9, 1966: 785.

Despite YAF's support for the war, libertarians still influenced the organization's policies. Specifically, libertarian YAFers pushed the organization to take a strong anti-draft stance. In 1967 many libertarian leaders pushed for the draft's abolition. Libertarian intellectuals such as Milton Friedman, Karl Hess, and Murray Rothbard argued that the draft reduced individual freedoms. These individuals, especially Karl Hess whose son was involved in YAF, held strong sway over many grassroots libertarians. Libertarian YAFers often justified their anti-draft stance by demonstrating the support they received from these leaders. They believed it expressed expanded government power. Specifically, they marked the draft as the government forcing people to fight. The effects of the libertarian offensive against the draft quickly reverberated throughout the movement, and within a year YAF became the leading conservative anti-draft organization.[30]

Within two years of Lyndon Johnson's escalation of the Vietnam War, YAF joined several liberal organizations, such as the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), to form the Council for a Volunteer Military. Public statements and the few private records

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One example of libertarians referring to the oppressive nature of anti-communism was a letter by a libertarian YAFer about how libertarians wanted to promote a "pro-freedom" agenda which would permanently change the "basic direction of YAF."
Letter from Ernsberger to Maytag, 1 August 1969, Box 1, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.
Additionally, a libertarian article opposing patriotism and military conflict:
Fred Woodworth, "Programmed Patriotism," *The Individualist*, 3, no. 1, January 1971: 14-15.

[30] An example of the libertarian objection to the draft is the Spring 1967 issue of the *New Individualist Review*, a small elite libertarian journal which had Milton Friedman, Yale Brozen, George J. Stigler, F. A. Hayek, and Benjamin A. Rogge as Editorial Advisors. The Spring 1967 issue was devoted exclusively to anti-draft opinions. *New Individualist Review*, 4, no 4, Spring 1967.

available indicate that the majority of YAF's leadership supported the Council.[31] Much of YAF's external arguments in favor of a volunteer army derived from libertarian ideological origins. For instance, YAF's Executive Director Randal Teague explained in 1969 that the organization favored a strong military and opposed conscription because it "deprives the individual - the cornerstone of liberty and, therefore of free government - of his freedom of choice…"[32] YAF argued that using a free-market model would enable the American military to obtain sufficient volunteers for an adequate supply of soldiers, necessary to win the war.

Traditionalists within YAF believed that supporting a volunteer military remained consistent with its advocacy of a more effective and aggressive military policy in Vietnam. Traditionalist YAFers believed that the growing left-wing anti-war sentiment stemmed primarily from individuals who feared being drafted. If the government eliminated the draft it would weaken the anti-war movement, enabling the United States to fight the war without simultaneously combating domestic opposition. They hoped this would allow the United States to defeat communism in South Vietnam. From a military perspective, they believed that opposing the draft would support the long-term struggle against communists.

Although they never publicly admitted as much, it is probable that many YAFers opposed the draft because of self-preservation. All YAFers were of draft age, and it is comparably easier to find arguments to support a war than it is to risk your life for the cause. Although many YAFers entered the military (including those who volunteered), not all of them

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[31] Public statements were supportive of the Council. Private statements, most of which were dated from 1968-73 indicate that the leadership never wavered from opposing conscription.

[32] Statement on the Draft by YAF's Exec Director Randal Cornell Teague to the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Forces, 29 September 1969, Box 2, Folder 4, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

did, and it is very likely that fear of death compelled those YAFers to oppose the draft. With libertarian philosophy about individual freedom readily available within the movement, the philosophy provided good cover for those who did not want to devote two years to military service and who were scared to risk their lives.[33]

One result of YAF's opposition to the draft was that it helped keep the organization hospitable for libertarians. Libertarians were ideologically more anti-war than rest of the traditionalist-leaning organization. Since traditionalists refused to compromise their support for the war—they were not going to allow their movement to oppose a war against communists—they needed to find a different issue for compromise. This compromise issue rested with the draft. By remaining pro-war and anti-draft, traditionalist YAFers compromised with the libertarians while still holding to their core principles.[34]

Unfortunately for YAF's leadership, many libertarians within the organization were not satisfied with an anti-draft position and eventually advocated for a cessation of hostilities. YAF's problems began in 1968 when these libertarians began protesting the Vietnam War. The growing New Left's anti-war revolts on college campuses inspired these libertarians to advocate YAF to

[33] Although I find no direct public or private correspondence supporting this claim, it is still likely that self-preservation played a role in motivating some YAFers to oppose the draft. Additionally, Jerry Norton insinuated as much in a memo to Randy Teague on October 1, 1970, where he pointed out that many within YAF's leadership managed to avoid the draft.
Norton to Teague, 1 October 1970, Box 3, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[34] One mention of this compromise over the draft issue with libertarians comes from:
Memo from Rusher to Buckley, 7 January 1970, Inter-Office Memos 1970, WBP, Yale University.

change its position. As the liberal Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) became more popular and held more anti-war rallies, libertarian agitation within YAF increased.[35]

YAF and SDS's popularity grew simultaneously in the late 1960s as college campuses became hives of political activity. Although the two groups remained ideological opposites, many libertarians attempted to bridge the gap and joined both YAF and SDS. Left-Right student alliances sprouted up on campuses nationwide and libertarians seated themselves at the center of these unique—and short lived—student groups. Libertarians began associating with the Left for the first time since the fusionism coalition dominated the Right, weakening the bond between libertarians and YAF.

By 1969, the New Left inspired many libertarians to seriously question their continued support for the Vietnam War and their association with YAF. Libertarians began organizing within YAF, primarily from California and Texas YAFers. They formed YAF auxiliary groups called Libertarian Caucuses that worked to make YAF a libertarian organization. These caucuses were particularly troubling to YAF's leadership because of their goals. They aimed to take over the organization, to wean it off fusionism, and push it towards libertarianism. Additionally, they used opposition to the Vietnam War as the wedge issue to push YAF away from fusionism.[36]

Fusionists and traditionalists dominated the National Board, and they continued to

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[35] That YAF and SDS grew in popularity together is argued in Klatch, *Generation Divided*; Schneider, *Cadres*.

[36] There was much debate within YAF in 1969 and 1970 regarding the future of libertarianism in the movement. Libertarians often initiated this broader debate. One example of this is a memo from Don Feder, State Chairman of Massachusetts YAF and a member of the National Board of Directors to the Libertarian Caucus, dated July 17, 1969. In this memo, Feder chides the LC for promoting a new-ideology which would have "no place in it for Traditionalists."
Feder to Libertarian Caucus, 17 July 1969, Box 1, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

endorse a more aggressive war policy. Libertarians, whose frustration increased because of their repeated failures in changing YAF's positions, questioned their role within the organization. In 1969, Patrick Dowd, a California libertarian leader, wrote a letter to YAF's Executive Director David Keene where Dowd lamented the organization's continued support for Vietnam (among other traditionalist positions). In this letter, Dowd opposed YAF's move "a traditionalist cadre movement." Dowd concluded his letter with a threat to quit the organization if its ideology did not change.[37] Within a year, Dowd was no longer an active member of YAF. That same year, 1970, Libertarian Caucuses throughout the nation were leaving YAF to form their own organizations.[38]

Like Dowd, many libertarians left YAF in 1969 and 1970. The largest contingent of libertarians left the organization following one of the most dramatic events in YAF's short history—the 1969 national convention in St. Louis, Missouri. There, tensions between the libertarian grassroots activists and YAF's traditionalist leadership spread throughout the convention hall. The tensions began when the Libertarian Caucus failed in its attempt to pass an anti-war resolution at the convention. After the vote, several libertarian members began burning their draft cards. This incensed traditionalist YAFers and a riot nearly broke out on the convention floor.[39] In the end, the organization passed resolutions re-affirming YAF's support

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[37] Dowd to Keene, 6 December 1969, Box 1, Folder 4, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[38] Doug to Dowd, undated [probably between November 1969 and April 1970], Box 1, Folder 3, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[39] For one of the clearest descriptions of the YAF convention, see: Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 228-29.
One series of articles describing the anger on both sides, and the split, was:
Editorial, "The Week," *National Review*, December 2, 1969: 1202.
Reply: Joe Michael Cobb, "Letter to the Editor," *National Review*, December 30, 1969.

for the Vietnam War along with motions to strip several libertarians of their membership in YAF.[40] This dispute about Vietnam marked a final split with libertarians leaving YAF to form independent youth organizations.

While disagreements concerning the Vietnam War rested at the heart of the split, serious personal disputes added to the strife. The argument between the traditionalist-leaning National Board and the Libertarian Caucus grew increasingly bitter, personal, and nasty. Each side quickly became defensive and fearful about losing control of the organization. National Board members claimed that the libertarians' demands were unreasonable. One YAF board member called the libertarian anti-war advocates "provocateurs" and "freeks" who wanted to destroy YAF, following the general discourse where traditionalists portrayed libertarians as stubborn and unreasonable in their anti-war demands.[41] Unfortunately for the organization, because traditionalists viewed libertarians as unreasonable, they were less likely to compromise. Thus, the National Board wanted to retain control of the organization's ideology and its steadfast support for the Vietnam War.

Whereas the National Board members viewed libertarians as stubborn, the libertarians complained of persecution at the hands of National Board members. Shortly after the 1969 convention, Patrick Dowd complained to National Board member Wayne Thorburn: "The [National] Board members acted like chauvinistic madmen purging people right and left for no other reason than they disagreed with the individual's brand of conservatism."[42] Dowd's

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[40] YAF Resolutions, 1969, Box 341, GRP, Columbia University.

[41] Luce to Steel, 25 July 1969, Box 1, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

argument is echoed throughout the discourse; there were frequent complaints about the manner in which members were dismissed from the organization. The libertarians described this as a vendetta by the traditionalists to suppress any discussion about the merits of the war. Although both sides had principled disagreements, their many correspondences indicate that this was a personal disagreement as much as an ideological one. Libertarians and traditionalists disliked one another.

In addition to disagreements about the war and personality conflicts, moral values also played a part of the reason as to why the two groups disagreed. Moral values helped draw libertarians closer to the New Left as they both permitted promiscuous sex and drug usage. Many libertarians used drug and rebelled against Victorian values regarding sexual modesty. Conversely, traditionalists believed that these activities—legal or not—reeked of immorality. These stark cultural differences helped increase the tensions between libertarians and the Right.[43]

In many ways young libertarians looked and acted like Hippies, which angered traditionalists. Most traditionalist conservatives held firm to their definition of Christian moral values, publicly proclaiming that sex should only occur between a husband and wife and that drug usage was immoral. These values antagonized the New Left. Traditionalists stereotypically dressed with fitted clothing and short hair, as compared to Hippies who had long hair and baggy clothing. In an article describing a traditionalist conservative rally, James Kilpatrick was excited because: "You could tell the girls from the boys. Peace, it is wonderful. The boys had short hair, crew-cropped and the girls had long hair, curled at their shoulders; they radiated hot water, good

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[42] Dowd to Thorburn, 23 October 1969, Box 1, Folder 4, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[43] For one of the more complete analyses of the relationship between libertarians and the Right, see Klatch, *Generation Divided*.

soap, and Chanel No. 5."[44] Kilpatrick's point was that these traditionalists looked and acted different from liberal teenagers, he could not have said the same thing about libertarians. Although Vietnam divided YAF, its cultural values differed during this period.

In response to the tensions within YAF, libertarians set up their own organizations. Many joined the short-lived Student Libertarian Alliance or the Society for Individual Liberty. These groups wanted to compete with YAF and become national college organizations. Their departure meant that YAF no longer had to cater to libertarian viewpoints. This eventually had consequences as conservatism's ideology changed throughout the remainder of the 1970s.

As the Vietnam War progressed, independent libertarian organizations became increasingly vocal in their anti-war protests. Libertarians began to view the United States government as an imperialistic organization equally repressive as any other communist government. Their rhetoric even began to resemble the New Left's. For example, Ron Kimberling wrote in *The Forty-Niner*, a student paper published at California State College in Long Beach, "our country is becoming fascist due, in large part, to Vietnam. The state claims the life of the individual when he forces him to be conscripted in the Selective Slavery System."[45] Kimberling's rhetoric mirrored a large faction within the libertarian movement who no longer viewed the fight against communism as the number one threat against freedom in the United States. Instead, the U.S. government was now the most serious threat to freedom. He borrowed his language from some of the most virulent New Left literature of the era, demonstrating the relationship between the New Left and libertarians.

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[44] James Kilpatrick, "YAF Hears the 'Old Time Religion' At Meeting," *Los Angeles Times*, May 19, 1966: B5. Found on proquest.com

[45] Kimberling, "Vietnam: A Libertarian View," Box 2, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Following YAF's split libertarians formed their own independent organizations. These groups never reached the same popularity, amount of funds, or organizational structure as YAF. Typically, they wanted to avoid following YAF's centralized structure and thus offered more local autonomy than YAF did. The problem with running a decentralized national organization is that it is difficult to coordinate or have a coherent message. Additionally, initial support for the libertarian cause stemmed partially from the fact that libertarians were the only anti-war conservative organizations—making libertarianism both unique and appealing to a specific segment of the population. When libertarians became independent from YAF they turned into just another anti-war student movement—losing their uniqueness on campuses. By mid 1971, the Society for Individual Liberty, which was one of the largest libertarian youth organizations, essentially ceased to exist.[46]

Disputes and charges that took place within YAF during this period represented problems that were affecting the entire conservative movement. As Vietnam continued without a projected end, the Right began to fracture with much of the disputes concerning the war. Vietnam was a source of major frustration, especially with those committed to fusionism. YAF's disunity eventually came to symbolize the growing rift on the Right.

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[46] The movement continued to exist, and the SIL eventually merging with the Libertarian International to form the International Society for Individual Liberty: Vince Miller with Jim Elwood, "Taking Liberty Global: 25 Years Building the World Liberty Movement," *International Society for Individual Liberty*, 2005, http://www.isil.org/resources/fnn/2005fall/isil-history.html

Still, historian Jonathan Schoenwald claims that the organization's influence and membership essentially disappeared in 1971 because of dramatic declines in membership numbers: Schoenwald, "Vietnam on Campus," 37-38.

Fusionism Falters

The split within YAF concerning the Vietnam War was a pivotal event within the greater conservative movement. YAF's decision to oppose the Vietnam draft, and its debate about supporting the war, forced the entire conservative movement to question its support of the Vietnam War. Eventually disagreements piled up, libertarians felt disenfranchised, and the movement as a whole stalled because of the issue with Vietnam.

The heated debate concerning the draft foreshadowed the problems within conservatism about the war. Movement intellectuals openly disagreed with one another. For example, traditionalist and Cold War hawk James Burnham, a *National Review* Editor, stridently supported the draft. Conversely, Senator Barry Goldwater, who in the early 1960s helped epitomize fusionism better than any other politician, supported the idea of a volunteer military. In 1966, the movement appeared unable to compromise on a coherent and unified stance with regard to the Vietnam draft.

Leaders such as Goldwater and *National Review* editor Frank Meyer supported a volunteer military early on. They rationalized that this would have two advantages over the conscription system. First, it would decrease the size of the Army, forcing President Johnson to rethink his military strategy and to be more careful with how he used the military. Secondly, a volunteer military would end opposition by teenagers and young adults whose anti-war stance, conservatives believed, was primarily self-serving. He hoped this would disarm anti-war protesters. Without a strong domestic anti-war movement, Johnson would have the necessary political freedom to prosecute the war more aggressively and hopefully achieve military victory.

Opposition to the anti-draft movement proved to be both quick and vicious. A large percentage of conservative intellectuals appear to have continued to support the draft with the

same adamant stubbornness with which they continued to support the war itself. In fact, these individuals often combined the two issues—proclaiming that one could not whole-heartedly support the Vietnam War while opposing the draft system that perpetuated the war. They were also angered by what they believed was an unholy alliance between the Left and the Right. Throughout the Cold War conservatives prided themselves on strident opposition to liberalism, and this sentiment only increased as the New Left's anti-war protests increased. Pro-draft individuals often attacked the anti-draft movement with the same rhetoric they used against the anti-war movement.[47]

The *National Review* had a harder time reaching this compromise on the draft than *Human Events*. Frank Meyer and James Burnham, two leading conservative intellectuals and founding members of the magazine's board, explicitly attacked one another in June and July 1967. Meyer, a founder of fusionism and a man with strong libertarian leanings, believed that creating an all-volunteer military would help end public opposition toward the Vietnam War.[48] Comparatively, Burnham believed that the anti-draft movement was too closely associated with the anti-war movement which would cause confusion with the public distinguishing between the two.[49] The viciousness with which these two men attacked one another cannot be understated. These two colleagues were never as direct in their disagreements about any other issue throughout the entire Vietnam period.

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[47] One of the most intense arguments against the draft was: James Burnham, "The Third World War: The Antidraft Movement," *National Review,* June 13, 1967: 629.

[48] Frank Meyer, "Principles & heresies: The Council for a Volunteer Military," *National Review,* July 11, 1967: 749

[49] James Burnham, "The Third World War: The Antidraft Movement," *National Review*, June 13, 1967: 627.

Human Events generally focused more on partisan political issues, as opposed to the *National Review* which focused more on greater philosophical debates. This perspective helps explain why *Human Events* was more skeptical of the anti-draft coalition. Alice Widener, in June 1967 passionately argued in *Human Events* that: "nothing good can possibly come from [an anti-draft] left-right alliance."[50] Several months later John Chamberlain was even more concerned with the anti-draft movement. He feared that the Left was duping the Right, fooling it into eliminating the draft just so that the Left could halt America's war making ability and thus stop the Vietnam War. He casuistically argued: "Leftists have never minded state compulsion when it is going their way."[51] Chamberlain, like *Human Events* in general, had a deep and visceral distrust of the Left.

The traditionalists who opposed the draft usually offered pragmatic reasons for their opinions. They argued that if the military had fewer soldiers, Johnson would have to be more efficient with military strategy, and military officials would have to become more judicious with soldiers' lives. They believed that eliminating the draft would help force Johnson to change his military strategy. Specifically, as mentioned in Chapter One, they wanted the United States to utilize its technological advantage while minimizing personnel exposure. They hoped that ending the draft would help the United States win the war.

Compared to traditionalists, libertarian opponents of the draft had ideological explanations for promoting a volunteer military. If traditionalists believed ending the draft would help the war effort, they would compromise on how best to change the nature of the draft system.

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[50] Alice Widener, "One Vote for the Draft," *Human Events*, June 10, 1967: 13(365).

[51] John Chamberlain, "Youth vs the Draft: Are young conservatives wise to make common cause with the left in fighting conscription?" *Human Events*, November 11, 1967: 7(711).

Comparatively, libertarians adamantly believed the draft was amoral. This belief hurt relations within the movement. As the war and the draft dragged on libertarian objections to the draft became increasingly strident. Only YAF had a dramatic moment (at the 1969 national convention) where libertarians split from conservatism. However, the traditionalist-libertarian disagreement grew increasingly vicious as the war continued.

After about a year-and-a-half of debating the merits of the draft a compromise appeared to emerge. By late 1968 and early 1969 it was evident that most members of the Right's intellectual leadership agreed that the draft system was broken. Their primary argument was that the inequitable nature of the draft aided the anti-war activists. If the draft were a more neutral system (with less discretion offered to local draft boards), then there would be more support for the draft and by default the war. Additionally, they agreed that drafts are morally indefensible, except during times of war; it varied by the individual whether or not to considered Vietnam a time of war. This compromise was evident from the articles of both *Human Events* and *National Review.* Each journal used harsh rhetoric in their debate over the draft but, in the end, they both agreed that there were philosophical problems with keeping the draft in its then-present form.[52]

The Ugly Divorce

After 1968, the relationship between libertarians and the rest of the conservative movement deteriorated. Midway through the war, frustrations throughout the nation intensified. American opposition to the war grew as people questioned whether the United States could win in Vietnam. The conservative movement also had similar feelings concerning the pro- and anti-

[52] The most comprehensive plan for updating the draft was in the *National Review*: Editorial, "The Draft: A Breeze of Change," *National Review*, June 3, 1969: 524.

war Right. As tensions worsened, reconciliation appeared increasingly less likely. The combination of traditionalist support of the war and the increasing importance of moral issues within politics helped push the two ideologies further apart. As long as Vietnam continued, the wounds of disagreement between the libertarians and the rest of the movement would not heel.

Disagreements between libertarians and the rest of the conservative movement were frequent during the late 1960s. What made the fight over the Vietnam War different from other internal disagreements were its effects on the grassroots supporters. Vietnam became a clearly identifiable litmus test regarding whether someone was a 'true libertarian' or not.[53] There is sufficient evidence to believe that Vietnam became a genuine rallying cry among the grassroots Right. Unlike with other ideological disputes, such as their eventual divergence over abortion—which happened in the early 1970s—Vietnam elicited visceral responses from both sides.[54]

Debate about the draft for the Vietnam War was one of the first major areas of disagreement between the libertarians and the traditionalists since the founding of fusionism in the 1950s. Anti-war libertarians started to become vocal about their opinions in 1968. Early that

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[53] When arguing that libertarians should not try to re-join YAF in 1970, Jerome Tuccille claimed that reconciliation was impossible since 78% of YAFers supported the Nixon Administration's policies, especially with regard to Vietnam.
Jerome Tuccille, "Phony Libertarianism," *The Libertarian Forum*, 15 February 1970, Box 2, Folder 3, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[54] Examples: Libertarian Fred Woodworth wrote that it was important for people to fight their nationalistic impulse and not support wars—a thinly veiled attack at traditionalists who used nationalism to support their anti-communist beliefs. Fred Woodworth, "Programmed Patriotism," *The Individualist*, 3, no 1, January 1971: 14-15.
Comparatively, William F. Buckley derisively called libertarians and their New Left compatriots absolutists who believe you have an absolute right to do whatever you want. This, he believes, is dangerous and leads to the downfall of civilizations. This was a reference to the claim that people had the absolute right to protest the war.
Memo Buckley to the Editors, "Reflections on Current Disorders," undated [probably from 1970], Box 121, Folder 3, WRP, Library of Congress.

year, Paul Harvey, a libertarian, wrote an article in *Human Events* opposing the Vietnam War. Harvey believed that: "in this no-win war my country is wrong- and it's time somebody says so."[55] That *Human Events* agreed to publish Harvey's article proved surprising, though it was the only anti-war libertarian position published in the magazine throughout the eight-year war. Part of the reason why the magazine's editors published Harvey's article was because it used a pragmatic rationale for opposing the war—specifically that the United States could not win the war under the present strategy—which was something most other conservatives agreed with. Harvey, unlike much of the traditionalist leadership, believed that since the United States could not win the war under those circumstances, the United States should withdraw instead of redoubling its efforts.

Harvey's analysis, which lacked any hot-headed denunciations of the United States, was relatively mild compared to several other libertarians. Libertarian leaders such as Karl Hess, Murray Rothbard, and Robert LeFevre made headlines with their denunciations of the Right. Hess—Goldwater's speech-writer during the 1964 campaign—briefly became a darling of the national media in late 1970 when he publicly declared that he no longer affiliated with the conservative movement. In a *New York Times* article, he said: "The immediate cause [of my defection from the Right] was Vietnam. Conservatives like me had spent our lives arguing against Federal power—with one exception. We trusted Washington with enormous powers to fight global Communism. We were wrong."[56] Shortly after that article, in February 1971, in an op-ed in the *New York Times*, the libertarian economist Murray Rothbard proclaimed that thanks

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[55] Paul Harvey, "'No Win' Viet Policy Attacked: Conservative Columnist Makes 'Agonizing Reappraisal' on War," *Human Events*, March 2, 1968: 12(40).

[56] James Boyd, "From Far Right to Far Left – and Further – With Karl Hess," *New York Times*, December 6, 1970: 306. Found on *proquest.com.*

to the leadership of the *National Review*, "whatever libertarian elements had been in the 'fusion' have one by one disappeared."[57] His op-ed was a scathing critique of William F. Buckley and the *National Review*, two of the most identifiable conservative icons in the U.S. at the time. This demonstrates the viciousness of the split within the movement. By 1970 the leading libertarians were using the popular press to attack the mainstream Right, and much of their disagreement stemmed from the Vietnam War.

The conservative leadership did not take these insults lightly. Frank Meyer, the man who helped found fusionism in the 1950s, attacked libertarians in late 1969. At that time, he proclaimed that conservatism was undergoing the greatest crisis in the movement's history. Meyer understood that libertarianism was a philosophy focused on strong individual freedom. However, he proclaimed that Karl Hess and Murray Rothbard's libertarianism was an extreme form of the ideology that refused to compromise; Meyer believed this was a dangerous precedent. He believed their extremism would tear the movement apart. Meyer warned that libertarians should not try to separate from fusionism because both wanted similar goals and that they were better off working together.[58]

Neither side heeded Meyer's plea. Grassroots conservative organizations followed their leaders as the anti-war rhetoric became increasingly aggressive. Groups such as the (San Francisco) Bay Area Libertarian League announced that its primary policy goal was: "An end to American military & political intervention thruout [sic] the world."[59] The following year, the

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[57] Murray N. Rothbard, "The New Libertarian Creed," *New York Times*, February 9, 1971: 39.

[58] Frank Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Libertarianism or Libertinism?," *National Review*, Sept 9, 1969: 9-10.

[59] Liberty League Pamphlet, undated [probably from early 1970s], Box 2, Folder 6, American Subjects Collection [hereafter ASC], Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Society for Individual Liberty's monthly newsletter proclaimed: "The Draft can be stopped NOW, and with it, much of the capacity to carry on the war in Vietnam."[60] These are examples of grassroots libertarians who were extremely hostile toward the government and the war. By 1970 they were anti-war conservative extremists.

The libertarian anti-war protests disgusted traditionalist conservatives. *National Review* Publisher William Rusher took particular offense at Rothbard and Hess's statements, and (in an internal memo) described them as "kook libertarians."[61] That term carried extra weight within conservative circles since the movement took such great offense when the mainstream media referred to Barry Goldwater as a "kook" in the 1964 election. Rusher and much of the rest of the movement were fed up with the anti-war Right and no longer respected these libertarians' opinions.

Grassroots conservatives also debased grassroots libertarians. In March 1970, Stephen J. Sniegoski, writing in *The Conservative*, a student publication of the American University YAF, wrote an article titled "Libertarianism." In this article, he disagreed with those who supported the Left on issues such as elimination of the draft or ending the war. "In this age," he added, "the task of the conservative is to defend society and the principles of ordered community, not to quibble about the perfect freedom for the individual. Such idyllic talk should be consigned to the utopian ideologues of the Left."[62] In the same issue, Jay Mooney sarcastically suggested that the

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[60] Editorial, "The Draft – Keep It Dead," *SIL News*, August 1971, Box 300, GRP, Columbia University.

[61] Rusher to Buckley, 24 February 1971, Box 121, Folder 4, WRP, Library of Congress.

[62] Stephen J. Sniegoski, "Libertarianism," *The Conservative*, Published by the American University Young Americans for Freedom, March 1970: 3-4.

Right should support legalization of drugs in order to help control the population—insinuating that drug users would eventually die of an overdose.[63] Mooney and Sniegoski's had harsh attitudes in response to libertarians and they demonstrated the lack of respect emanating from grassroots traditionalists toward their former comrades.

Mooney and Sniegoski's philosophy exemplifies the changes taking place within the conservative movement, and the hatred between the two sects of conservatism. For the first time, conservatives expressed the same hatred and rage normally reserved for the Left towards their former comrades. Many traditionalists lacked respect for their libertarian opponents. The two groups were at war with one another.

Despite the differences between the leadership of the two philosophies, conservatives did not suddenly forget their libertarian roots. Many traditionalists still believed in a smaller federal government, even if they were not dogmatic about it. Thus, there were still many instances throughout the remainder of the 1960s and early 1970s (and even in contemporary conservatism) where the conservative movement endorsed a libertarian principle. For instance, in March 1969 when discussing a decision under consideration by the Federal Communication Commission regarding cigarette advertisement on television, James Jackson Kilpatrick believed that it was essential that the government not limit the freedom of cigarette companies to advertise.[64] Around the same time, in a special edition of *Human Events*, Henry Hazlitt brazenly announced the demise of the welfare state. Hazlitt gloated about all of the government projects and programs

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Jay Mooney, "Blow Your Mind," *The Conservative*, Published by the American University Young Americans for Freedom, March 1970: 2-3.
The Conservative, March 1970, Box 341, GRP, Columbia University.

[64] James Jackson Kilpatrick, "Big Brother and the Cigarette Ban," *Human Events*, March 1, 1969: 6(134).

which Nixon was going to stop funding.[65] Like many other conservatives, Hazlitt believed that the government had gotten too big during the 1960s, and that it was their job to work on shrinking the government.

While traditionalists retained their views about small government in some areas, as the decade wore on, they were unable to maintain the fusionism philosophy without a strong libertarian influence. This dichotomy served well as morality-based issues began to enter the political discourse. Issues such as abstinence education thrust into the public sphere. As the early 1970s progressed, there was a greater focus within conservative literature on morality and order within society. During these debates, libertarians had a lesser influence on the movement's leadership than they did before the Vietnam War. Over the long-term, this affected the movement's ideology.[66]

This split began over disagreements about Vietnam. Libertarians could not endorse a continued U.S. presence in Vietnam, and traditionalists could not continue working with those who sided with the New Left in opposing America's national security. The Vietnam War resonated as a flash point of disagreement between the two sides. Compromise between the two sides lessened, and relations worsened as morality began playing a larger role in the national political discourse. Even when the issues strayed away from Vietnam and centered on sex, drugs and personal privacy, both sides solidified their opposition to each other. The split became more entrenched as the war progressed.

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[65] Henry Hazlitt, "Life and Death of the Welfare State," Special Supplement, *Human Events*, January 4, 1969: 5(5).

[66] This theme is continued in Chapter Four, but it is also echoed in Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warrior* where she discusses the transitional focus of conservatism from focusing on external to internal enemies.

In 1972, the split became permanent. That year, libertarian leaders around the nation formed a new political party—the Libertarian Party. Although the party was never very successful, failing to garner a significant percentage of the popular vote for presidency (in every election since formation), at inception, the party did gain attention from both the media and other conservative leaders. The Libertarian Party, at its founding, advertised itself as the first national party to oppose government intervention in the economy while supporting an end to the war in Vietnam.[67]

Without libertarians closely involved in the conservative movement, the remnants of the movement veered further away from the philosophies of traditional fusionism. Instead, religion played a larger role in the new conservatism than ever before. Libertarians were often atheists or agnostics and helped keep the religious impulses of traditionalists in check. Upon their desertion from the Right, conservatives used religion as a prominent political tool. Rather than obscuring from their religious leaning, conservatives proudly proclaimed their religious affiliation and still won elections. Without fear of political defeat, and without fear of offending libertarians, religion slowly became a central tenant of modern conservatism by the mid 1970s.

[67] Advertisement, Box 201, GRP, Columbia University.

Chapter 4:
Opposing Hedonism: The Rise of Christian Anti-Communists

The Vietnam War served as the first major national issue since the 1964 election where conservatives and Christian anti-communists recognized their shared interests.[1] Both groups believed that communism posed the greatest threat to the United States and the world. They also believed in a grand, world-wide communist conspiracy to destroy freedom. These shared beliefs enabled them to take a long-term view of the Cold War. Conservatives and Christian anti-communists understood that communists throughout the world would view U.S. failure in Vietnam as a sign of weakness, precipitating the domino effect, and causing Cambodia, Laos, and probably Thailand to fall to communist aggression. By the early 1970s, conservatives and Christian Evangelicals remained as part of the political minority, not viewing failure in Vietnam as a legitimate option.

Conservatives and Christian anti-communists were able to recognize their shared interested largely because libertarians left the movement in the early 1970s. The libertarian philosophy was hostile toward the idea of government enforced morality laws; it believed that

[1] This paper uses the term Christian anti-communists to refer to groups and individuals who made up the religious Right in the 1960s and early 1970s. Unlike the Christian Right of the late 1970s, which was a critical component of the revival of conservatism prior to Ronald Reagan's presidency, this group was less unified and coordinated. They were also on the fringes of the conservative movement. Jonathan Schoenwald, among others, describes them as the extremists throughout his book, with special emphasis in Chapter 2: Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*. Many were Christian Evangelicals, though there were several other denominations of Christianity involved (including Catholics). Christian anti-communists focused their political involvement on opposing communism through a promotion of religion. Preachers and other religious figures often led Christian anti-communist organizations.

individuals should abide by their own moral code. However, libertarians deserted the Right because of disagreements about the Vietnam War. Christian anti-communists supported the war, which meant that the war provided the vehicle for increased familiarity between conservatives and Christian anti-communists. The increased familiarity between the two groups helped create a fertile environment for the rise of the Religious Right in the late 1970s.[2]

Though many historians have studied the rise of the Religious Right in the 1970s, few have studied how the Vietnam War precipitated this transformation.[3] The Vietnam War helped create a unique moment where conservatives needed to find a new issue, which could help galvanize the grassroots. Historians Donald Critchlow and Gregory Schneider argue that conservatives in the late 1970s learned to galvanize the grassroots by using religious moral issues—such as abortion and school prayer—to help create the New Right movement.[4] Rather than contradicting Critchlow and Schneider's theory, this chapter adds to their work by explaining why the Right needed revitalization. It argues that conservatives embraced a more religious identity because of desperation at the failure of the Vietnam War and the lost cause nature of the war. Conservatives quickly recognized that abortion was a new issue which they

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[2] Chapter 3 discusses the disagreements between libertarians and traditional moral values. One of the most comprehensive works on libertarians, where she discusses the religious beliefs of several intellectual leaders, is Burns, *Goddess*.

[3] For studies that discuss the religious transformation of the Right in the 1970s, see: Barry Hankins, *American Evangelicals: A Contemporary History of a Mainstream Religious Movement* (Lanham, PA: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009); Geoffrey Layman, *The Great Divide: Religious and Cultural Conflict in American Party Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); William A. Link, *Righteous Warrior: Jesse Helms and the Rise of Modern Conservatism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008); William Martin, *With God on Our Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America* (New York: Broadway, 2005); Schulman and Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound*.

[4] Critchlow, *Conservative Ascendancy*; Schneider, *Conservative Century*.

could vigorously support.

Much of the problem within the movement stemmed from the failure in Vietnam. Had the United States succeeded militarily, the Right could have campaigned as patriotic supporters of the U.S. military. Instead the movement was stuck in a political conundrum. Primarily, conservative anti-communism meant that the movement wanted to win the war. In order to do that the United States needed a more forceful and unrestrained war strategy. Unfortunately, most conservatives recognized that the military and political leadership refused to expand the fighting, making victory unlikely. Worse still, the war appeared to be fracturing the grassroots between those who blindly endorsed a more vigorous strategy and those who joined the liberal anti-war movement. All of this occurred during a period of political instability for the Right, as they were fighting moderates for political control of the Republican Party.

Without the United States' failure in Vietnam, the Right might have thrived in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Throughout the decade the movement had strong, national leaders such as Governor Ronald Reagan and television pundit William F. Buckley. It was a major part of the Republican Party (especially during the Richard Nixon presidency). And it had a large number of grassroots voters sympathetic to its philosophy. Yet, the movement failed politically during this period as it was unable to move beyond Vietnam as a central issue. By focusing on the unpopular war (and the war became increasingly unpopular after 1968), conservatives won few elections and they found it nearly impossible to direct the national political debate. This began changing as the Right placed religion as an increasingly centralized aspect of the conservative movement's philosophy. With libertarians opposed to the war, and Christian Evangelicals emphatically supporting it, the creation of the Christian New Right stayed a relatively natural one.

Religion within Fusionism

Few conservatives during the 1964 presidential campaign would have guessed that religion would become a central component of their movement's ideology. Religious issues remained far from the political radar. This helps explain why few conservatives knew—let alone cared—that the wife of Senator Barry Goldwater helped found the Arizona branch of Planned Parenthood.[5] Although Goldwater took clear stances against women's reproductive rights in the 1970s, the issue was absent from his 1964 presidential campaign. Rather than focus on religious issues, the movement fashioned itself with anti-communism and keeping the government from controlling the economy.

Fusionism united most conservatives in the early and mid 1960s. Fusionism included equal parts traditionalism and libertarianism. Despite their unity in working toward common goals, such as electing Barry Goldwater and changing the national political discourse, there was a near-constant tension between the two groups about what role, if any, religion should have on society. A disproportionate number of traditionalists were Catholics, including the vast majority of the *National Review*'s editorial board. Comparatively, a similarly large number of libertarians, such as Fredrich von Hayek and Ayn Rand, were atheists or agnostics yet born Jewish. These libertarians placed little value in religious edict and wanted a clear separation of church and state.

Prior to the Vietnam War, many conservatives thought religion's value lay outside of politics and more in the public sphere. One example of this mindset came from Walter Judd. Judd, a conservative Republican Congressman from Minnesota, wrote to his friend Dr. James Fifield, a radio personality and preacher, saying that he stood "<u>against</u> political action by

[5] At the time, Planned Parenthood's primary focus was on the distribution of contraception, especially in lower-class communities. Goldberg, *Goldwater*, 52.

Christian bodies; [but] for political action by Christian persons."[6] This statement gave the essence of the traditionalist conservative values. They believed that religious values play an important role in politics, but should not dictate policy.[7]

Even for the conservative leaders who were devout worshippers, doubt reigned regarding how closely politics and religion should commix. Clarence Manion and Phyllis Schlafly serve as examples of churchgoing Catholics whose religious beliefs influenced, but did not strictly dictate, their conservatism. They held fame for their anti-communism, but they based this stance on strong religious values.[8] For example, the headline of a May 1964 *Manion Forum* proclaimed: "We Must Restore Prayer to the Schools in Order to Defeat Communism."[9] Thus combining Manion's ardent anti-communism and his belief that religion could help prevent communists from taking over the United States. Manion and Schlafly argued that religion would keep the United States safe from communism since it was an atheist political movement.

Traditionalists, such as Manion and Schlafly, were popular with a large percentage of the conservative population, and it is probable that many conservatives did not follow Manion and

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[6] Letter from Judd to Fifield, 7 August 1964, Box 30, Folder 3, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[7] Though traditionalists were religious, they also were a part of the fusionism coalition, which required general support for smaller government. Separating church and state was a part of smaller government. Additionally, traditionalists of the early 1960s focused more efforts on creating a moral society than on a religious society.

[8] Schlafly's fame increased quickly in 1972 as she founded the STOP-ERA movement, a national grassroots organization opposed to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. She opposed it for several reasons; one was that it would destroy traditional family values, a euphemism for religious values. Prior to STOP-ERA, Schlafly's focus was on anti-communism and the Cold War.

[9] "We Must Restore Prayer to the Schools in Order to Defeat Communism," *Manion Forum*, May 24, 1964: 1.

Schlafly because of their religious beliefs. A close inspection of Manion's work demonstrates that he focused significantly more radio time on anti-communism than religion. Although his followers probably knew he was a devout Catholic, Manion earned much of his praise because his program was: "the only really anti-Communist program to purify America's sometimes polluted airwaves."[10] To many of his followers, Manion was an anti-communist first who happened to be Catholic.

While conservatives united behind fusionism for much of the 1950s and through the mid 1960s, frequent discussions on how best to transform the ideology occurred. Barry Goldwater's disastrous 1964 presidential campaign created an opportunity for conservatives to re-think fusionism. In the wake of the election, Buckley sent a memo to the *National Review* staff ordering them to focus more attention on Catholicism and Catholic issues. He hoped that this stance would help unite conservatives around religion.[11] There was no follow-up to this memo, and the *National Review*'s content did not show an increased focus on Catholicism. Most likely, the editorial board ignored Buckley's request, which was not without precedent. Still, this memo indicates that Buckley briefly believed that religion could help further unite the Right in the face of the disastrous election.

Although much of the *National Review*'s readership and editorial board was Catholic in the 1960s, the magazine never held the belief that Catholicism should dictate U.S. policy (nor did

[10] Letter from John E. Burke (a listener and fan of Manion's from New Jersey) to Manion, 29 November 1965, Box 21, Folder 1, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[11] Memo from Buckley to the Editors, April 1965, Inter-Office Memo 1965, WBP, Yale University.

the magazine become Catholic-centric).[12] Buckley and *National Review* tended to view religion as a means of critiquing and improving society, but they did not believe the government should use regulation to enforce religious edicts. This distinction of supporting a more moral society without government backed morality edicts is evident from the magazine's stance on drug usage. In the late 1960s, *National Review* published several articles about how people should not do drugs, while simultaneously arguing that the government should legalize drug usage.[13] This contradictory argument stemmed from the general rule-of-thumb that government should not use the legal system to enforce morality in society.

The few times where *National Review* made exceptions for government-backed religiosity was when it aided the abolition of communism. For instance, it supported a constitutional amendment to legalize school prayer because it viewed this as a means of fighting the spread of communism within the United States.[14] The magazine had long-held beliefs that the best way to stop communist infiltrations within the U.S. was to strengthen religion.[15] Thus, if the

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[12] There was no professionally administered survey of the makeup of the *National Review* readership; however, the Conservative Book Club found that in 1969 30% of its membership was Catholic. This number was disproportionately high compared to the general population. Since the *National Review* and Conservative Book Club had similar subscribers and shared lists and resources, it is probable to believe that they had a similar breakdown of subscribers. Conservative Book Club Membership Survey, 1969, Box 368, GRP, Columbia University.

[13] An example of the *National Review* opposing anti-marijuana laws: Antoni Gollan, "The Great Marijuana Debate," *National Review*, January 30, 1968: 74-76.

[14] An example of the *National Review* supporting a school prayer amendment: William Buckley, "On the Right: The Prayer Amendment," *National Review*, December 3, 1971: 1375.

[15] One of the more infamous examples of the *National Review* proclaiming that religion was the best tool to defeat communism was in the magazine's front-page review of Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged*. Whittaker Chambers, "Big Sister Is Watching You," *National Review*, January 18, 1958: 71.

magazine was able to tie a specific religious policy to the Cold War, then it supported the expansion of religion.

In the early 1970s, when conservatism came under attack for its support of the Vietnam War, some within the movement turned to religion to help stay united. These individuals no longer required that religion and anti-communism work together. Now religion was an important enough topic to stand on its own. At this time, libertarians were in the process of leaving the conservative movement, and the Right's pro-war stance made it relatively unpopular with the public. During this tense period, conservatives needed another leading issue, besides Vietnam, with which to support. In this atmosphere, abortion entered the public discourse. Previously, as with its support for school prayer, the only time conservatives supported government intervention supporting religion was when the debate concerned anti-communism. With abortion, conservatives rarely attempted to turn it into a Cold War issue. This represented an important change in the conservative philosophy regarding the influence of religion and government policy.

Because of the discord created by the traditionalists' pro-war stance, the political climate in the early 1970s was ripe for a transformation of the Right's ideology. None the less, the change did not occur seamlessly. Buckley's early writings about abortion exemplify the complex relationship between the Right and the medical procedure. In December 1970, in Buckley's first nationally published article about abortion, he took the Catholic Church to task for not coming out forcefully against abortion and for "not only acting out of political confusion, but out of moral uncertainty."[16] Although the article mentioned his anti-abortion views, the central focus of

[16] William Buckley, "On the Right: Catholics and Abortion," *National Review*, December 15, 1970: 1366-1367.

his article was the response by Catholics. The article essentially glosses over the morality of the subject and focuses on how Catholics and the Catholic Church viewed the issue. This distinction allowed Buckley to oppose abortion on personal religious grounds while asking his co-religionists to join in an anti-abortion campaign. This article was one of the very rare instances where Buckley used his public platform to talk exclusively to Catholics, rather than all Americans. In 1970, when the abortion debate was in its infancy, Catholics such as Buckley served as the primary conservative opponents of the procedure.

Like Buckley, much of the rest of the conservative movement was initially unsure of how to address abortion as a political issue. Early abortion articles by *National Review* demonstrate this uncertainty. Will Herberg wrote one of the magazine's early articles regarding abortion rights. In the February 1971 article, Herberg argued that abortion is a symptom of a greater moral flaw within society, but he did not demand immediate abolition of the procedure. Instead, he devoted the bulk of the article arguing that a democratic society could choose to ban abortion through the normal legislative process. He claimed that a national grassroots coalition could push public opinion and that once a unified public opposed abortion, then democratic procedures could outlaw it. He devoted his writing to justifying the reasons why a free society may declare a medical procedure illegal. Conservatives of this era frequently took unpopular stances on tough political questions, making it unusual that Herberg did not take a definitive stance against abortion. Thus, his noncommittal stance indicates the controversial nature of abortion within the magazine, and probably the greater movement.

Herberg's article represents the gradual shift within the conservative movement. Herberg's stance ran counter to the libertarian and conservative ideals of individual freedom and small government. His long-winding intellectual exercise, along with the defensive tone of the

article, indicates that he understood that banning abortion had uncertain grassroots support. Most likely this was because he respected the historical roots of fusionism in influencing conservatism. He also probably feared that if he moved too quickly on this issue, he would alienate some grassroots activists (and magazine subscribers).

Throughout the early 1970s, libertarians began leaving the conservative movement. Libertarians left largely because of disagreements stemming from the Vietnam War, but the effects were not limited to the Right's foreign policy. Instead, the conservative philosophy started to grow, as it became a movement increasingly focused on religion. Without libertarians acting as atheistic and small government counter-weights, traditionalism became an increasingly dominant form of conservatism. Libertarian influence declined rapidly as more Christian anti-communists and conservatives began to recognizing their shared support of the Vietnam War.

The Christian Anti-Communists

The failure of the U.S. military in Vietnam provided a vehicle for conservatives and Christian anti-communists to begin working together. As the war continued, their identities began coalescing into one movement. As with the fusionism coalition of the 1950s and 60s, this new ideology also had anti-communism as a core philosophy. Christian anti-communists used an Evangelical style and Christian rhetoric to sell an argument that communism, which had an evil core, led to death and destruction. Both traditionalist conservatives and Christian anti-communists believed that the United States needed to fight communism at all costs. As part of their shared rhetoric and ideas, both groups believed that the United States needed to fight the Vietnam War aggressively.

Christian anti-communists worked to convince their followers that religion proved the best tool available for fighting godless communism. Rev. Billy James Hargis, founder of the Christian Crusade and Dr. Fred Schwarz, founder of the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade (CACC) stand as examples of this evangelical style. Both Hargis and Schwarz made religion a central part of their anti-communist organizations. A poster published by CACC in the late 1960s and early 1970s underscores the role of religion in fighting communism. The menacing poster—designed to hang on the wall above a child's bed or in a parent's office—asked in big, bold letters: "Will You Be Free to Celebrate Christmas in the Future?" The poster ominously threatened Americans that communists were on the verge of outlawing Christmas, "**Unless** you and other free Americans awaken to the true meaning of Communism and understand that it is your enemy."[17] This type of threatening rhetoric frequently occurred throughout the Christian anti-communist movement. In order to sustain this strident anti-communist rhetoric, and to believe that communists might actually steal Christmas, the Christian anti-communist movement needed to genuinely believe that communism was the literal equivalent of the Grinch who stole Christmas from Dr. Seuss.

Christian Evangelicals tend to view the world through their theological lens, which includes an emphasis on the end of days and a belief in evil. Their religious beliefs supported a black and white view of a vast, decades-old, world-wide communist conspiracy. This religious paranoia helped propel the careers of individuals such as Dr. W. S. McBirnie, a long-time

[17] A poster published by the Allen-Bradley Company in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sponsored by Dr. Fred Schwarz. This poster was undated but most likely from the mid 1960s. I found it in several other archives, indicating that the Allen-Bradley Company probably published it widely and in multiple years.
Poster, undated [probably mid 1960s], Box 35, Radical Right Papers [Hereafter: RRP], Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Christian Minister and political commentator based in Southern California. McBirnie accused communists of secretly restricting individual freedom in this country one law at a time. He blamed communists for virtually every problem in the United States. When California passed anti-discrimination housing laws, communists were at fault. As college students began smoking pot and looking at pornography in the 1960s, it was because of communist influence. When Martin Luther King, Jr. organized civil rights demonstrations in 1965, McBirnie argued that it was because "communism has infiltrated the civil rights movement."[18] Virtually every time something contradicted McBirnie's political preference, a communist usually caused the problem. In order to emphasize his beliefs, McBirnie warned his listeners that: "All Communists are first socially maladjusted persons who are spiritually empty. No one becomes Communist by objective reasoning alone."[19] This thinking allowed McBirnie to justify his hateful rhetoric and sustain his beliefs.

Although McBirnie was an ideologically extreme Christian anti-communist, the vast majority of them viewed communism as one monolithic group of pure evil. In order to retain this view of communism, they dehumanized the entire movement and turned it into a cult of satanic boogiemen. Millions of Americans affiliated with the Christian anti-communist movement by

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[18] Mention of anti-discrimination laws: Pamphlet, W. S. McBirnie, "What You Need to Know About That Rumford Act!," 1964, Box 35, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Mention of drugs and pornography: W. S. McBirnie, "What Must Be Done…" *Dr. McBirnie Newsletter*, March 1970, Box 47, Folder 12, NAP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Quote about Martin Luther King, Jr.: Pamphlet, W. S. McBirnie, "Race War!," 1965, Box 34, Folder 2, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[19] Pamphlet, W. S. McBirnie, "Why Do Some Americans Become Communists?" undated, Box 35, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

participating in CACC and Christian Crusade events, listening to McBirnie on the radio, or subscribing to magazines such as *The Mindszenty Report*. These organizations preached, and their followers spent much money in their support. They claimed that only the religiously inclined could save the United States from the apocalypse.[20]

Much of the apocalyptical rhetoric included an underlying belief that communism was something to be feared on the long-term global view. These organizations declared that the communists followed prophecies made by Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin 75 years earlier. They preached that communism aimed to slowly take over the world one country at a time. They worried that communists influenced far Left groups to disrupt U.S. society. According to their logic, as the amount of protests and civil disruptions increased, the government would become weaker. A weakened government would create an opening for the communists to depose the U.S. government. These mindsets followed the logic of the blueprint Vladimir Lenin utilized when he overthrew the Russian Czar in 1917. Additionally, their Amero-centric worldview allowed them to accept that if the United States fell to communism the entire world would be vulnerable. The United States falling prey to communism served as the ultimate fear of the Christian anti-communists.[21]

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[20] Two examples are: "Will the Reds Get St. Stephen's Crown?" *The Mindszenty Report*, December 1971, Box 362, Cardinal Mindszenty Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

Donald Janson, "Crusaders Term Goldwater Timid, But Hargis Group Believes Senator Must Be Elected," *New York Times*, August 9, 1964, Box 67, Christian Crusade Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[21] In one instance, Hurst Amyx wrote in his "Blueprint For a Center for National Planning," about the doomsday scenario where all conservatives who are not in jail are instead forced into hiding. He declared that communist control of America was probably inevitable and so conservatives needed to prepare to survive while in hiding. Many of Amyx's fellow conservatives considered him rational.

Communism as a long-term enemy echoed deep within Christian anti-communism. In one instance, a McBirnie newsletter from the late 1960s titled "The Real Power Behind Communism" had on the cover a black and white photo of Lenin with bright, blood-red colored horns coming out of his head. The indication in this cover photo was clear. Lenin was the Devil, and communists were his demons. This cover was no anomaly. McBirnie and others frequently warned their followers of those age-old communist prophecies for total world domination. They believed that all of Lenin's predictions were slowly coming true. McBirnie never stopped to publicly consider that it would be impossible for any person or organization to follow a century-long plan for world conquest. That logic did not temper the Christian anti-communist rhetoric, instead it worked to underscore the idea that a powerful and under worldly figure was promoting communism.

Part of the fear from communism emanated as much from what the Soviet military was doing (building up arms) as what was happening domestically (the rise of liberalism and anti-war protests). Christian anti-communists were on constant alert for new laws passed by Congress and by state governments that might make the United States more vulnerable to communism. When Congress passed the Child Development Act in 1971, intended to form a national childcare system for needy mothers, Hargis warned his followers that this act would eliminate the power of parents and give "government control of our children."[22] Hargis did not focus on how this act might have destroyed the traditional family structure (by supporting single mothers as they went back to work). Instead he used anti-communism to oppose the act. He claimed that communists

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Report issued by Hurst Amyx, "Blueprint For a Center For National Planning," undated [by probably from 1965-1968], Box 54, Folder 5, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

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[22] Letter from Billy James Hargis to supporters, 22 January 1972, Box 35, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

could exploit the government-run day cares to control U.S. infants. This mindset followed the general trend that most laws for centralized power received strident opposition from Christian anti-communists. Unlike conservative leaders who opposed many bills because they believed it infringed on human liberty and required the government to interfere with the private sector (thus competing with free enterprise), Christians anti-communists opposed government regulations for fear that further regulation was a communist ploy to destroy the United States. Everywhere they looked, they worried about the communist conspiracy taking over.

Fighting a Cold War against the satanic movement required both vigilance and a long-term perspective. This long-term view allowed Christian anti-communists to look at the long history of communism and apply that perspective to the war in Vietnam. Thus, the movement's leaders frequently complained that Presidents Johnson and Nixon did not do enough to win the war. Their anti-communist ideology warned that communism threatened U.S. national security and it constantly looked to expand. Additionally, they believed that communists would not negotiate a peace treaty in good faith and that communist North Vietnam would violate any peace treaty moments after the United States withdrew its troops. Thus, the only way for the United States to win the war and stop communism from expanding was with force. Furthermore, should the U.S. fail, they warned that it would embolden the communists to continue to try expanding into other Southeast Asian nations.

Fred Schwarz engrained the idea that diplomacy only leads to defeat when dealing with communists in his first book *You Can Trust Communists (to be Communists)*. This polemic contained quotes from Lenin and other communist founders where they claimed that there will

never be peace until they have achieved total world domination.[23] Thus, according to Schwarz and other Christian anti-communists, the ultimate goal in Vietnam had to ensure victory via might versus a mediated end to the battles. After all, mediation would leave the North Vietnamese military capable of re-starting the war at any time and of overriding South Vietnam at its earliest possible convenience (as eventually happened). Christian anti-communists shared this sentiment with the rest of the conservative movement and it eventually became part of their shared ideology.

The argument that Johnson and Nixon should not negotiate with communists echoed throughout the Christian anti-communist discourse. It underscores the point that most of the movement did not believe that the United States could give up in South Vietnam. It also confirms that, like the conservative movement, Christian anti-communists supported the Vietnam War more than the majority of American society. In general Christian anti-communists supported Rev. Billy Graham's assertion that the United States had a "moral obligation to defend freedom in Southeast Asia."[24]

Despite the pervasive pro-war sentiment of most Christian anti-communists, the movement's literature infrequently mentioned Vietnam. This omission is especially noticeable compared with the greater conservative movement. The lack of a vigorous discourse about the war does not indicate a lack of support for the war. Rather, it probably occurred because most Christian anti-communists instinctively supported the Vietnam War. In essence, the leadership

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[23] Though I do not know if Lenin was responsible for the quotes, conservatives certainly believed they were real. This book was reprinted frequently throughout the 1960s. First printing: Fred Schwarz, *You Can Trust Communists (to be Communists)*, Long Beach, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960.

[24] Interview of Billy Graham in discussion with Max Goldberg (North American Newspaper Alliance), 25 September 1965, Box 217, Folder ND 19/CO 312, WHCF, Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library.

did not use this issue to help it retain its grassroots popularity. Comparatively, the rest of the Right initially attempted to use the war as a means of unifying the movement. This distinction could help serve as an explanation why fusionists discussed the war more frequently. Support among Christian anti-communists in favor of the war against the subhuman communist from North Vietnam was implicit, and it enabled the Christian anti-communist leadership to discuss other internal subversive plots that communists were attempting in the United States.[25]

When Christian anti-communists did discuss the Vietnam War, they appeared to concur with conservatives in support of the Vietnam War and in their fear that Johnson and Nixon were going to lose the war by negotiating. Fred Schwarz, in a CACC newsletter, wrote in the war's first year: "If [the communists] conquer Viet Nam, either on the field of battle or at the negotiating table, the immediate and long-range consequences will be immeasurably tragic. They must not prevail!"[26] Schwarz's comments leave little doubt that he believed there was no substitute for victory.

Long after many Americans opposed the war, Christian anti-communists continued to support it. In 1969, the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation, a Catholic anti-communist organization, called Nixon's peace drive "immoral." This refrain stood out since religious organizations traditionally promote peace rather than attack it. Not so with the Mindszenty Foundation, it believed Nixon acted immorally because he fought a war without the intent of winning. It claimed that his decision to negotiation meant that he was not taking the Cold War

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[25] Throughout my archival research, I did not find a single example of a Christian anti-communist who opposed the war. Comparatively, there were many conservatives who opposed communism but also opposed the war because they believed that Vietnam was a distraction from the greater Cold War battle. That is discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

[26] Fred Schwarz, "Dilemma in Viet Nam" *Christian Anti-Communism Crusade*, 15 March 1965, Box 10, Folder 42, NAP, Hoover Institute Archives.

seriously and by extension jeopardized national security. This validated the Foundation's worst fears regarding both Johnson and Nixon. It believed that neither of them had the fortitude to defend capitalism with force and vigor, and that neither intended to win the war.[27]

The attacks on Johnson and Nixon also epitomized the frustration within the group regarding the United States' military strategy. The Christian anti-communists supported the war with the honest belief that victory was possible. From 1965 through 1968, they blamed the United States' failures on the liberal Democrat Johnson. Once Nixon won the presidency, they initially hoped that things would change in Vietnam. As Nixon's strategy became clearer, the Christian anti-communists became fed up with him and his failed war strategy. During the failed (and short-lived) Cambodian invasion in early 1970, McBirnie wrote a scathing critique of Nixon's grand strategy:

> I fear President Nixon is going to yield too hastily to the cacophonous pressure from the Left to get out of Cambodia before we have secured that country. General George Patton would have cranked up his tanks and rolled through North Vietnam in a week. We have instead been bogged down fighting the same battles daily in the same place each time for years. We need a General Patton! The best thing President Nixon has yet done is to launch the Cambodian operation. You can tell how effective it was by the yelps and howls of the communists and their 'running dogs' in this country. [28]

McBirnie's critiques echoed the complaints emanating from the conservative movement's leadership in questioning Nixon's strategy and commitment to victory in Vietnam.[29]

Throughout Nixon's term in office many Christian anti-communist groups questioned his

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[27] *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, "Viet Win Goal Urged by Mindszenty Council," 22 April 1969, Box 363, Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[28] W.S. McBirnie, "A Heart-to-Heart Letter from Dr. McBirnie," *Dr. McBirnie Newsletter*, June 1970, Box 34, Folder 1, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[29] For more information on the conservative critique of Nixon's policies, see Chapter 2.

commitment to victory and feared he would prematurely negotiate a peace treaty which would lead the U.S. toward defeat in Vietnam. By the end of 1971, both conservatives and Christian anti-communists were in lock-step support that Nixon did not have the political will to win the Vietnam War. Their rhetoric aligned more closely together and as the war progressed, their frustration was increasingly obvious.

Christian anti-communist organizations were some of the first groups on the Right to attack Nixon as weak and to claim his Vietnamization policies reeked of failure. Unlike the rest of the conservative movement, they did not give Vietnamization the benefit of the doubt. From early on, they believed that slowly withdrawing U.S. troops—while delegating responsibility to the South Vietnamese—would only serve to hurt the United States. In one instance, *The Mindszenty Report* claimed that if the United States withdrew its soldiers before winning the war, it would be "discouraging to our secret allies [anti-communists living behind the Iron Curtain] and encouraging their captors."[30] This was one of many examples where the Christian anti-communist organizations expanded upon the idea that the war in Vietnam was about fighting in the much larger Cold War struggle.

Part of the explanation why Christian anti-communists opposed Vietnamization was because they had little political obligation to support Nixon. Many outright opposed his presidential campaign. In 1968, McBirnie emphatically criticized all three presidential candidates: "NIXON IS UNSATISFACTORY, WALLACE IS UNELECTABLE, HUMPHREY IS UNTHINKABLE."[31] Without a strong natural attachment to Nixon (which others on the Right

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[30] "Surrendering Our Allies – Next Ourselves?" *The Mindszenty Report*, July 1971, Box 362, Cardinal Mindszenty Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[31] Dr. W. S. McBirnie, "Election Guide," 1968, Box 34, Folder 2, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

had, including the *National Review* which endorsed Nixon in 1968), Christian anti-communists quickly dismissed Nixon as a politician without conviction. Their role as outsiders on the fringes of the conservative movement meant they could more readily dismiss the mainstream movement and its leaders. The lack of institutional ties between Nixon and the majority of the Christian anti-communist organizations stood as a large part of the reason why they quickly dismissed him because he bowed to the "cacophonous pressure from the Left."[32]

The reason why the Christian anti-communist organizations were less supportive of Nixon than most conservatives was they had a different purpose and audience than the mainstream conservative organizations. Unlike conservative publications such as *Human Events* or organizations such as the ACU, Christian anti-communist groups such as the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade remained far more insular and less focused on direct communication with the general voter. Those who participated in Crusade events entered with a fear of a communist take-over of the United States. Conversely, *Human Events* hoped to speak to the entire movement in order to provide leadership for that movement. CACC generally did not try to lead the conservative movement. At best, its goals were to integrate into the conservative movement.[33]

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[32] W.S. McBirnie, "A Heart-to-Heart Letter from Dr. McBirnie," *Dr. McBirnie Newsletter*, June 1970, Box 34, Folder 1, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[33] Most likely the Christian anti-communist organizations were able to insulate themselves from the rest of the movement partially because of their focus on religion, which is by definition an exclusive pious belief. Throughout this period there were many references in the mainstream conservative literature where organizations and presses dismissed the Christian anti-communist organizations as fraudulent extremists. Additionally, there was no discernable attempt by Christian anti-communist organizations to moderate their rhetoric. This strain between the mainstream Right and extremists groups is a central focus of Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*.

In their ideal world, Christian anti-communist groups strove to dominate U.S. political discourse, but their hateful rhetoric made such a dream virtually impossible. Most national leaders in academia, media, and politics (especially liberals, and including liberal anti-communists), viewed these groups as fascists posing a greater threat to U.S. society than the small number of active communists in the United States. Still others labeled them frauds. In one controversy, McIntire attempted to move his organization to Florida when a local businessperson complained that the organization was: "a shabby, money-making operation that hides behind the banner of education, religion and patriotism."[34] At the same time, there was little support within society for a return to the period of McCarthyism. While millions of Americans still feared communism and communist expansion, more Americans supported the ideas of détente than did the violent anti-communism of McIntire and his ilk.

Christian anti-communist goals stood so far from the social norm that many of their preachers were in a near-constant state of dispute with the Federal Communication Commission about their alleged violation of the Fairness Doctrine. The Fairness Doctrine required broadcasters to devote equal airtime to opposing viewpoints.[35] Because of their heated, one-sided rhetoric, many Christian anti-communists had to defend themselves from violations of this law. As one opponent alleged of McIntire's program: "[it is] highly racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Negro and anti-Roman Catholic."[36] When the FCC eventually sided with McIntire's opponents, he took

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[34] Donald Jansons, "Right-Wing Preacher's Big Real Estate Acquisition Leaves Cape Canaveral Divided," *New York Times*, March 13, 1971: 15. Found on proquest.com

[35] For a more complete discussion of the Right's problems with the Fairness Doctrine, see: Hemmer, "Messengers".

[36] Jansons, "Right-Wing Preacher's Big Real Estate Acquisition Leaves Cape Canaveral Divided," *New York Times*: 15. Found on proquest.com

his entire operation to sea in an attempt to circumvent U.S. laws and broadcast his program from a "pirate radio ship."[37] McIntire, like most of his co-religionists refused to moderate his rhetoric to placate the federal government.

Despite support from only a distinct minority of the nation, there was still cooperation between the mainstream Right and Christian anti-communists. For instance, former Congressman Walter Judd spoke on multiple occasions at Schwarz's CACC conventions.[38] Judd was also close friends with several Christian anti-communist preachers.[39] But Judd was not alone. Constant references throughout the personal writings of conservative leaders demonstrate that they watched the activities and beliefs of Christian anti-communist groups and offered either tacit or explicit support for their motives and goals.[40]

Aside from elite-level support, there was a tremendous amount of grassroots integration between the two groups. Letters by regular, grassroots conservatives implored conservative organizations and individuals such as *National Review*, YAF, ACU, Phyllis Schlafly, and Clarence Manion, to recognize the various "patriotic" efforts made by the Christian anti-communist organizations. The same people who heard Hargis preach on Sunday afternoons often

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[37] Albin Krebs, "McIntire Unable to Get 'Pirate' Radio Ship Going," *New York Times*, August 31, 1973: 56. Found on proquest.com

[38] Untitled pamphlet of Christian Anti Communist Crusades, undated [probably from the early 1960s], Box 48, Folder 4, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[39] Judd was close friends with several Christian anti-communist leaders, including Fred Schwrz and James Fifield.
Box 30 Folder 3 and Folder 6, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[40] In one instance, William Herberg, religion editor at *National Review*, wrote the following about Evangelical Pentecostalism: "despite its rather dubious theology, and external eccentricities, I feel that we, as conservatives, ought to affirm it and wish it well."
William Herberg from *New Guard,* "Conservatives and the 'Jesus Freaks,'" *Human Events*, December 11, 1971: 8(976).

listened to Manion's radio program on Sunday evenings, and might well have subscribed to either *Human Events* or *National Review.* Though the elite conservatives recognized the differences between these organizations, the lines were far more blurry to average Americans. So long as all actors on the Right believed that it was both moral and necessary to defeat communism, then grassroots activists believed they played for the same team.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Christian anti-communists and conservatives had similar worldviews. They both believed that communism posed a unique threat to world peace; they supported a more aggressive military strategy in Vietnam; and they opposed Johnson and Nixon's détente overtures to the Soviet Union and China. Although the Christian anti-communists typically stood more vitriolic in their hatred of communism and they tended to be more prone to paranoia, their ultimate goals mirrored those of the greater conservative movement.

A Religious Movement

When Barry Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential election by over 400 electoral votes, it created an atmosphere where the conservative movement needed to regroup and reorganize. The vast majority of American voters rejected Goldwater's fusionist brand of conservatism. Johnson's campaign proclaimed that Goldwater was crazy enough to start an atomic war and to cut the Eastern seaboard into the ocean.[41] Several psychologists reinforced this idea when a non-scientific poll of U.S. psychologists found that most of them believed Goldwater was clinically

[41] Goldwater's ad campaign was one of the more notorious negative campaigns in presidential history, especially the Daisy ad. To view a selection of the ads visit: "The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008," *Museum of the Moving Image*, http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1964

insane.[42] Goldwater lost the election in disastrous fashion, with many Americans believing that he and his ideology failed. At the time the movement needed to reinvigorate itself in order to attract more voters and supporters.

Goldwater's defeat meant that conservative leaders needed to find a new issue to help energize the grassroots. At first the Right used the Vietnam War as a tool to avoid grassroots desertion and keep the movement from fracturing. This strategy helped keep conservatives involved politically, however there was a long-term political consequence. As it dragged on, the conservative movement began to feel isolated. Anti-war groups sprang up, including libertarian anti-war groups, tying the hands of President Johnson. Conservative groups appeared to be the only segment of society willing to endorse the Vietnam War, but Johnson refused to accept their advice and opinions. The conservative movement became less effective politically as it tried to deal with the increasing domestic crisis, the loss of libertarians from their movement, and the stigma of being associated with Johnson's failed war policies. Although support for conservatism remained stable throughout the 1960s, the movement was not able to expand enough to dominate U.S. politics. The Vietnam War was not a strong enough topic to help the movement expand.

The failure of both Goldwater and Vietnam created a perfect moment in history where the movement's leaders could push the conservative ideology in a new direction. By the mid 1970s it was evident that religion would replace Vietnam as a central point of focus for the movement.

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[42] Ralph Ginzberg, ed, "Special Issue: The Unconscious of a Conservative: A Special Isue on the Mind of Barry Goldwater," *Fact*, Vol 1, No 5, September/October 1964.
The front cover of the magazine was "1,189 Psychiatrists Say Goldwater is Psychologically Unfit to Be President!" The magazine was about how Goldwater was mentally unstable. Goldwater eventually successfully sued Ginzberg for libel for this issue. Source: Adam Bernstein, "Obituary: Ralph Ginzburg: Pushed Envelope as a Publisher" *The Washington Post*, July 7, 2006: B06. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/06/AR2006070601724.html

Though there is no indication that this transformation was conscious, it was still a powerful force within the Right's grassroots and elite. By the end of the decade religion helped conservatism expand and become a more popular ideology.

The move towards a more religious-based conservatism accelerated after 1969, and Nixon's failure to win the Vietnam War. Throughout Johnson's presidency the Right attributed his failure to his liberalism. Upon Nixon's accession to the presidency, no more excuses for failure remained. Nixon's electoral victory in 1968 sent a short-term euphoria throughout the movement, but it did not take long for many conservatives to become annoyed with his lack of progress.

Nixon's first year in office, 1969 also marked the end of a unified YAF, a significant event for the Right. At the organization's August national convention, some radical libertarian members burned their draft cards, epitomizing a split that was brewing for about two years. Although only a small number of libertarians walked out of the convention, the rest of the movement reluctantly entered into a debate about the viability of libertarianism as a part of fusionism. As the primary national cadre organization, which meant that YAF had a symbiotic relationship with the grassroots, trouble in YAF indicated an increasingly fractured movement. Additionally, as libertarians left YAF largely because of disagreements regarding Vietnam, this action indicates that the war failed to serve as a uniting issue for conservatives.

As YAFers divided into libertarian and traditionalist camps, the rest of the traditionalist movement began fretting about the moral deprivation throughout society. With the rise of the Students for a Democratic Society and the New Left, conservatives felt that the nation's adherence to traditionalists' understanding of traditional Judeo-Christian values were under siege. Panic set in throughout much of the movement, as expressed by John Davenport.

Davenport sat on the Board of Directors of the American Conservative Union. In a letter to Brent Bozell, the ghostwriter of Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative*, Davenport wrote:

> today the public life as it now exists (including politics, television, the shame of our cities and our villages if you count all the neon signs) 'is an enormous obstacle to virtue.' ... And because [religion] is in fact being pushed aside we [as a society] are in a very bad way indeed.[43]

He wrote this letter in April 1969, the day after approximately 100 Hippies began building People's Park in San Francisco.[44] The chaos that surrounded People's Park epitomized the problems Davenport referred to in his letter. Although this was a personal letter between friends, it demonstrates the undercurrent of discourse within the conservative movement. Times were changing and the movement needed to respond to what they perceived as the decaying morality of American society.

The debate in magazines and journals demonstrated an increased focus on religion in 1969 and 1970. In September 1969, *National Review* ran a cover story on sex education written by Sociologist Ernest van den Haag.[45] This article was the first cover story explicitly focused on morality in the *National Review*. It also shows a striking change of policy for the magazine. Only sixteen months earlier, *National Review* editor Arlene Croce argued that the magazine should stop accepting ads from the Evangelical Bob Jones University, dramatically complaining that she

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[43] Letter from John Davenport to Brent Bozell, 21 April 1969, Box 2, Folder 6, John Davenport Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[44] People's Park was a plot of land in Berkeley, California, which many Hippies from the area usurped in order to serve as a location where they could be free. This led to an eventual show-down between conservative Governor Ronald Reagan and the Hippies, culminating in the death of a few residents and Reagan's use of the National Guard to remove the trespassers.

[45] Ernest van den Haag, "Why Sex Education?," *National Review*, September 23, 1969: 956-958.

"died 2,000 deaths" every time she saw one of those ads.[46] Throughout the sixteen months between the last Bob Jones ad and the van den Haag article, the *National Review* started to respond to the changing culture in the U.S.

The *National Review* was not the only conservative group embracing religiosity. This happened throughout many layers of the greater conservative movement's elite groups. Leading national groups and individuals such as Clarence Manion, the ACU, and *Human Events* all slowly started to align themselves more closely with religious values around this time. Clarence Manion, who had long been a religious man, led this group with proclamations in early January 1969 that one of the greatest threats to society lay in the loss of personal moral responsibility and religious belief.[47] By September 1970, *Human Events* also published angry articles warning of the threat to society posed by the increasingly sexualized culture of the United States.[48]

The Young Americans for Freedom had a more complex relationship with religion and morality. Largely because the organization's traditionalist elites were sensitive about accusations that they were discriminatory toward libertarians, at the national level YAF did not expend much organizational effort on debating the role of religion in society. YAF had its major break in 1969, which indicates serious problems existed before the convention. Those problems were more

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[46] The quote from: Memo from Arlene Croce to William F. Buckley, 8 March 1968, Inter-Office Memos 1968, WBP, Yale University.
The last Bob Jones ad occurred in the *National Review*, Vol 20, No 20, May 21, 1968. There is no clear indication on whether Croce's complaint about the ads cause the *NR* to reconsider its policy, or if Bob Jones chose to stop advertising in the *NR* on its own.

[47] *Manion Forum*, "Don't Blame The Students: College Climate Breeds Contempt For Capitalism," January 19, 1969.
Manion Forum, "Godless forces Are Forging A Union Of State And Atheism: It's Time For The Big 98% Majority To Stop Complaining And Start Praying," January 26, 1969.

[48] Editorial, "This Week's News from Inside Washington: Lame-Duck Porno Panel Report Stalled," *Human Events*, September 19, 1970: 5(725).

noticeable when inspecting local YAF chapters, which experienced their own changes at various rates throughout the country in the years leading up to the convention.

Rage against the nation's immoral culture was apparent at several YAF branches in the late 1960s. The Washington D.C. chapter of YAF published a newsletter in 1967 that demonstrates several explicit arguments in favor of traditional moral values. The newsletter's lead story showed an editorial favoring prayer in public schools. By comparison, it buried the editorial against trading with communist nations deeper into the newsletter.[49] At the time of this newsletter, YAF was in the midst of a national campaign to oppose trade with communist nations. The lead story not focusing on this national issue (trade with communists) and pointing out the concerns of the local population (school prayer) indicates the priorities of the local chapter. The symbolism of this act is more relevant since YAF's national headquarters were located in Washington, DC in 1967, meaning the National Board was probably well aware of DC YAF events. Thus, although the national YAF philosophy did not become more religious until the mid 1970s, local YAF groups began earlier.

While YAF struggled to find a unified stance on the role of religion in society, the rest of the movement continued to discuss religion and morality with increasing frequency. Conservatives even began to infuse the Vietnam War with a sense of morality in 1969. William F. Buckley's "On the Right: My Lai - Whose Fault?" explored the reasons why U.S. troops massacred hundreds of civilians in My Lai, South Vietnam. Buckley rhetorically asks what could make a twenty-year old into a monster. He responded that the teenager was probably already disturbed before entering Vietnam, and Buckley blamed U.S. culture and society as a whole.

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[49] DC Young Americans for Freedom Newsletter, February 1967, Box 341, Young Americans for Freedom Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

Sounding like a moralistic killjoy, Buckley blamed: "A society deprived of the strength of religious sanctions, a society hugely devoted to hedonism, to permissive egalitarianism, to irresponsibility, to an indifference to authority and the law."[50] This article followed a trend within Buckley's thinking where he argued that religious morality should play a large role both in the rationale for continuing the struggle against communists in South Vietnam and in helping to win the war in South Vietnam.[51] Buckley believed that the United States had a moral obligation to support freedom and that more faith would help fight the communists in South Vietnam, helping to turn the tide of the war.

In general, from 1969 onward, conservatives began focusing on religion as an alternative issue to try to replace the war as a key issue. They used religious morality to help gain grassroots support and to grow the movement. With the rise of the New Left and liberalism (which was partially attributable to the rise of the anti-war movement), the conservative focus increasingly centered on religion. The religious politics culminated in the rise of the Religious Right in the mid 1970s. The shift happened at the time when the Right's pro-war stance disenchanted libertarians, helping to precipitate the shift away from libertarianism within the conservative movement's ideology. Additionally, all of this occurred at a time when Christian anti-communists were some of the most emphatic pro-war supporters in society. From 1969 through the end of the war in 1973, the changes within the Right's ideology occurred during a period

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[50] William F. Buckley, "On the Right: My Lai- Whose Fault?", *Washington Start Syndicate, Inc.*, 11 December 1969, Box On the Right 1969, WBP, Yale University.

[51] Two specific examples of Buckley using religion to defend and prosecute the Vietnam are:
William F. Buckley, "Letter from Saigon: Terrorism – Weapon of Warfare," *National Review*, March 7, 1967: 237
Response from Buckley to questionnaire of Cecil Woolf and John Bagguley, 18 September 1967, WBP, Yale University.

when the Vietnam War divided libertarians from the rest of the movement and united Christian anti-communists with the mainstream movement.

Replacing Libertarianism

During Barry Goldwater's 1964 campaign, some of the most dominant issues were Civil Rights, the Great Society, and the welfare state. [52] In Goldwater's campaign he emphatically opposed expanding the social safety net for all Americans. The best way for Goldwater to fight the expansion of the federal government was to use the rhetoric of states' rights and individual rights. Goldwater needed to convince the public that Johnson and the federal bureaucracy could not solve the United States' problems. Libertarianism, with a heavy dose of *laissez-faire* capitalism, provided Goldwater with the most logical arguments available in fighting Johnson's Great Society. Fusionism required that Goldwater believe in morality and traditional values, but the strongest political arguments at the disposal for conservatives in the early and mid 1960s were economic ones. Religion and morality were not major political debates at the start of the Vietnam War.

As the decade progressed, morality played a greater role in politics. By 1967 the Great Society looked far less great, as Americans recognized the true financial burden caused by an expanded welfare state and a major war. In 1967 and 1968, war strategy dominated politics. Additionally, anti-war protests began gaining supporters while others debated whether protesting against your nation during a time of war was patriotic. In short, the debate about the Vietnam

[52] The Great Society is the name of Johnson's domestic policy proposals. In general, they included expanded the role of the federal government and promoting a stronger social safety net. The Right strenuously opposed the majority of the Great Society, including its underlying principle.

War dominated the last two years of Johnson's presidency. The usefulness of libertarianism as the public face of conservatism had run its course. Traditionalism provided a more useful framework for opposing the rise of the New Left. This became more apparent as many grassroots libertarians joined hands with SDS and the New Left. Libertarians and SDS had two important similarities: cultural values and opposition to the war. Thus, conservatives began to identify themselves as defenders of both the Vietnam War and the traditional values.

In the midst of this ideological crisis of the Right, Christian anti-communist organizations remained strong nation-wide. With conservatives increasingly secluded in society as the only ones supporting a stronger war effort, Christian anti-communists no longer appeared as radical as they had before. Though conservatives such as Buckley or Manion did not begin by immediately praising Hargis or McIntire, they did begin supporting religious values espoused by the Christian anti-communists. Despite their shared values, throughout the 1960s the political climate was unsuitable for frequent religious debates. In the early 1970s, the political climate changed and the Right and the Christian anti-communists demonstrated shared values that were readily identifiable.

Other issues not related to the Vietnam War also spurred coordination between conservatives and Christian anti-communist groups. Specifically, the rise of abortion as a national issue helped convince conservatives that the rise of religious politics might help the movement to recover from its failure to win broad national support for a more aggressive Vietnam War. Abortion became a panacea for the ills of the conservative movement in the early 1970s. It helped to expand the movement's reach in politics, while also changing the subject away from Vietnam. More readily than any other issue since 1964 (excluding the war), abortion was something which generated a significant amount of buzz throughout the conservative

movement.

Some groups moved their ideology towards abortion and religion very explicitly. William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, wrote to the editorial board in response to a downturn in the magazine's subscriptions in 1973. He believed that the magazine was undergoing a malaise which was causing the decline in subscriptions. He argued that the best way to spur interest in *Nation Review* was for an increased focus on religion and abortion. Specifically, in an attempt to expand the magazine's base of subscribers to Protestants and Jews, he wanted the editorial board to solicit more abortion articles written by non-Catholics.[53] Rusher hoped that religion would help save the magazine from declining interest.

The *National Review* was not the only organization to move from Vietnam to abortion. Both Clarence Manion and Phyllis Schlafly considered abortion an important societal issue.[54] Although Manion and Schlafly did not write down what caused this shift in focus (unlike Rusher) they used unequivocal language in denouncing abortion as immoral and unchristian. Likely their decision to use morality as a political tool helped persuade Rusher that if the *National Review* did the same, it would be successful.

The move towards a more religious movement appears to have galvanized the grassroots supporters in a way that was unmatched throughout the Vietnam War. Representative John Ashbrook staked his political ambitions on morality by making it one of his premiere issues at a

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[53] Memo from Rusher to the Editors, 17 April 1973, Box 123, Folder 4, WRP, Library of Congress.

[54] Clarence Manion, "Killing for Convenience: Are We Loosing the Right to Live?" *Manion Forum*, 8 February 1970, Box 84, Folder 2, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

Letter from Fred Schlafly to Reverend Thomas M. Hesburgh, CSC, President of the University of Notre Dame, 12 November 1970, Box 79, Folder 4, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

pivotal time in his young career.[55] Additionally, many grassroots YAF groups found abortion and morality as strong antidotes to the rising tide of the New Left on college campuses. They argued that SDS promoted immorality. Traditional Judeo-Christian religious morality was an important issue that galvanized people at the grassroots throughout the movement. This was especially important because anti-communism and support for the Vietnam War were not able to engender the same type of exuberance amongst grassroots conservative as abortion has for the last forty years.

In a week rife in symbolism, the Supreme Court decided the *Roe v. Wade* decision in January 1973 on the same week as the signing of the Paris Peace Accord, officially ending American involvement in Vietnam. The decision helped revitalize the conservative movement. Both morality and abortion were part of the political discourse before *Roe.* However, it took the end of the Vietnam War and the decision in *Roe* for conservatism to open up a new chapter in its history. Once Vietnam no longer served as a distraction within conservatism, the movement was able to focus on other issues. Following January 1973, the Right quickly learned that *Roe* was an issue which could galvanize the grassroots and serve as a unifying position amongst most of the non-libertarian elite. Additionally, most conservatives and Christian anti-communists agreed upon this issue. More than possibly any other medical procedure in U.S. history, abortion has come to dominate the national discourse. Although the movement responded to events beyond its control (the *Roe* decision), it also looked for a new rallying cry in order to take the focus off Vietnam. The movement needed to move on, and it did so, but with a new constituency.

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[55] Letter from John Ashbrook to Clarence Manion, 2 March 1971, Box 58, Folder 10, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

Chapter 5:
Opposing Liberalism

Following the 1964 presidential election, conservative organizations distributed bumper stickers exclaiming: "27 Million Americans Can't Be Wrong," a reference to the number of people who voted for Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.[1] Conservatives conceded that Lyndon Johnson won more votes (by almost 16 million), but they still took pride in Goldwater's ability to receive 27 million votes. To many conservatives, the 1964 presidential election stood as a success, regardless of the fact that Goldwater's vote total was seven million short of Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign (when Nixon was the Republican nominee). Instead of accenting the negative, the Right found solace in the claim that the premiere conservative politician of the day, Barry Goldwater, was not defeated on the merits of his ideology. They argued that there must have been someone else to blame. The implications within the bumper sticker—a simple, populist form of political sound bite—was that Johnson's 43 million voters were deluded sheep, whereas every voter for Goldwater was an intelligent, respectable American. Johnson may have received more votes, but the Right claimed he did so with support of mindless followers who were brainwashed by the elite. Thus, it removed blame from Goldwater's ideology and conservatism in general.

As with the 1964 election, conservatives blamed liberals for defeat in Vietnam. Conservatives viewed victory in Vietnam as possible, if only the liberals had acted rationally and

[1] Michael Gerson, "Mr. Right." *U.S. News & World Report.* June 8, 1998: 12-16. Found on proquest.com

supported their country, instead of acting like mindless anti-war proponents (which is a historical memory which persists). Attacking the anti-war movement became a way for conservatives to attack the Left. However, focusing so much energy on the anti-war Left proved to have long-term political ramifications for the movement. The more energy conservatives devoted to hating the Left, the less time they spent in movement and identity building, making it increasingly difficult for the Right to grow into a powerful political front. This chapter analyzes how the focus on liberal anti-war activists, and on the media's coverage of the anti-war movement, consumed the Right and hampered its expansion. From 1965 to 1973, conservatives could not regain dominance within the Republican Party. They did not control U.S. political discourse, and this failure stems from the movement identifying itself in negative terms (opposing liberalism) instead of positive terms (supporting an aggressive Cold War strategy).[2]

The conservative movement's negative self-identity[3] became increasingly apparent in the years immediately after Goldwater lost the 1964 presidential election, when conservatives viewed themselves as the primary minority movement in U.S. politics. As this chapter demonstrates, during Johnson's administration, the conservative elite suffered from a self-described malaise as they were unable to move beyond an anti-liberal identity. The harmful effects of this negative self-identity identity were most prevalent in the Right's response to both college students (and the anti-war New Left movement) and the media.

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[2] As mentioned in Chapter Two, conservatives did not control the GOP throughout this period and they were divided about supporting Nixon in 1968, and his foreign and domestic policies forced much of the movement's leaders to cease supporting him in 1971.

[3] I use the term negative self-identity to describe the Right's identity during the early years of the Vietnam War. During this time, the Right identified itself primarily in the negative (what it opposed) rather than in the positive (what it stood for).

Opposing Liberalism

Focusing blame on others remained a common theme throughout modern conservatism during the post-Goldwater period. Historian George Nash, in *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, writes that in the wake of Goldwater's defeat the Right began focusing on the revolutionary nature of the Left. According to Nash, the conservative movement spent the latter-half of the 1960s figuring out how to "cope with the demise of liberalism, the radicalization of the Left, and the immense powers which still resided in the left-oriented intellectual and cultural centers of the nation." Nash refers to both colleges and the media as the "intellectual and cultural centers of the nation."[4] According to Nash, the Right devoted about half-a-decade to the goal of opposing the Left.

Nash's work does not offer a significant critique of the negative effects of opposing the Left's "radicalization" in the 1960s. It largely ignores the differences between the Left and Right regarding the Vietnam War, as Nash only sparingly mentions Vietnam in his work.[5] Divergent views about Vietnam stood at the heart of the change between the Left and Right in the 1960s. Throughout the war conservatives began to focus a large amount of energy on opposing to the ideals—especially the anti-war beliefs—of liberalism, college students, and the media. As this chapter demonstrates, there were several consequences of the negative self-identity (of conservatives defining themselves as opposing liberalism). Primary among the consequences was an inability to expand the movement's political power throughout much of the 1960s and early 1970s.

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[4] Nash, *The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America since 1945*, 197.

[5] Nash only mentions Vietnam four times throughout his work, each times as a side point within a greater topic.

Long before the Vietnam War, conservatives opposed liberalism, attacked America's elite, and labeled entire groups unpatriotic. Since Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, conservatives viewed the media, intellectuals, and leading liberal Democratic politicians as their nemesis.[6] Despite the long history of opposing those groups, the ferocity with which the Right attacked their opponents increased during the Vietnam War. The Left's reaction to the war angered conservatives largely because the Right felt betrayed. According to conservatives, the liberal Democratic President Johnson started the fighting without a winning strategy; and, at the onset of the war, it received relatively stable support from liberal Democratic intellectuals (such as the Americans for a Democratic Action).[7] Additionally, throughout 1964 and 1965, the media devoted comparatively little attention to the fighting. It was only after the United States began losing military ground that the liberal elite turned against the war, leaving conservatives as the only defenders of Johnson's war.[8]

Throughout the Vietnam War, conservatives became increasingly frustrated and upset because of the lack of both military progress in winning the war and national support for the war. This frustration manifested as a malaise that settled throughout the movement as the Right's

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[6] Some works which touch on anti-liberalism within the Right in the 1930s through 1964 are: Burk, *The Corporate State*; Hemmer, "Messengers"; Lionel Lokos, *Hysteria 1964: The Fear Campaign against Barry Goldwater* (New Rochelle, New York: Arlington House, 1967); James T. Patterson, *Mr. Republican, a Biography of Robert A. Taft* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972).

[7] For more on the Americans for a Democratic Action and its stance about the Vietnam War, see: Steven M. Gillon, *Politics and Vision: The Ada and American Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[8] An example of conservatives lamenting the Left's role in mismanaging the Vietnam War is: Victor Lasky, "LBJ Cleared Viet Nam Speech with ADA," *Human Events*, April 24, 1965: 1. Additionally, as argued in Chapter 1, the Right endorsed the war largely because Johnson promoted it as a centerpiece of American foreign policy. Conservatives began strongly supporting the war only after Johnson sent in troops.

arguments remained relatively static. The movement wrapped itself in a negative self-identity of opposing all of the Left's policy proposals instead of supporting any new conservative ideals. Aside from libertarians, the majority of conservatives did not waver in support for the Vietnam War. However, their rhetoric became stale as they perpetuated old policy proscriptions for ending the war. The Right's most prominent leaders offered the same advice to both Johnson and Nixon. Conservatives wanted the U.S. to expand the fighting into Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam, for a blocking of Haiphong Harbor, for an expansion of bombing targets, and for the U.S. to get military assistance from more SEATO nations (notably Taiwan).[9] However, neither president seemed willing to accept the advice. Without either presidential support or new ideas for winning the war, a malaise settled over the Right as the most dominant issue of the 1960s bedeviled the conservative movement. This malaise resembled a period where the intellectual elite (people such as William Buckley, Clarence Manion, and William Rusher) focused their internal discourse on how best to help the movement. Yet, not a lot of action from the leadership occurred to achieve their aim of dominating the political discourse and ultimately winning elections.

Without radical new suggestions for how best to prosecute the war, conservative elites turned their attention toward attacking those who opposed the war. The late 1960s and early 1970s ushered in a new and extremely hostile era of conservative attacks on the American liberal elite. These consistent attacks often pointedly and explicitly proclaimed that the U.S. was losing the war because of the distortion of the nature and causes of the war by anti-war opponents. They argued that this weakened the U.S. resolve, which undermined the military effort. By devoting so many resources to blaming the opposition, the movement lost much of its spark that made it

[9] Conservative suggestions for military victory are the focus of Chapters One and Two.

popular in the early 1960s. Without something positive to rally around, the Right suffered a malaise throughout much of this period.

That conservatives had little positive self-identity in the Vietnam era was unique within the movement's post-World War II history. Conservatism became popular in the 1950s and early 1960s because it offered up suggestions for how best to change American society. William Buckley's *Up from Liberalism* (1959) was a seminal work because he proposed alternatives to the political status quo, arguing in favor of more personal responsibility. Barry Goldwater's *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960) was also a pro-active policy guide for conservatives and Americans about how best to improve society. The fighting spirit epitomized within these works helped propel the movement to new heights, culminating with Goldwater's victory in the 1964 Republican primary.[10]

Within a few years of Goldwater's presidential defeat, conservatives became a feckless oppositional political movement. They opposed liberalism without unique policy proposals for transforming the political culture. A work that epitomizes this mindset is Buckley's *The Unmaking of a Mayor* (1966). This work satirized the unabashed liberalism of the New York City media, as seen through the lens of Buckley's 1966 campaign for Mayor of New York. However, the work did not expand upon his serious ideas for fixing New York City's problems.[11] As with Buckley's entire mayoral campaign, the book echoed as a big joke aimed at

[10] William F. Buckley, *Up from Liberalism* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959); Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative*.

[11] William F. Buckley, *The Unmaking of a Mayor* (New York: Viking Press, 1966).

mocking the liberal elite. However, neither the campaign nor the best-selling book was a serious attempt at electing conservatives to office.[12]

A year later, Frank Meyer, a founding thinker of fusionism, provided an intellectual argument in favor of Buckley's strategy. He proclaimed that conservatives needed not propose policies, and instead of policy proposals, all the Right needed to do was oppose them. He asserted that this is "the most valuable service the opposition can perform for the country."[13] The Right acceded to Meyer's request throughout the war's years. The war united conservatives in opposition to the president (for not doing enough to win) and against the liberal elite (educators and the media) who did not support the war. The Right found a common enemy, and it spent much of its time as the blind opposition.

Negative Self-Identity

Supporting unpopular and failed wars can help force movements to regroup and change strategies. Landslide electoral defeats can devastate political movements and create periods of introspection. Together, supporting unpopular and failed wars can create difficult periods for political movements. Conservatives began using their negative self-identity because of the combination of Goldwater's defeat and the Vietnam War; two powerful events. Combined, Barry Goldwater's 1964 presidential defeat and conservative support for the Vietnam War created a

[12] Buckley famously proclaimed that if he won the election, the first thing he would do is "demand a recount" and that he was "running half in fun." Quotes from John Leo, "Very Dark Horse in New York," *New York Times* Sunday Magazine, September 5, 1965: 8-16. Found on proquest.com.

[13] Frank S. Meyer, "Principles & Heresies: Accent the Negative," *National Review*, February 7, 1967: 135.

moment where conservatives needed to re-evaluate their philosophies while also providing an opportunity for the movement to change its future.

During the early years of the Vietnam War, which coincided with the immediate post-Goldwater period, the conservative movement had a strong negative self-identity. The movement no longer defined itself upon what its ideology would accomplish, but rather it defined itself by what it opposed: liberalism and communism. While hatred of outsiders can help rally grassroots supporters, it did little to help conservatives grow outward and attract more moderate Americans. Conservatism needed to recover from the electoral defeat while both expanding its political appeal and improving its ideological clarity. It needed to add new supporters in addition to retaining its previous supporters. By focusing heavily on anti-liberalism and anti-communism, the movement's elite became stuck in a malaise effecting the entire movement.

In 1965, as Johnson began expanding the war, many conservatives leaders supported it out of necessity, as they believed that it offered them an opportunity to demonstrate their anti-communism and help rejuvenate the movement's supporters.[14] As the war progressed, support for the war represented a litmus test of loyalty to the movement. The grassroots viewed opponents of the war as adversaries of the movement. This belief originated because supporting the war became one more tool for conservatives to oppose the rising New Left and liberalism within the U.S. By rallying behind the war and against their opponents, the Right whittled down the war to a simple binary choice: support it or resist it with little room for divergence. These

[14] For more details on conservative support for the war in the early years, see Chapter 1.

stances acted as another means for conservatives to mold their negative self-identity, and they did it without offering powerful pro-active policy solutions.[15]

Historian Jonathan Schoenwald's book *A Time for Choosing* analyzes the conservative leadership's efforts at creating a viable and more powerful movement in the wake of Goldwater's defeat. They did this by focusing efforts on removing the most extreme and offensive groups from conservatism, groups such as the John Birch Society.[16] Led by the efforts of William Buckley, conservatives believed that these far-Right groups were hurting the reputation of all conservative groups and helping to provide ammunition for liberals to assail all conservatives as extremists. Without these radical organizations, as the media and other groups dubbed them, conservative elites hoped that the movement could grow and expand. They hoped that by expelling the perceived extremists, their movement would gain more supporters to lead to more electoral victories.[17]

At the same time that conservatives pushed away the more extreme members of their movement, many within the leadership focused on liberalism's rise within society and on supporting the Vietnam War. However, genuine anxiety arose among the elite that a narrow

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[15] As discussed in Chapter 1, although conservatives did offer suggestions for how best to end the war, the suggestions remained relatively static throughout the war years. Additionally, Johnson and Nixon never seriously considered several of the suggestions (such as using atomic bombs or using SEATO troops), as the suggestions would have expended both the Vietnam and Cold Wars.

[16] The John Birch Society was particularly controversial because its founder Robert Welch labeled many people in society communist sympathizers, including President Dwight Eisenhower. Welch saw communism virtually everywhere and although many grassroots members did not share his views, the accusations still discredited the organization. For more on Welch and the John Birch Society, see McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*, 6-7. For a conservative movement leader's opinion of the John Birch Society and Robert Welch, see: Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*, 116-18.

[17] Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*.

focus on those two topics hindered the movement's long-term goal of dominating the political discourse. This concern was an especially serious issue when conservatives served as the primary opposition movement to Lyndon Johnson's administration. Many elites grumbled of the potential problems with the movement's focusing on opposing Johnson's Great Society but not on pro-active policy solutions. They felt that opposing Johnson's policies did not do enough for the movement to grow.[18]

The Vietnam War and Great Society impeded conservatives' ability to create a positive political identity. In a personal letter to Dr. Glen Campbell, Director of the conservative Hoover Institute, Goldwater lamented the state of conservatism. He believed that there was too great of a focus on opposing Johnson's policies without viable alternatives to liberalism. To rectify this situation, Goldwater proposed a national campaign to transfer ownership of National Parks to state governments. Not surprisingly, it appears that the Institute did not seriously considered Goldwater's suggestion, because abandoning the National Parks system seemed a dubious galvanizing point for the public.[19] Despite Goldwater's stature as the most recent figurehead of the conservative movement, he failed at offering any meaningful ideas for change. His idea was

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[18] One example of this complaining is a memo from Neil McCaffrey to William Buckley, William Rusher, and Jim McFadden where he complained that: "The conservative movement is quiescent," and he proposed as a solution for the *National Review*, "campaigns, special issues, planned articles, crusades."
Memo from Neil McCaffrey to Buckley, Rusher and Jim McFadden, 19 April 1966, Inter-Office Correspondence 1966, WBP, Yale University.

[19] In a letter responding to Goldwater's ideas, Roger Freeman disagreed with Goldwater because only a couple of mid-western states would benefit, while many states on the East coast would lose a lot of money. Freeman also said that since parks are typically expensive to run and bring in little revenue, it would not be to the Western states' benefit or to the parks' benefits to have the parks turned over to state control.
Letter from Freeman to Goldwater, 10 August 1967, Box 336, Folder 6, Roger Freeman Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

one of the many unsuccessful proposals promoted by conservatives in order to help the movement achieve a pro-active identity again.[20]

When other conservative groups and organizations attempted to help jolt the movement out of its malaise, they were as ineffective as Goldwater was. Vietnam and opposing the anti-war protesters, dominated much of the movement's discourse. The focus of a large percentage of the American Conservative Union's policy proposals in the late 1960s opposed the New Left or supported the war. Among the ACU's pro-active policy solutions, one included ending the monopoly on mail delivery granted to the U.S. Postal Service. While that policy would have inserted the free market into postal delivery, it was unlikely to have roused millions of Americans. Both Goldwater and the ACU provided key examples of how the movement's leadership could not identify clear political issues to rally grassroots supporters and help attract substantial new membership to the movement.[21]

When the *National Review* editorial board tried to fill the void, they too found it nearly impossible to rescue the movement from its melancholy. Internal memos among *National Review* editors demonstrate they frequently worried about the movement's "quiescent" state. They recognized the need for "campaigns, special issues, planned articles, crusades." However, they too failed to prepare unique topics for the movement to identify with. Their proposed solution was to become less "judicious" regarding the Vietnam War and to increase attacks

[20] Letter from Goldwater to Campbell, 5 July 1967, Box 336, Folder 6, Roger Freeman Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[21] This come after reading several mailings from the ACU from 1965-1968.

against President Johnson. Rather than provide the Right with a positive self-identity, they suggested focusing increased attention on their negative identity as an oppositional movement.[22]

The internal discourse within conservative circles demonstrates an awareness and concern of the movement's malaise, but no pro-active ideology emerged to help solve the crisis. Some groups, such as *Human Events*, exhibited a near-fatalistic stubborn adherence to their strategy of attacking Johnson, liberalism, and Johnson's Vietnam policies. Political attack articles accounted for a very large percentage of all commentary within *Human Events* during the late 1960s. Throughout 1965 and 1966, when the war started, almost every article about Vietnam within *Human Events* attacked either Johnson's strategy or the media's portrayal of the war. The magazine offered very few proscriptive solutions, outside of supporting the use of SEATO troops. Supporting SEATO would have required using troops from Taiwan, something Johnson refused to accept since he believed it would have brought war with China. *Human Events* appeared comfortable selling its magazine and leading the movement with a negative identity.

Frank Meyer supported *Human Events*'s philosophy, as Meyer believed that the Right did not need a new identity. He argued that conservatives should abandon attempts at defining themselves pro-actively. Dissenting against the views of several *National Review* editors, Meyer wrote a column "Accent the Negative," where he called on conservatives to forgo policy solutions to contemporary problems. He argued that it was more productive for the Right to dissent against the Johnson administration's policies than to propose their own policies. Meyer

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[22] There were several internal memos addressing the movement and magazine's malaise. The most explicit one, which the quotes were taken from, came from,
Neil McCaffrey to Buckley, Rusher and Jim McFadden, 19 April 1966, Inter-Office Memo 1966, WBP, Yale University.
This sentiment is felt throughout the Buckley and Rusher archives. Examples include a memo from Rusher to the Editors, 22 January 1973, Box 123, Folder 4, WRP, Library of Congress.

believed that dissent was "the most valuable service the opposition can perform for the country."[23] He agreed with the movement's strategy of remaining the opposition and minority movement without growing the Right's ideology to help the movement expand.

Meyer's article is further proof that many elites recognized that the movement suffered from a malaise. Political rhetoric is born out of the discourse of the era, and conservatives did not offer their own national agenda. Meyer was acknowledging this reality, albeit in an unusually blunt manner. He believed that this was not a problem; he believed dissent was the essence of the opposition movement. Meyer's stance has added importance in large part because he had a reputation as a leading thinker within the movement's elite and because of his role in creating fusionism.

The Vietnam War did not offer conservatives a reprieve about their negative self-identity. Although the movement had suggestions for how best to fight the war, conservatives found it difficult to get their message to the public. At the same time, the continuing presence of a large and growing anti-war movement made it difficult for conservatives to focus on other issues. Most conservatives supported the idea that the U.S. should fight and win the Vietnam War, but they also understood that Johnson's and eventually Nixon's strategies had their faults. This knowledge put many movement leaders in precarious positions since they refused to advocate surrender. They also refused to support the underlying war strategies of the United States. Instead of focusing their public rhetoric on this nuanced argument, they spent the majority of their efforts opposing the New Left's anti-war movement. This resulted in the colloquial understanding that the Right supported the war. However, this understanding omitted the

[23] Frank S. Meyer, "Principles & Heresies: Accent the Negative," *National Review*, February 7, 1967: 135

movement's proposals for ending the war (such as using SEATO troops or increasing bombing campaigns).

The only national organization that appeared—for a brief period in the late 1960s—immune toward the effects of the malaise was the Young Americans for Freedom. It temporarily benefited from conservatism turning into an opposition movement. YAF benefited from the close relationship between the New Left and the anti-war movements, as college campuses housed both. It was able to position itself as the premiere anti-New Left organization. As the New Left was one of the most dominant political movements in society, YAF's role as a counter-balance made the organization an important wing of the conservative movement. This occurred during a period when young Americans played a vocal role in political discourse—particularly regarding the staging of protests and marches—which helped YAF achieve legitimacy in the eyes of the elite. The organization's leadership understood that they would be wise to establish their organization as an anti-New Left group in order to help it grow.[24]

In the late 1960s, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) became popular on college campuses primarily because of its opposition to the Vietnam War. Anti-war protests and teach-in's were common on campuses from the mid 1960s to the early 1970s. Following Goldwater's campaign, YAF re-defined itself as a pro-war, anti-communist, anti-Hippie organization. In order to achieve this goal, it created several pro-Vietnam War and anti-communist subsidiary organizations such as the World Youth Crusade for Freedom.[25] It also sent several YAFers to

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[24] In an internal memo from 1967, William Rusher called YAFers "sophisticated conservatives." The Right's leadership respected YAF's leadership, and this was largely because of their ability to act as a counter weight to the New Left.
Rusher to the Editors, 22 May 1967, Inter-Office Memo 1967, WBP, Yale University.

[25] Fundraising brochure for World Youth Crusade, 1966, WHCF, Lyndon Baines Johnson Presidential Library.

Asia and helped organize conferences there, including the Asian People's Anti-Communist League in 1966. By spending resources on trips to Asia, YAF demonstrated its commitment to the Vietnam War, while also countering the rhetoric of SDS leaders who traveled to Vietnam and found a U.S.-caused humanitarian crisis. YAF's leaders claimed that they saw the truth on the ground and it was obvious that the United States was winning the war.[26]

As the Vietnam War continued and the New Left grew in size and prominence within society, YAF increasingly gravitated toward promoting itself as the counter-balance to SDS. Many YAF activities were political opposition antics. For instance, in 1969, a Northern California YAF group created a short-lived "Right-Wing People's Park" in a parking lot controlled by the People's Park Steering Committee.[27] Acts such as this helped YAF achieve local media coverage, and occasionally even national media coverage. However, it was not a pro-active policy. Instead, it helped reinforce the notion that YAF opposed (albeit in a mocking manner) the New Left, but the act did not suggest that the Right had a deep political philosophy underlying its opposition to the People's Park.

By 1969, YAF's leadership was trying to take advantage of the sentiment among America's youth that the New Left had gone too far with their massive protests, many of which

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[26] "First Things First: Young Americans Plan World-wide Effort Aimed at the Feet of Communism," *Manion Forum*, 6 March 1966, Box 83, Folder 8, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[27] The People's Park was a parking lot which liberal activists took over and turned into community space. The People's Park Steering Committee ran this activity. In retaliation, the YAF organization took over the parking space controlled by the Committee.
Letter from Dave Van Sciver, Northern California YAF Chairman, to YAF Leaders, undated [1969?], Box 1, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

For more information on the Right-Wing People's Park, you can also see Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*, 249.

closed several major universities.[28] Wayne Thorburn, the organization's Executive Director, promoted this view in a 1969 form-letter which described YAF as a leading organization at the "forefront of student opposition to the new Left [*sic*]."[29] YAF's leadership believed that it was enticing for students and other individuals to join a movement that was a counter-counter culture, rather than a movement that supported specific policy proposals. A day earlier, Thorburn sent out another standardized letter, written to college YAF leaders giving them suggestions for how best to grow their membership. One of his top suggestions was to use the New Left to "rally the support of the responsible students on your campus [emphasis original]."[30] For a brief period in the late 1960s and early 1970s YAF successfully used the strategy of opposing liberalism as a way of growing the movement and expanding membership.

YAF chose to become an opposition movement for many reasons. During the Vietnam War years, the organization successfully turned itself into a grassroots political movement primarily based on opposing the mainstream political discourse of the era. Members of grassroots movements often define their shared values as an opposition to a specific group of people, as happened when YAFers united against a common enemy (Hippies and anti-war activists). During the 1960s and 1970s, liberalism dominated college campuses, and YAF pushed back. Even during a time when it lost many libertarian members because of disagreements

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[28] As Gregory Schneider describes, the closing of Columbia University and the riots at the University of Wisconsin in spring 1968 as major turning points in the Left's losing political support among college students. Schneider, *Cadres*, 112-14.

[29] Letter from Wayne Thorburn, Chapter Director of YAF to Greg Holt, a student in Piedmont High School, 13 March 1969, Box 1, Folder 1, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[30] Letter from Wayne Thornburn to Roy Lewis, 12 March 1969, Box 1, Folders 1, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

regarding Vietnam, it was still able to grow. The message that YAFers were fed up with both the Hippies and the anti-war protesters was sufficient. The organization was able to make it cool to oppose the counter-culture. As long as Hippies dominated college campuses, there were students willing to represent the other side of college students; for those students, joining YAF was an enticing offer. The pro-war, anti-New Left identity helped YAF expand and achieve some of its most impressive membership numbers.

By the early 1970s, YAF's leadership began to fear the potential pitfalls of the group's negative self-identity. Ron Docksai, YAF's National Chairman, wrote a letter to the National Board expressing his concern about the organization's decisions from the previous few years. He argued that the negative self-identity had the potential of destroying YAF's long-term survival. He believed that the ideological difference between someone who opposed the New Left and someone who supported conservative principles was great. Docksai worried that true conservatives no longer accounted for the majority of people within YAF. He believed that unless YAF was able to convert these students to "true conservatives," that the organization would quickly lose membership once the war ended. He blamed the problem squarely on YAF's chapter leaders, whom he felt primarily joined the organization to demonstrate support for the Vietnam War and opposition to the New Left. These people were not intellectually conservative and did not fully understand the intellectual roots of the conservative philosophy. Docksai feared for what this meant for the future of the organization.[31]

The struggles regarding group identity resulted in a temporary growth for YAF, followed by a steep decline in membership. Its membership peaked at approximately 20,000 in 1965,

[31] Memo from Ron Docksai to National Board, re: The State of the Movement, 29 January 1971, Box 3, Folder 1, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University

following Goldwater's defeat. It never again reached such high numbers. However, the organization underwent a brief revival in 1969 and early 1970 when it surpassed 500 chapters; this was the only time in its history where it claimed that many chapters. Immediately afterward, the organization began a steep decline as the number of college chapters dropped rapidly (creation of YAF high school programs helped artificially inflate the total number of chapters in late 1970 and 1971).[32] Following 1971, YAF began a slow decline in total membership, as the organization was nearly defunct in the mid 1970s.[33]

YAF's decline coincided at the time when SDS' membership numbers also began to shrink. Since YAF's identity was so closely intertwined to SDS, YAF could not continue to grow without its opposite. Thus, although the negative self-identity helped YAF expand its membership during the split with the libertarians (1968-69), it also hurt because this expansion was unsustainable. Ron Docksai's fears turned prophetic; without a strong philosophical underpinning for the organization, its membership declined throughout the 1970s.

In the mid 1960s, YAF's popularity rose in large part because the Vietnam War was a hot-topic for debate on campus. The organization retained strong records and membership through the conclusion of the Vietnam War, but was not able to sustain this momentum once the war concluded. Vietnam became a double-edged sword for YAF, helping it become politically relevant and earn its stripes and respect within the movement as the countervailing force opposing the New Left, however, as soon as the war and the New Left died down, YAF was unable to adjust to the changing conditions within American politics and the conservative

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[32] Lists of YAF Chapters per state 1965-71, undated [1971?], Box 2, Folder 1, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[33] Letter sent by Senator Strom Thurmond to Fundraisers, 12 November 1975, Box 342, GRP, Columbia University.
Further information on the decline of YAF in the 1970s, see Schneider, *Cadres*, 151-59.

movement lost its most able youth and grassroots organization.

Attacking Liberalism

On July 23, 1964, Elizabeth Churchill Brown, a popular conservative columnist, expressed concern to her friend Jeanne Dixon for the safety of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. In this deeply personal letter, Brown revealed her greatest fear, which was that a communist-influenced, liberal, African-American civil rights advocate would assassinate Goldwater. Brown said that "99 percent of the Negroes in Washington… are old fashioned, good American patriots." Still, she was worried about the younger generation, which she believed was crazy and communist-inspired. Many within the conservative movement during the early 1960s held this fear that the Left served as a pawn of international communism. By the end of the 1960s, with the anti-war protests gaining followers rapidly, anxiety within the Right about communism's influence grew exponentially. Conservatives feared that the only reason why people would organize an anti-war protest in support of the communist North Vietnamese government, was that the protesters were secretly supportive of the communist cause.[34]

Brown's fear was symptomatic of the Right's distrust of liberals and liberalism, stemming the belief that communism was an evil, expansionist ideology requiring overwhelming force to defeat. Conversely, many on the Left had more complacent Cold War beliefs, including support for détente and negotiating with the Soviet Union. Conservative anti-communism left

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[34] Brown's letter includes language that indicates she held racist beliefs, which many conservatives held. However, like the majority of the movement, Brown professed to support racial equality, while attacking the Civil Rights movement for its communist influence. This juxtaposition of racism and professed equality is interesting and requires examination by historians in the future.
Letter from Brown to Dixon, 23 July 1964, Box 1, Folder 24, Elizabeth Churchill Brown Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

little room for nuance regarding this topic. Conservatives viewed liberals' relative passivity as a sign of weakness and support for the enemy. These different Cold War approaches struck fear into the hearts of many conservatives who believed that liberal naivety endangered their country.

As a further sign of the Right's hatred of the Left was a small and permanent section of the *National Review*. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the *National Review* was a bi-weekly magazine, with the *National Review Bulletin* published on off-weeks. The *Bulletin* stood as a briefer version of the *National Review* (usually 5-7 pages long) with short news-related editorials and no columns or cover stories. A permanent feature of the *National Review Bulletin* was a section entitled "On the Left." Boxed off and located on page three, this section mercilessly deriding the beliefs and activities of various liberal groups. Primarily, these liberal organizations protested the Vietnam War. Specifically, the "On the Left" section lambasted teach-ins and campus wide screenings of movies that the *National Review* editorial board marked un-patriotic. In one piece, the magazine angrily accused a student organization of screening a film which the magazine proclaimed was "produced by the Communist Viet Cong."[35] This section proved a popular edition to the magazine, and it helped give identity to the anti-New Left views within conservatism.

The anti-liberal identity during the Vietnam War was an outgrowth of movement's opposition to the Civil Rights movement. As Lyndon Johnson expanded the Vietnam War, many liberal organizations such as the Students for a Democratic Society began focusing attention on the Vietnam War, in addition to civil rights. As a result of liberal concern for civil rights and its support for anti-war policies, many on the Right began to conflate the two movements. This

[35] Just one example of these attacks on the Left was an editorial in June 23, 1964 which attacked the screening of the movie "The War in Vietnam" on the U. of California at Berkeley campus.

transition within liberalism made it easy for the conservative movement to transfer its identity of attacking the Civil Rights movement in the early 1960s to the anti-war movement. Additionally, since many conservatives, including Elizabeth Churchill Brown, believed that Civil Rights advocates were communists, it was easy to accuse opponents of the Vietnam War (and by result supporters of the creation of a communist Vietnamese state) of being communist sympathizers.

The conservative movement had a long history of believing that the Civil Rights movement was a communist conspiracy. Although both closeted and overt racism influenced this belief, this racism does not sufficiently explain why conservatives despised the Civil Rights movement. The movement's support for both libertarianism and anti-communism aided conservative opposition to the Civil Rights movement. Primarily, conservatives opposed both civil rights protests and federal civil rights legislation. Many (primarily) white northern conservative organizations, such as YAF and the ACU, opposed segregation. However, their libertarian beliefs allowed them to also oppose the federal Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts. Conversely, other radical and often, but not exclusively, Southern conservatives were more explicit in their racism. Frequently, this group of conservatives did not explicitly call for segregation, but they did not believe that integration should occur. However, most conservatives, included conservatives who opposed segregation, believed that communists influenced the Civil Rights movement, and virtually every conservative agreed that fighting communism remained more important than fighting segregation.[36]

[36] Many groups such as YAF vigorously promoted their role in accepting African-Americans into the movement. Additionally, they denounced segregationists on various occasions. However, they supported anti-civil rights ideas by arguing that a free market was a more effective approach to achieving integration than federal legislation. It should be noted that several former YAFers whom I have talked to about the 1960s expressed regret over that position, recognizing that the Civil Rights Act did succeed. In my opinion, far more research

Many conservatives, regardless of their individual views of race, supported FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's claim that the Civil Rights movement was communist-inspired.[37] Dr. W. S. McBirnie, aired a radio program titled "Race War!" in 1965. In this show he explicitly endorsed Hoover's accusation, while also chastising Hoover for taking so long to make this connection.[38] Although the racial rhetoric McBirnie used was harsh, it was not very different from the views of former Congressman Donald Bruce. Bruce, who served as president of the American Conservative Union, was a moderate regarding race relations. In an interview with Clarence Manion in 1966, Bruce referenced Hoover when he proclaimed that communists helped instigate and run the Civil Rights movement.[39] There was a genuine fear within the conservative movement, among both racist conservatives and non-race baiting conservatives, that communist inspiration was the most important reason why African-Americans agitated for civil rights.

Since conservatives already believed that communism inspired the Civil Rights movement, it was easy for them to transfer those thoughts onto the anti-war movement. The intersection between Civil Rights and Vietnam proved evident in Manion's interview with Bruce

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should be devoted to the topic of race and conservative philosophy during the 1960s as this topic requires more in-depth historical analysis.
One example of a group that was proud of its support for African Americans was the Conservative Book Club, which was excited to find that George Schuyler (an African American) was the sixth most popular conservative according to the CBC's readership.
Membership Survey, 1969, Box 368, Group Research Papers, Columbia University.

[37] One work about Hoover's anti-communist views: J. Edgar Hoover, *J. Edgard Hoover on Communism* (New York: Random House, 1971).

[38] Dr. W. S. McBirnie, "Race War!" radio script, 1965, Box 34, Folder 2, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[39] Donald Bruce (Guest), "While Brave Men Die' A New Motion Picture Portrays The Motivators Behind the 'Peace' Movement," *Manion Forum,* 20 March 1966, Box 83, Folder, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

in 1966. The purpose for the interview was a documentary produced by the ACU titled: "While Brave Men Die." According to Bruce's description, the film was about people who protested against the Vietnam War despite the fact that Americans died in the conflict. He portrayed the anti-war protesters in a negative light, and Bruce's reference to Hoover's book was an attempt to equate the Civil Rights movement and the anti-war movement, since both were fermenting (communist) uprising in the United States.[40]

Throughout the conservative discourse, connections between the Civil Rights and anti-war movements abounded in the war's early years. Denison Kitchel, Goldwater's presidential campaign manager and the founding-president of the conservative Free Society Association, spoke at the Southern California Republican women's organization in 1965. In his speech, Kitchel warned that "A strange virus is eroding the moral and political strength of the United States of America and threatening to destroy the institutions which have made it the greatest and the freest nation in the history of the world." To prove his point, he discussed the causes of the Watts riot, which occurred three months earlier.[41] He tied the riot to the anti-war protesters:

> The events which have occurred and continue to occur in this connection show quite clearly the existence of a new political fanaticism that threatens the very foundations of our American body politic. It is the political fanaticism of the so-called New Left. The teach-in specialists, the campus demonstrations, the beatnicks, the Vietniks and the draft card burners who constantly seek and obtain headlines are modern 'typhoid Marys,' carriers of the same alien ideological virus that afflicted such modern political fanatics as Lee Harvey Oswald. If he were alive today, Oswald would probably be participating in the current wave of Vietnik demonstrations.[42]

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[40] *Ibid.*

[41] The Watts Riot was a race riot in Los Angeles which happened a few months after the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

[42] Speech by Denison Kitchel to the Southern California Republican Women in Los Angeles, California, 19 November 1965, Box 8, Folder 5, Free Society Association Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

Kitchel, like many other leading conservatives, thoroughly supported the movement's negative self-identity and its role as opposing the New Left and liberalism. Kitchel, like many others, believed that the Left and the anti-war movement caused most of society's problems.

As the Vietnam War raged on, elite conservative publications continued to focus their attention on opposing the New Left and the liberal anti-war movement. Most leading conservatives offered solutions for fighting the protests from college campuses. Clarence Manion's radio program, *The Manion Forum*, acted as one medium which devoted a particularly large amount of attention to liberalism on college campuses. In some cases Manion explicitly blamed America's weak position in Vietnam on the anti-war movement, but the majority of the time he discussed the New Left was in a paternalistic attempt to explain where these ideas and forces came from. In one program from early 1966, Manion and his guest, Dr. Stefan Possony of the Hoover Institute at Stanford University, defended New Left students saying that most of them did not recognize that international communism targeted students. According to Possony, "Our young people, I'm sorry to say, are not knowledgeable enough to see through the propaganda tricks and the propaganda arguments of the Communists."[43] Possony argued that these college students did not possess the reasoning skilled to understand the consequences of their actions, and he claimed that the real cause of the anti-war protests was not the war itself or the fear of the draft. Instead, the causes of the protests came from the powerful communist forces behind it.

Manion's sentiment that the New Left did not understand the full implications of its

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[43] Marilyn Manion interviewing Stefan Possony (Hoover Institute), "A Look At the 'New Left': A Psychological Warfare Expert Examines Communist Techniques On College Campuses," *Manion Forum*, 27 March 1966, Box 83, Folder 8, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

behavior lasted through the entire war. In 1969, he blamed the "permissive, indulgent environment" where these young adults grew up for their protests.[44] The idea that college students turned into victims of crimes perpetuated by communists fortified support among the grassroots that a need for anti-communist protests and activities existed. It also helped reinforce the fear of a grandiose international communist conspiracy, which many believed to be true. This chaos created a feeling within the movement that the Right must fight the communist-inspired, left-wing, anti-war movement. By creating an identity based on the exclusion and opposition to this other group, the Right failed to produce a positive identity. Unfortunately for the movement, this negative self-identity was not enough to help the movement expand and gain support from a wider national audience.

Because the Right had so thoroughly demonized the New Left, it became difficult for conservatives to accept that the New Left had legitimate grievances. A failure to acknowledge that the beliefs of some anti-war activists that the United States could not win the war without catastrophic consequences to the Vietnamese people, and possibly to the world if the Soviet Union got involved, fueled opposition. Instead of listening to the arguments of the Left, conservatives demonized their opponents, belittling, and attacking them about every issue. This response explains James Jackson Kilpatrick's answer to an incident in mid 1967. He wrote an article in *Human Events* calling for anti-war advocate Rockwell Kent to be tried for treason, a capital offense. He believed Kent deserved the death penalty because of a $10,000 donation from Kent to the North Vietnamese government. Not only was Kent protesting the Vietnam War, but he supported the enemy. Kilpatrick declared in certain terms that donating money to the nation's

[44] Marilyn Manion and Bryan Cox (Guests), "Don't Blame the Students: College Climate Breeds Contempt for Capitalism," *Manion Forum*, 19 January 1969, Box 84, Folder 1, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

enemy is a crime worthy of the highest possible penalty. This represents the conservative movement's loathing of the New Left, and as the Vietnam War continued, their hatred increased as the Right became increasingly frustrated with the New Left.[45]

Media

With time, liberal support for the war eroded. In 1964 and 1965, liberal President Johnson and many Congressional Democrats (along with the liberal ADA) supported the Vietnam War. As the war continued, the New Left, along with millions of other Americans, joined in massive protests against the Vietnam War. Those anti-war protests helped lessen political support for the war and came to define the Left's position about it. This helped create the Left-Right political dichotomy regarding Vietnam, and created the Right's self-identify as an anti-New Left and anti- anti-war movement. In addition to blaming liberalism for its failure to support the war, conservatives also began blaming the media for the rise of the New Left and for society's eroding support of the war. Conservatives frequently repeated claims that media bias promoted the anti-war cause.

For the conservative leadership, on the heels of Goldwater's 1964 defeat, opposing the media was natural. Throughout the campaign, Goldwater's supporters frequently complained about the national media's unfair coverage toward Goldwater. One area where conservatives found the media bias especially evident concerned the coverage of both Goldwater and Johnson's Vietnam strategy proposals prior to the election. Specifically, when Goldwater proposed escalation of U.S. military fighting in Vietnam, the media attacked Goldwater as a

[45] James Jackson Kilpatrick, "Should Rockwell Kent Be Tried for Treason? Gives $10,000 to North Viet Nam," *Human Events*, July 22, 1967: 1.

warmonger. This incensed the *National Review* when, in August 1964, the media portrayed Johnson's policy of escalation as logical and restrained. The *National Review* argued that both candidates had similar plans, yet the media portrayed Goldwater as delusional while praising Johnson as the peaceful candidate.[46] Using broad strokes to indict the entire industry, the *National Review*, among other Right-wing media outlets, saw only hypocrisy and bias in the news reporting.

When the election ended, conservatives believed that the press stole the vote from them by refusing to write fairly about the issues.[47] There was a long-held conservative belief that a liberal bias existed in the press. Historian David Greenberg argues that this belief began during the early years of the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s. According to Greenberg, despite the presses' goal of neutrality, the overwhelmingly unjust nature of Southern racial segregation helped push most journalists to sympathize with the Civil Rights movement and oppose Southern conservatives.[48] Though historians dispute whether press bias existed regarding the media's coverage of the Vietnam War, many historians, including Greenberg, believe that the press did not influence the public's support for the war.[49]

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[46] Editorial, "Focus On… The President Escalates," *National Review*, August 18, 1964: 4-5.

[47] Two examples of this kind of work are: Lokos, *Hysteria 1964*; Stephen Shadegg, *What Happened to Goldwater? The inside Story of the 1964 Republican Campaign* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965).

[48] David Greenberg, "The Idea of 'the Liberal Media' and Its Roots in the Civil Rights Movement," *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture* 1, no. 2 (December 2008).

[49] An example of a historian who recalls that "editors wanted only negative reporting [of the war]," see: William L. Stearman, "Lessons Learned from Vietnam," *Military Review* 90, no. 2 (March/April 2010).
An example of a historian who believes that historical memory of negative coverage is exaggerated, see: David Culbert, "Television's Visual Impact on Decision-Making in the USA,

Despite the potential realities regarding media bias in the 1960s, certainly conservatives felt suffocated by the lack of diverse views amongst the national press corps. With far fewer media options than in the cable news era, and with a less fragmented press of the modern Internet era, conservatives found the same voices helping to dictate the national discourse, and that discourse was turning against conservatism.[50] One way to defeat the media was to fight back by increasing conservative presence within the media, which conservatives worked toward in the wake of the 1964 campaign. Those already on the air, such as Clarence Manion, worked feverishly to insulate their programs from FCC fines over conflicts with the Fairness Doctrine. Manion and others also worked to increase the number of people their programs reached. Often Manion and other radio personalities believed that the best route toward mainstream success was to appear less extreme (meaning focus slightly less air-time on conspiracy theories), while simultaneously attacking the Left and the opposition. They hoped this would help spread the conservative message.[51]

1968: The Tet Offensive and Chicago's Democratic National Convention," *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (July 1998).
Examples of historians who doubt that negative coverage of the war influenced public opinion: Greenberg, "Idea of 'the Liberal Media'."; Michael Mandelbaum, "Vietnam: The Television War," *Daedalus* 111, no. 4 (Fall 1982).

[50] In the 1960s only a small number of national television stations existed, along with a small number of national, influential newspapers and magazines. Organizations such as ABC, NBC, CBS, *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Time* magazine, and *Newsweek* dominated the media. With cable news came more stations, and with the Internet came even more media outlets, most which serve specific niches in news coverage and opinion. One or two organizations are no longer able to set the national media agenda.

[51] For more on the general media response, with an emphasis on Manion's response, see Hemmer, "Messengers", Chapter 6. For an analysis of the Right's moderation in the post-Goldwater years, see: Schoenwald, *Time for Choosing*.

While some on the Right attempted to moderate their tones, many others believed that the route to expanding support for their ideology came from the creation of new conservative media outlets. Marvin Liebman, a founder of both YAF and the ACU, proposed one of the grander plans for countering the weight of the liberal media. Liebman promoted the creation of a "Conservative Communication Center" in New York City, which "would become the headquarters for conservative projects and public relations efforts and a clearing-house for conservative television programs, documentary films, radio ideas and other projects for the communications media."[52] Liebman was a wealthy businessperson who earned his money as a public relations specialist. This, tied with his successful support of both ACU and YAF, meant that his words carried with them a greater weight than many other conservatives who lacked his successful organizational skills. His goal was to create a centralized response to the perceived influence of liberalism on the press. Had he succeeded, the Right would have had an answer to the perceived bias within the media.

The concept for a conservative communication center was rooted in the idea that conservatives were incapable of getting their message through all of the national presses' filters. Though there was no implementation of Liebman's idea, its conceptualization occurred during a period when many other conservatives worried that without a coordinated effort the movement might flounder and fail. Throughout the post-World War II era, conservatives constantly fretted about liberal control of the media, but Liebman's proposal represented a newfound urgency which was present. This urgency stemmed from the brief amount of success enjoyed by the Right because of Goldwater's nomination. The movement teetered closer to triumph than it ever had,

[52] Liebman to Don Lipsett of the American Conservative Union, 15 May 1965, Box 7, Folder 7, MLP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

and it refused to miss a second opportunity to capture the presidency. After decades of fighting for control of the Republican Party, they finally came close to success only to see their candidate defeated in the general election. Conservatives remained convinced that without more support within the media, they might never win any future presidential election.

Early in the Vietnam War, the connection between the anti-Left self-identity and the Vietnam War focused primarily on opposing university professors and students, but as the war dragged on conservatives turned on the media with vengeance. Though conservatives doubted the neutrality of the press as early as the 1950s, the veracity of the Right's anti-press complaints grew exponentially. By 1966 and 1967, conservative media outlets *National Review* and *Human Events* questioned the fairness of the media's coverage of the war in almost every issue. They felt that a liberal, anti-war press accentuated the negative regarding every military act by the United States, while Viet Cong atrocities went unreported. The *National Review* hammered this point in a 1966 photo essay documenting slaughter committed by the Viet Cong. The magazine justified the publication of gruesome photos of Viet Cong atrocities by claiming that the media constantly published photos of destruction wrought by the United States military, but the media failed to hold the opposition to the same ethical standards.[53] As the war continued, the Right became increasingly distraught at the press's coverage of the war. Whereas biased coverage had undercut Goldwater's appeal in 1964, they now argued that the press acted unpatriotically and threatened national security.[54]

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[53] "Vietnam, The Photographs We're Never Asked For..." *National Review*, October 18, 1966: 1049-1051

[54] In another example, the *National Review* chastised the press for publishing the now-infamous photograph of Saigon police chief executing the suspected Viet Cong fighter in the streets during the Tet Offensive while failing to show any pictures of North Vietnamese atrocities in Hue, where 1,000 civilians were executed.

The media probably focused on atrocities committed by the U.S. military instead of those committed by the North Vietnamese because of an overall focus on the activities of the U.S. military. The media covered the United States, not North Vietnam, and this focus meant increased treatment of all things which the U.S. military did, both good and bad. This focus on the actions, accomplishments, and mistakes of the U.S. military meant that the Right had more stories to take offense. The Right portrayed that coverage as negative and used it to label the media as biased. Additionally, the press often covered American views of the war, with an added focus on large events like anti-war demonstrations. These large events received coverage largely because their size made them newsworthy. Since there were not many large conservative pro-war rallies, the media focused more attention on the anti-war protest movement. Grassroots conservative organizations used these stories to make their point that the national media was biased. They also took this claim one step further by arguing that coverage of anti-war protests was the media's way of opposing the war. By the end of the 1960s, the media had become the Right's default scapegoat for the problems ailing both the nation and the war.

The reason the media became the default scapegoat was that conservatives argued that if only the media focused on the positive stories of progress made by the U.S. military, or if they focused on the atrocities of the North Vietnamese government, then the U.S. public would never support a premature end to the ground war.[55] By focusing blame on the media, the Right was able to avoid internal soul-searching about whether the decision to endorse the war was a good idea. Before the U.S. expanded the war in 1964, conservatives recognized that the public would not accept a long-term struggle in Vietnam. Yet by 1967 the movement blamed the media for the

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Editorial, "The Week," *National Review*, May 21, 1968: 478.

[55] One example was the article: Editorial, "News Bulletin," *National Review*, July 8, 1969: 98.

eroding public support for the war. By blaming the media the Right was able to avoid taking responsibility for supporting the war at its onset. Conservatives turned on the easy targets, the media, which appeared to have opposed the war.

Throughout the war there were several efforts to expose the perceived hypocrisy and bias within the media towards the war. Although it was later in the war effort, perhaps the most famous of these efforts was a lead story published in the *National Review* in July 1971. The special report titled the "Vietnam Papers" was a series of brief, *faux* CIA reports. These *faux* reports expressed the seriousness of the threat communism posed to the world, and the strategic importance of Vietnam to worldwide communism. The *National Review* claimed in the article that these were real, classified, documents written by the American intelligence community. Each of these reports expressed the seriousness that the United States should take the effort in Vietnam and its relationship with the greater Cold War struggle.[56]

A few days after the publication of the special report, William F. Buckley and William Rusher held a press conference announcing that the reports were fakes. They claimed that the purpose was to remind the American public that the government and intelligence community is "not composed of incompetents," despite the perception created by the major media outlets, specifically the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*. The point was to remind Americans that despite reports from the recently-released Pentagon Papers, the U.S. could still win the war. The *National Review* believed that the government had the ability to win the war and that the problems in Vietnam were not a matter of military or intelligence failures. Rather, they resulted

[56] Statement by William F. Buckley, "Government Documents Hoax," 21 July 1971, Box 120, Folder 5, WRP, Library of Congress.

from the failure of "political will." On this later point, they blamed the press for fomenting a discourse of dissent against the war.[57]

National Review published the "Vietnam Papers" during a period when a central focus of the Right's internal discourse was that the U.S. could win the war. The movement believed that the key to victory was resolute willpower and the movement blamed the media for the nation's loss of will. This public discourse failed to acknowledge that the public refused to accept their suggested strategy for victory, which included the use of nuclear weapons on North Vietnam and a complete invasion of Laos, Cambodia, and North Vietnam. Instead, they blamed the media for the failure of the public to accept their strategy proposals.

The "Vietnam Papers" was not alone in complaining about the loss of faith the press fermented in society. A few years earlier, in 1967, Clarence Manion labeled the press "Superintendents of Surrender," helping conservatives relieve their guilt that their policy prescriptions were not feasible.[58] Two years later Thomas Lane used similar language when he complained about the growth of "surrender syndrome" by the television news media. He believed that television news broadcasts helped promote the idea that victory was impossible.[59] It was easier for the Right to blame the media for the problems the U.S. was experiencing in achieving victory in Vietnam than to accept responsibility for supporting a failed war strategy.

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[57] Early draft of a statement made to the press by William F. Buckley to the press, 21 July 1971, Box 120, Folder 5, WRP, Library of Congress.

[58] "Superintendents Of Surrender: American Policy And Public Opinion Controlled By Promoters Of World Socialism," *Manion Forum*, 15 January 1967, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[59] Thomas A. Lane, "Surrender Syndrome Grips News Media," *Human Events*, May 3, 1969: 7(327).

These consistent attacks on the media had their long-term effects on the movement, and they led to the grassroots identifying the news media as wholly biased against both conservatism and the war. Conservatives often wrote to conservative media outlets and intellectuals thanking them for standing up to the opponents of freedom within the media. This view was so pervasive that a 1971 professionally commissioned survey of *National Review* readers claimed that 87.6% of their subscribers believed that a bias existed in the media against conservatism. A large majority of the movement did not trust the media to report fairly about issues that mattered most.[60]

This view of the media helped to further unite the conservative movement while also perpetuating the negative self-identity regarding the movement's opposition to the Left. By arguing that the media was the root cause of society's anti-war views, the Right ignored the flaws with their own policy. As with the negative self-identity against the New Left, this view of the media also helped to foster an us-versus-them mentality, as the Right continued to define itself in terms that opposed the national press. This helped to unify the grassroots, and no doubt it felt good to find an excuse as to why the United States was losing the war, but it was not an inclusive strategy aimed at enticing others to join the Right. Without their own pro-active policy solutions, the Right's fight against the media remained ineffective.

Effects of Serving in the Opposition

Throughout the Vietnam War years, the conservative movement struggled to figure out how to respond to the rise of the New Left, liberalism, and the anti-war movement. The belief

[60] Subscriber Survey conducted on behalf of the *National Review* by Erdos and Morgan, Inc, December 1971, Box 125, Folder 6, WRP, Library of Congress.

that the media was working against them made the struggle more difficult. Most of the movement's supporters accepted it as a *fait accompli* that they were an oppositional movement; opposed to everything liberalism stood for, but without a strong positive self-identity. Conservatives allowed their anger toward the media for its treatment of both the Vietnam War and the anti-war movement to consume the movement's identity. By fighting liberalism, conservatives ceded their ability to define their own organization and beliefs. The Right spent much of this period accenting the negative.

The negative self-identity chosen by conservatives frustrated the movement's leadership. Conservatives frequently vented over the lack of positive ideas percolating throughout the movement. They used the term malaise to describe how individuals felt about the state of conservatism in the post-Goldwater years. Fear of the failure by conservatives stemmed from the fact that the movement was trying to support a war, while arguing against the war planners (Johnson and Nixon). The movement's disappointment in its ability to push society toward supporting the war was palpable throughout this period, and it served as a distraction. It hurt their ability to expand the movement's political reach.

Opposing the Vietnam War was not a serious consideration for the vast majority of conservatives. Support for the war (and more importantly opposition to the anti-war movement) had become central to the movement's identity. Even when conservatives recognized the limitations of the U.S. military, they felt compelled to continue and endorse the fighting. They hoped that a small policy change could alter the outcome of the war. Their negative self-identity made it nearly impossible for most conservatives to endorse their opponent's ideas and oppose the war. Conservatives remained united during this period largely because of their support for the Vietnam War and their opposition toward liberalism.

The one group of conservatives who tried to challenge this mindset was the libertarians. Many libertarians were friends with the members of the New Left. They often attended the same parties on college campuses and partook in the same extracurricular activities.[61] Some openly endorsed ideas of sexual freedom and supported the legalization of drugs. Many of these libertarians opposed the Vietnam War, which had lasting consequences for the conservative movement. Their close affiliation with the New Left caused serious tensions, as conservative organizations (most notably YAF) expelled many libertarians. In response, libertarians flirted with the New Left. They created many New Left-Libertarian organizations. The mainstream Right viewed these actions as heresy, as these libertarians no longer supported the war and joined the enemy. On one of the most important (if not the most important) topics of the period, libertarians joined the enemy.

Much of the reason why the Right expelled grassroots libertarians was not just an opposition to the Vietnam War and a questioning of the Cold War mentality, but it was also the inability of mainstream conservatives to accept that a part of their movement was working with liberals. Since resisting these groups stood central to the conservative identity, it remained difficult to suddenly accept the Left-Right alliances libertarians proposed. When Karl Hess, a leading libertarian who wrote many of Barry Goldwater's campaign speeches in 1964, announced in 1969 that he had more in common with the New Left than the Right, his comment reverberated throughout the movement's literature. Most conservative groups responded angrily to Hess, demonstrating the level of hurt he created.

Because the loss of libertarians negatively affected conservatives in the late 1960s, the

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[61] Marc Jason Gilbert, ed. *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers,2001); Klatch, *Generation Divided*.

movement became more receptive to expanding by incorporating newer groups and factions later on. Christian anti-communists ardently opposed the New Left and communism, which made a perfect marriage for conservatism during the early 1970s. The movement expanded only after it suffered from its negative identity and malaise of the late 1960s.

Working as the loyal opposition also hurt the conservative movement because its philosophical underpinnings did not radically change during this era. Post World War II conservative ideology constantly evolved, and many philosophical leaders with their own ideas pushed the movement in different directions. During the Vietnam War, a noticeable lack of new work which challenged traditional conservative orthodoxy came out of the movement's leadership. Instead, the leadership focused most of their efforts on support for the Vietnam War and opposition towards the New Left. Conservatism's ideology remained relatively static during the years of the Vietnam War.

Chapter 6:
The Problem of Richard Nixon

The conservative movement had a turbulent relationship with Richard Nixon throughout his presidency. Despite Nixon ending an eight-year drought for Republicans in the White House, and in spite of most Americans associating Nixon with conservatism, many conservatives held mixed feelings about the president.[1] In 1971, several influential conservative leaders publicly withdrew support for Nixon's presidency. Still, as the Republican president in the White House, many on the movement's grassroots level respected him, even if they often did not agree with his policies.

During Nixon's administration, anti-war protests and anti-war sentiment made the domestic political rhetoric inhospitable to the hawkish anti-communism of conservatism. In response to the festering political climate Jeffrey Bell, the former Capitol Hill director of the American Conservative Union, described Nixon's first term as the most "unpleasant" years of his political career. In Bell's opinion, the combination of the Vietnam War, Nixon's embrace of détente, and his visit to China disoriented the conservative movement, forcing it onto the defensive and hindering the movement's growth. Thankfully for conservatives, Bell proved

[1] An example of a historical work which argues that Nixon retained support from the Right throughout his presidency: Julian Zelizer, "Detente and Domestic Politics," *Diplomatic History* 33, no. 4 (September 2009): 656. An example of a work which argues Nixon lost support from the Right during his first term: Critchlow, *Schlafly*, Chapter 8.

prescient when he wrote that the Vietnam War's conclusion would help usher in a new and more favorable era of political discourse for the Right.[2]

In Bell's glum assessment of Nixon's first term, he gave a negative re-telling of the relationship between the Right and Nixon. As this chapter demonstrates, the relationship was far more complex, at times proving fruitful for the movement. For instance, in 1968 and 1969, the Right's grassroots relished Nixon's campaign, helping him achieve victory over Democratic Vice President Hubert Humphrey. In his first term, the grassroots members were elated that he did not retreat in Vietnam, and they approved his Cambodian invasion of 1970. However, as the reality of his détente policies became apparent, the conservative leadership disowned the president and attempted to hinder his re-election.[3] This divided the grassroots members and the leaders, which exacerbated a wide-spread feeling of malaise and dissatisfaction about the future of the movement among the leadership. By the end of Nixon's first term, his foreign policies and his inability to win the war caused the movement's second sustained period of malaise since the 1964 election.[4]

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[2] Jeffrey Bell, "The State of Conservatism," *Human Events*, February 24, 1973: 8-11(152-155).

[3] The Right strenuously opposed Nixon's support for increased East-West trade, his supporting the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, and his decision to visit communist China. Those efforts get to the heart of Nixon's détente policies.
Some works about détente and Nixon: Robert Dallek, *Nixon and Kissinger: Partners in Power* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007); Gaddis, *Cold War*; Robert S. Litwack, *Detente and the Nixon Doctrine: American Foreign Relations and the Pursuit of Stability, 1969-1976* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jeremi Suri, *Henry Kissinger and the American Century* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[4] As described in Chapters 1 and 5, the movement underwent an early malaise during the second half of Johnson's term, largely because of the United States' failure regarding the war.

Falling in Love with Nixon

Conservatives quickly supported Nixon's 1968 presidential campaign largely because they believed he agreed with their anti-communist worldview and they believed that he would help fight the Vietnam War effectively. During the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon did not offer clear ideas regarding how he was going to effectively win the Vietnam War, offering only the promise that he would not surrender. This did not scare conservatives, who put faith in Nixon's long-standing anti-communist reputation and the belief that he would do everything possible to win the war.

Long before the 1968 presidential election, Nixon earned his reputation as an ardent anti-communist. He earned this reputation while serving as a member of the House of Representatives, when he used Whittaker Chambers's testimony before the House Committee of Un-American Activities to accuse Alger Hiss of being a communist in 1948. Chambers used this testimony to jump start a long career of promoting anti-communist causes. Through this, Chambers became one of the most influential and well-respected figures within the conservative movement. Hiss, on the other hand, represented the extent of communist infiltration in the U.S. government.[5] Nixon's involvement in the hearing earned him a reputation within the conservative community as a man who understood the evil soul of communism and would not back down from a threat. Chambers helped cement Nixon's reputation with the publication of *Witness*, where Chambers wrote that Nixon was "the one man on the [House] Committee who asks shrewd questions."[6] However, Nixon did not advocate small government principles. Many

[5] Chambers helped create the image of himself and of the Hiss case with *Witness*, where he documents his time as a communist and describes the Hiss case and its long-term effects: Chambers, *Witness*.

[6] *Ibid*., 532.

conservatives complained he lacked significant domestic political principles, and so he remained an outsider—the non-conservative—who stood by and supported the conservative anti-communist cause in the face of liberal outrage.

Despite his ardent anti-communism, many conservatives disapproved of Nixon when he ran for president in 1960. Their disapproval stemmed from his tenure as Vice President under Dwight Eisenhower. The Republican Party's ideology moved to the left in the 1950s disheartening these conservatives. Many conservatives believed that Eisenhower and Nixon shared responsibility for pushing the Republican Party away from conservatism. The presence of moderate Republicans angered conservatives who felt as though they were losing an ideological battle within their own party. Many conservatives proved reluctant to support Nixon at the 1960 Republican National Convention because he served as Eisenhower's vice president.[7]

Nixon's popularity among conservatives further declined when he made a deal right before the 1960 national convention with the unofficial leader of the moderate Republicans, Governor Nelson Rockefeller. The deal attempted to make the Republican platform less conservative in exchange for Rockefeller's support of Nixon at the convention. At the time, conservative Senator Barry Goldwater unceremoniously described it as a "domestic Munich."[8] In general, conservatives remained unenthusiastic about Nixon's 1960 presidential campaign, and almost immediately after Nixon's defeat, they began working on nominating Goldwater in 1964.

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[7] Rusher, *The Rise of the Right*.
Many conservatives distrusted Nixon so much that they forced their way into the convention and were able to get a token nomination for Senator Barry Goldwater. Many, including Rusher, credit this token nomination to the eventual nomination of Goldwater four years later and the "rise of the right."

[8] *Ibid*., 87-88.

That the Right supported Nixon in 1968 stands in contrast with its failure to embrace him during his first presidential bid in 1960. Conservatives changed their opinion of Nixon between 1960 and 1968, explaining how the Vietnam War was the most prominent issue in 1968. The Vietnam War was now more important than all other concerns, including fear of moderate Republicans. For those on the Right, Nixon's most appealing characteristic in 1968 was his foreign policy experience. For the 1968 election, conservatives allowed that one issue to override all others and to support Nixon.

The decision to support Nixon before the 1968 convention did not occur automatically. Heading into the Republican National Convention, conservatives shared their support between both Nixon and California Governor Ronald Reagan. During the pre-convention months, the conservative press rarely criticized Nixon. Instead they offered him praise, with most of their praise focusing on his foreign and Vietnam policy proposals. Comparatively, they voiced excitement about the possibility of Reagan running for office, even while acknowledging that his limited experience made his candidacy a long-shot. They believed that Reagan could help reinvent American politics and push the national discourse to the Right, whereas Nixon could be an effective Cold Warrior president. In the end, many supported Reagan at the convention's first ballot, but once Reagan lost the nomination they supported Nixon.[9]

This was hardly a glowing endorsement of Nixon, but it represented the realism within the movement during the election. The movement lacked any other serious options (conservatives recognized Reagan did not have enough experience or support to claim the GOP nomination), they also supported Nixon in 1968 because they viewed him as the only politician

[9] Frank Meyer represents this view of Nixon vs Reagain in his piece: Frank Meyer, "Principle and Heresies: What is at Issue in 1968?" *National Review*, July 30, 1968: 751.

with both the intelligence and political willpower to win the Vietnam War. Vietnam policies dominated conservative literature prior to the convention, and generally the movement's leadership approved of most of Nixon's comments regarding the war. Frequently during the campaign Nixon criticized Johnson for not fighting aggressively enough, similarly to the conservative critique. Nixon's words gave them hope that he would not follow Johnson's example.

Nixon's rhetoric during the 1968 campaign made it easy for conservatives to believe in him once again. Nixon presented himself as a smart Cold Warrior who talked tough and promised to never to give up on the Vietnam War. Once elected, his stated goal of Vietnamization helped provide the South Vietnamese with support to continue their defensive war against the North Vietnamese communists indefinitely.[10] He portrayed himself as the antitheses of Johnson, proclaiming a just and fierce fight against communists everywhere. He energized the patriotic and anti-communist spirit of the Right.

To conservatives, Nixon represented the potential success that their movement could attain. Between September and November 1968, virtually every article written in major conservative publications, and even in the personal letters between conservatives, indicates a genuine belief that Nixon could win the Vietnam War while also helping to promote conservatism. This embracement of him is remarkable considering the Right's pre-convention wariness toward Nixon. The change in attitude is largely attributable to Nixon's realistic chance of success, and his active campaign on conservative foreign policy principles. In the end, the Right strongly supported Nixon in the election.

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[10] Vietnamization was Nixon's policy to decrease the South Vietnamese reliance on American soldiers by slowly removing American troops but providing the South Vietnamese military with more advanced supplies.

The strong feelings toward Nixon remained noticeable after the election results were final. During the transition months, the Right viewed nearly every pronouncement by Nixon positively. An unusually low volume of criticism toward Nixon, in *Human Events* and *National Review*, permeated during this period. Those magazines frequently accented the negative, and their unconditional endorsements of Nixon's cabinet nominations (and the rumored cabinet nominees) stand out. For instance, in late November, *National Review* editorialized its support for the rumored appointment of 1968 liberal Democratic presidential nominee Hubert Humphrey as ambassador to the United Nations.[11] One week later William F. Buckley, Jr. supported Nelson Rockefeller's rumored nomination for Secretary of Defense. That Rockefeller was the leading liberal in the Republican Party did not discourage Buckley.[12] During the previous decade, Buckley and the *National Review* attacked Humphrey and Rockefeller as imbeciles set to destroy the United States. This sudden support for both candidates did not indicate a philosophical shift, but rather further emphasizes how conservatives confidently believed they had influence in the White House, and they saw no issue with giving liberals and liberal Republicans cabinet positions.

Nixon's early statements and strategy on Vietnam gave the conservative movement hope that he was going to prosecute the war more vigorously, while also improving the political climate for the movement. Nixon vowed not to give up on the war, and the Right took his promise literally. Much of the conservative movement's discourse focused on the war in 1968 and 1969. Much of the hype regarding the war resulted from renewed hope that Nixon could

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[11] Editorial, "News Brief," *National Review*, November 26, 1968: B185

[12] William F. Buckley, Jr., "On the Right: Mr. Nixon's Cabinet," *National Review,* December 3, 1968: 1236-37.

rally a U.S. victory. Also, conservatives hoped that a Nixon victory using strategy and philosophy similar to their own, would grant them increased political credibility. The Right advocated an expansion of bombing (in North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), the mining of Haiphong Harbor, and ending peace negotiations. Though Nixon did not make his plans clear in 1968, he indicated that he opposed meaningless negotiations and supported an increased bombing campaign.[13]

By the end of Johnson's presidency, many conservative leaders were stuck in a political malaise which was largely a result of their negative self-identity. Nixon's campaign and inauguration renewed the Right's spirit and its focus on Vietnam as many conservative groups re-emphasized their strategy for victory. The president-elect gave conservatives something new to fight for and to support. The *National Review*'s excitement manifested itself as the magazine gave him *carte blanche* concerning strategy. This meant that the magazine supported all of his early Vietnam policy decisions, including his token troop withdrawals in April 1969.[14] Overall, many within the movement put faith behind the idea that Nixon developed a winning strategy for the war.

The false belief that Nixon could bring victory in Vietnam brought the closest rapprochement between him and the movement. Several times in 1969 Nixon and his administration discussed ways to coordinate with conservative organizations and individuals. In one instance, Nixon wrote to staffers of his concern about the negative effects of his gradual troop withdrawals on the Right. He feared that he left them "flapping with increasing anger in

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[13] For more details on the Right's recommendations for the war strategy, see Chapters 1 and 2.

[14] Editorial, "Capital Bulletin," *National Review*, April 15, 1969: 52-3

the wings."[15] At the same time, Nixon and his staffers held several meetings with conservative leaders about the nature of the Vietnam War.[16] The war became one of the major areas where conservatives and Nixon thought alike, and he kept conservatives believing that he cherished their input.[17]

This period of good feelings between Nixon and the Right lasted throughout his first year in office. His war rhetoric created such euphoria that some conservatives audaciously proclaimed they could envision victory in Vietnam. Rev. Daniel Lyons, a conservative foreign policy commentator, told Clarence Manion's listeners in February 1970 that Nixon's Vietnamization policy would make a North Vietnamese victory unlikely. Lyon's prediction of the worst-case scenario was that the North Vietnamese would try to keep the war going indefinitely rather than face defeat.[18] Many throughout the movement shared Lyons's faith that Nixon's policies would succeed. Certainly conservatives understood that they would be in a much stronger political

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[15] Memo from Bryce Harlow to Lyn Nofziger, 18 September 1969, Box 52, Folder 7, White House Special Files, Richard Nixon Presidential Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[16] One example is a meeting between the Nixon Administration and William F. Buckley. Memo from Mr. Ehrlichman to Kissinger, 4 August 1969, Box 8, Folder 1, White House Special Files, Richard Nixon Presidential Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[17] Nixon archives and papers indicate that he set up frequent meetings between National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and Special Assistant Patrick Buchanan and various conservative leaders in order to cultivate close ties between the White House and the Right.

[18] This was an especially important program because it was one of the few where Manion focused on Vietnam, indicating that he held great respect for Lyons (a regular guest). Daniel Lyons, "Vietnamization Program Shows Promise: South Viet Nam Should Be Allowed To Destroy Red Sanctuaries," *Manion Forum*, 22 February 1970, Box 84, Folder 2, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

situation if Nixon could win the war while utilizing their strategy suggestions. They rejoiced, hoping that his leadership would end the war, and save the movement.

It's Complicated: Conservatives During Nixon's First Two Years

During his first two years in office, both the grassroots and the elite embraced the excitement of Nixon in the White House. The Right's leadership thoroughly engaged the grassroots movement, while conservative media and organizations briefly thrived. *National Review*'s circulation jumped approximately seven percent in the months after the 1968 election.[19] YAF's best fundraising year occurred in the wake of Nixon's 1969 inauguration.[20] Also in 1969, the American Conservative Union saw a twelve percent increase in revenue from the previous year, aided by its frequent attempts to influence Nixon's first year in office.[21] All of these numbers indicate that grassroots supporters purchased from and donated to all three organizations in record numbers. Throughout the Right there was the belief that Nixon's assertiveness in the Vietnam War was leading the United States to a military victory. This helped renew the enthusiasm of the grassroots members. In 1969, conservatives were confident that victory abroad was possible.

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[19] Audited circulation figures from ABC Auditing, 1968, Box 110, Folder 5, WRP, Library of Congress.

[20] The information in this paragraph did not come from a certified CPA. Still, I believe this statement is accurate because other YAF certified financial documents did indicate that this was one of YAF's biggest financial years, however, I was unable to locate certified financial statements for 1968.
From Randal Teague to National Board, Re: Analysis of Current Financial Status, 17 December 1969, Box 2, Folder 4, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[21] Financial Reports and Statements, American Conservative Union, 1967-1972, Box 136, Folder 1,2,3,4, WRP, Library of Congress.

While Nixon's rhetoric often galvanized the Right's grassroots, the conservative leadership did not wholeheartedly trust his ultimate intentions. Conservatives frequently lobbied him because they remained largely skeptical of his political beliefs. They wanted to ensure that his policies did not drift too far to the left. In a very complex, and frequently contradictory analysis of Nixon's foreign policy, the conservative leadership repeatedly praised his ardent anti-communism, his support for the military industrial complex, and his stance on the Vietnam War. They gave this approval despite expressing doubts about his commitment to the anti-communist cause. They appeared remarkably insecure of Nixon's true intentions. The distrust ran so rampant that speculation alone warranted panicky articles about his foreign policy. Long before Nixon made his détente foreign policy intentions clear, they worried about his inevitable "left-ward shift" in strategy.[22]

The difference with the Right's tone regarding how it treated Nixon compared to Johnson indicates that the conservative leadership remained independent yet supportive of Nixon's Administration. The conservative leadership took pains to ensure that they did not serve as cheerleaders for Nixon's policies. By pressuring Nixon on national security issues such as anti-ballistic missiles or military spending, the leadership reminded its constituencies that they remained independent-minded. The appearance of independence and flexibility stood as a prized value among conservatives. Additionally, conservative leaders reminded Nixon that they would not rubber-stamp all of his policies. Despite their cheers when he won the presidency, they did not want him to think that their support was unconditional.[23]

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[22] Cato, "Letter from Washington: Countdown to '72" *National Review,* January 12, 1971: 74.

[23] Examples of articles pressuring Nixon to spend more on national defense:
"This Week's News from Inside Washington: Laird's Alarming Budget Cuts" *Human Events,* January 17, 1970: 3(35).

At the same time that conservatives lobbied Nixon on anti-ballistic missiles, they also discussed his war strategy. While they appreciated his claims that he would never surrender and would achieve peace with honor, they frequently discussed how best to improve the United States' chances of success. They praised his resolve, something they believed Johnson lacked, while also occasionally doubting that his more aggressive strategy would ensure victory. This duality of sanctioning Nixon's rhetoric and criticizing his strategy lasted for much of the war.

In November 1969, the American Security Council produced a report evaluating Nixon's Vietnam policies. The report began with praise for Nixon because he refused to concede defeat in South Vietnam. The article also noted that electing Hubert Humphrey would have surely led to defeat. Nixon also received accolades for upholding his campaign promise to not "deliver [America's] ally to the communists."[24] This approval of Nixon's convictions for continuing the war stood as a trend in 1969. While praising Nixon, the report also expressed concern about the possible success of Vietnamization. Vietnamization acted as Nixon's central strategy for providing supplies to South Vietnamese troops so that U.S. troops could begin withdrawal. The report denounced Vietnamization as a bad policy since it left the responsibility for fighting to other nations. The American Security Council feared Nixon was "entrust[ing] U.S. security to others."[25]

Nixon's Vietnamization plan divided the conservative movement. Some, including *National Review*, believed it might help mollify internal dissent against the war with the onset of

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Editorial, "This Week's News from Inside Washington: Deploy the ABM," *Human Events,* March 22, 1969: 3(179).

[24] Stefan Possony, "The Self-Fettered Giant," *American Security Council Washington Report,* 17 November 1969, Box 58, Folder 5, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[25] *Ibid*

troops returning home and would lead to an American victory. Others were less convinced. In January 1970, *Human Events* evaluated Nixon's first year in office. The magazine both praised and attacked Nixon's Vietnam policy. In a single sentence it attacked Vietnamization as a "chimera" policy that could not work, but praised Vietnamization because it "could extricate us from Viet Nam with honor."[26] This contradictory view of Nixon's policy was common throughout the movement and it demonstrates the general disapproval for Vietnamization. It also demonstrates the belief that Nixon would do nearly anything for a viable strategy.

Although many conservatives did not believe that Vietnamization would work, and although conservatives feared that Nixon was not as ardent of a Cold Warrior as they were, his presence still bolstered the movement. For a brief period of about two years, his role in the White House gave them hope that their movement and ideology could grow and begin to incorporate more conservative ideas into mainstream society. Conservatives appeared happy at the political realities they encountered, a dramatic change from the later years of Johnson's presidency when the movement stagnated and failed to make significantly improved arguments. Nixon's victory helped excite the conservative movement, resulting in a renewed vigor on the Right.

Nixon Kills Fusionism

Despite conservatism's rise in the wake of Nixon's 1968 electoral victory, the president pushed the movement to the political margins beginning in late 1970. Nixon's evolving foreign policy, especially his achievement with the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) and his visit to China, severely hurt conservatives. The movement's philosophy believed that

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[26] Front Page Editorial, "Nixon After One Year: Conservatives Worried," *Human Events*, January 24, 1970: 1(57)

communists only made treaties with the intent to break them, and that communism was a ruthless, diabolical, and expansionistic ideology. Nixon's embrace of détente, which conservatives viewed as an about-face from his campaign promises eventually hurt the rhetorical credibility of ardent anti-communist conservatives.[27]

The bombing of Cambodia and the progress in the SALT negotiations turned 1970 into a pivotal year in altering the Right's relationship with Nixon. In spring 1970, Nixon announced an invasion of Cambodia in an effort to push North Vietnamese troops out of Cambodia. Shortly afterward, rumors began leaking to the public that Nixon and the Soviets made progress at the SALT negotiations taking place in Helsinki. From the beginning, conservatives supported expanding the war into Cambodia and opposed the SALT negotiations. Unfortunately for conservatives, the public opposed the Right on both issue.

The invasion of Cambodia brought Nixon and the conservative movement closer together ideologically. Conservatives rallied in support of Nixon, hoping that this military maneuver would help the U.S. achieve victory. However, in 1970 the public had little appetite for an expansion of the war, leading to a strong public outcry against the Cambodian invasion and a period of renewed anti-war protests by millions of young Americans. These protests helped convince Nixon to reverse course and end the invasion after two months, putting the movement on the defensive concerning Vietnam policy. Furthermore, it angered the movement after Nixon abandoned the policy. By limiting the invasion, Nixon forced the Right to defend the strategy after he disowned the strategy. Additionally, the Right did not anticipate the depth of the public's opposition to the invasion. The movement considered the invasion a smart military maneuver

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[27] Editorial, "This Week's News from Inside Washington: Nixon to Push East-West Trade?" *Human Events*, May 17, 1969: 2(355).

aimed at ending the war more quickly, whereas the public believed it represented an expansion of the war.

Almost immediately after the invasion, the *National Review* reverted to its old forms of conduct and negative self-identity by attacking liberals for dissenting against the Cambodian invasion. In an editorial during the invasion's sixth week, the magazine blamed the Left for caring more "that we should fail in the effort in Asia, if only in order to prove them [the Left] right."[28] Even more disappointing for the movement was that it witnessed no immediate dividends from the invasion. Expanding the war into Cambodia had been a central focus of conservative strategy for several years. Its failure disappointed them, especially coupled with the realities that many Americans vehemently disapproved of the military campaign.

While the nation was in the midst of a heated debate about support for the Cambodian invasion, the Nixon administration made progress in the SALT negotiations. The concept of trusting the Soviet Union to limit its nuclear capabilities infuriated conservatives. They opposed the meetings almost immediately after the talks began. As talks became more serious, conservative opposition became increasingly vocal. With the rise of SALT as a domestic political issue, the movement's focus shifted away from Vietnam. The combination of increasing support for détente and opposition to Vietnam threw the leadership back into the malaise that struck during the Johnson Administration. The movement's leadership believed it held no control over the national political discourse, and it believed the movement could not spread its message or lead the movement effectively.

The first organization to show signs of problems was YAF. In mid 1970, YAF had ample funds while smart and motivated future Republican leaders littered the national board, but the

[28] Editorial, "Cambodia: E-minus-3" *National Review*, June 16, 1970: 600-1.

grassroots membership appeared to be either dying or at least disinterested. Repeated internal YAF documents lamented the decline of the group's grassroots and demonstrated fear for the organization's long-term future. While the loss of libertarians at the 1969 national convention aided in YAF's decline, the national domestic political discourse also presented problems for YAF.[29]

The situation within YAF deteriorated so rapidly that in May 1970, Executive Director Randal Teague, wrote a memo to the National Board of Directors regarding the situation. According to Teague's memo:

> I have never seen, in YAF's entire history, so much that we can capitalize on - e.g., the campus turmoil, the Cambodia issue, etc. The amount of press we have received is substantial. The amount of attention we are getting is great. Membership is soaring because of our position in support of the President's decision to carry out operations against the sanctuaries in Cambodia. Funds are running well ahead of what we had planned for this period of time. Yet we are having substantial problems of motivation among the troops.

Teague pointed out that the political climate should be perfect for YAF to expand into a dominant political force. Instead, he observed a movement which had a disinterested membership, which he feared was hindering the organization's ascension. Teague wondered how a movement which was experiencing near-perfect conditions externally—support for the war, media attention, and funds—could have a disinterested grassroots. He feared what would happen if the external conditions became less favorable, would YAF be able to survive? He proposed several solutions mimicking other efforts that had failed YAF in the past, such as an increased national campaign and "sloganeering."[30] Teague failed to recognize that part of the problem was that YAF was supported a failed war. Vietnam had re-energized the conservative movement

[29] For further information on the loss of libertarians, see Chapter 3.

[30] Memo from Randal Teague to the National Board of Directors, 15 May 1970, Box 2, Folder 3, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

throughout most of 1969. But in the face of the severe opposition to the Cambodian invasion, grassroots members became exhausted with their constant defense of the war. Especially on college campuses, where the majority of YAFers resided, public opposition exploded because of the invasion. This opposition dispirited so many because it served as one of the last major policy changes available (short of using nuclear weapons), and yet still there was little public support.

Within a couple of months of Teague's letter to the National Board, YAF's leadership began debating the possibility that perhaps they should end the organization's long-standing support for the Vietnam War. Board member Jerry Norton was the strongest advocate in favor of opposing the war. Norton based his argument on the belief that the war turned more Americans against conservatism and that it diverted badly needed dollars away from spending on other military projects. The National Board members debated whether the United States would do better to spend money expanding its nuclear arsenal and developing an anti-ballistic missile defense system, instead of defending South Vietnam.[31] The idea of opposing the Vietnam War was not popular among YAF's National Board, but the lively debate within the leadership demonstrates that defending the war exhausted much of the leadership. A minority of National Board members believed that the organization could not expand as long as the war continued. The failed invasion helped initiate a serious debate about the war's aims and costs.

YAF's inability to take advantage of the political circumstances of 1970 demonstrates the limitations of using Vietnam as a recruiting tool for conservatives. YAF was the leading pro-war voice on college campuses, and with the invasion of Cambodia, political discord broke out on campuses nation-wide. If enough supporters of the war existed on campuses, then as Teague

[31] The strongest support for opposing the Vietnam War was written by Jerry Norton:
Norton to Teague, re: A Quiet YAF Withdrawal from Vietnam, 1 October 1970, Box 3, Folder 2, PDP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

suggested, YAF would have expanded and been flush with like-minded and active supporters. The loss of libertarians in 1969 hurt the organization, but its inability to move beyond Vietnam or to create a strong, grassroots, pro-war movement proved fatal.

Although the Vietnam memos were silent about the loss of libertarians, the issue dominated discussions throughout 1969 and 1970. Libertarians walked out of the 1969 national YAF convention because of disputes about the war, which coincided with YAF and the larger movement losing valuable grassroots activists. Additionally, according to historian Jonathan Schoenwald, in 1970 libertarian organizations had strong presences on college campuses, potentially taking both attention and members away from YAF.[32] No doubt this competition against libertarian and anti-war conservative groups accelerated YAF's decline versus other parts of the movement.

Upon his inauguration, conservatives initially looked gleeful at the prospect that Nixon would win the war quickly. His initial Vietnamization plan failed, but then in early 1970 he began following conservative recommendations and expanded the war into Cambodia. With the failure of the invasion, victory appeared unlikely. In an attempt to distract others from the failure to win the war, and in a sign that conservatives were becoming disenchanted with Nixon, conservative magazines and leaders stopped focusing attention on the Vietnam War in autumn 1970. For the first time since Johnson sent troops to Vietnam in 1965, the movement was noticeably silent about the war.

Instead of focusing on Vietnam, opposing SALT took over as the most pressing issue within conservatism. It became the lead story within much of the movement's discourse. Most within the movement showed disappointment with Nixon's support for the SALT. The timing of

[32] Schoenwald, "Vietnam on Campus," 30-40.

the negotiations further angered the Right, as it took place at the same time that the United States could not win a war against communists in Vietnam. Accordingly, the movement increasingly grew disenchanted with the president.

Headlines in the conservative press indicate that the leadership started to fret about Nixon. For the first time since the mid 1960s, conservatives showed serious signs that they did not know how to treat him. *Human Events*, in one of its bluntest articles, begged Nixon to cancel the SALT negotiations with the article: "The Soviets and the 'Era of Negotiation:' It Takes Two to Talk." The article, written by an anonymous freelance author, reminded the audience that: "Confrontation is the only language the expansionist Soviets understand. Negotiation is in fact looked upon by Moscow as a *means* of confrontation."[33] Conservatives had long believed that communists only negotiate in an attempt to disarm the opposition. Thus, Nixon's decision to negotiate arms reduction greatly angered the Right. This article appeared in the middle of a months-long push by *Human Events* to get Nixon to abandon SALT. Post the Cambodian invasion, the magazine stopped focusing on Vietnam and instead alerted its criticisms to Nixon's foreign policy.

Conservative frustration with Nixon increased, and in January 1971 Frank Meyer—using terms normally reserved for liberal Democrats—claimed that the president's policies threatened national security. Meyer declared that the United States needed to spend a "minimum" of $20 billion more per year in military spending in order to retain its "strategic position." Without the additional money, Meyer believed the United States would fall further behind the Soviet Union

[33] John Ligonier, "The Soviets and the 'Era of Negotiation': It Takes Two to Talk," *Human Events*, November 14, 1970: 16(896).
John Ligonier was a pseudonym for a free-lance writer.

in military capabilities, and he blamed Nixon.[34] Conservatism reeled as a Republican president negotiated with the Soviet's and deemphasized military spending, all in the midst of a failing war.

The timing of the SALT negotiations made them particularly difficult for the movement to accept. Libertarians deserted the movement in mass numbers, the Right underwent an ideological transformation (as ideologies often do), but the failure of the Vietnam War and the heating up of the SALT negotiations exacerbated the pains of this change. For six years the war took either a primary or a secondary role for conservatives, and no matter how much they tried to ignore it they could not. Additionally, divisions with libertarians increased about Vietnam, which only helped to exacerbate the problems caused by the war. Nixon appeared as less of a Cold Warrior than Lyndon Johnson was, and the movement did not know how to cope with this betrayal.

With the loss of many libertarians threatening to change the nature of the movement's ideology, the combined effect of the failure of the Cambodian invasion to decisively win the war and Nixon's failure to expand the Cold War hurt conservatives. The movement's leadership became particularly testy towards Nixon. Anti-communism, the one part of fusionism which remained intact throughout the Vietnam War, helped unite many members of the conservative movement. Though, Nixon no longer appeared to share the movement's anticommunist zeal. Conservative leaders grew short-tempered with Nixon.

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[34] Frank Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Mr. Nixon's Course?", *National Review*, January 12, 1971: 86.

China and Abandoning Nixon

In July 1971, Nixon shocked the world with the announcement of a presidential visit to the People's Republic of China, a communist nation with whom the United States had no diplomatic ties. Nixon's visit to China changed the relationship between the presidency and the conservative movement. While having negative consequences on the morale of the movement's leadership, it put the group in an ideological bind. The Republican president, whose election they had supported, planned to recognize a communist government and legitimize the expansion of communism. Recognizing the legitimacy of communism and communist governments went against one of the most important tenets of the conservative ideology.

China, much like Cuba, was a communist country with a particularly symbolic role in conservative politics during the Cold War. In the late 1950s and early 1950s Senator Joseph McCarthy and other Republican anti-communists, including the young Congressman Richard Nixon, blamed President Harry Truman for the loss of China. China had become a political topic that elicited strong emotions, particularly among conservatives. Many conservative leaders, such as Walter Judd, Frank Meyer, and Marvin Liebman remained intimately involved with the Committee of One Million against the admission of Communist China to the United Nations. Many YAF leaders also involved themselves with various anti-China organizations, which culminated in YAF founding the Student Committee for a Free China in the 1960s. Overall, the conservative movement had near unanimity that the United States should not open or maintain diplomatic relations with communist China.

Many conservative leaders believed that the Vietnam War really acted as a proxy battle between the United States and China. Many conservatives thought China provided weapons and

soldiers to the North Vietnamese.[35] Nixon's visit to China represented an about face for U.S. foreign policy, and the conservative response to the president's decision proved visceral. This, combined with the long-standing association between the conservative movement and the anti-China lobby, made it virtually impossible for the Right to support Nixon's visit to China.

The Right's immediate response after Nixon announced his China visit came with a mix of shock and disbelief. Virtually every conservative leader, excluding congressional leaders, spoke passionately against it.[36] Just a few weeks before Nixon's announced visit, both *Human Events* and *National Review* published stories criticizing Nixon's decision not to oppose Red China's admission to the United Nations.[37] The editors were further enraged when they found out that Nixon planned to visit China. The best defense they mused was that perhaps he intended to trade international recognition of China for a strategic advantage in the Vietnam War, though they did not see this scenario as likely. Even if this was Nixon's explanation, they believed it was an uneven trade because international recognition of the communist Chinese government stood as more important than victory in Vietnam.

Grassroots sentiment echoed that of the leadership. Local pamphlets and preachers frequently warned of the Chinese menace. Local YAF chapters held meetings protesting the

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[35] One example is Anthony Harrigan's article where he compared China's secret support for the North Vietnamese to Pearl Harbor: Anthony Harrigan, "Our War With China: In Vietnam & In the UN," *National Review*, March 8, 1966: 204-9.

[36] Congressional conservatives tended to mute their criticism of Nixon, largely because of party loyalty and because Nixon controlled the Republican National Committee, which controlled money flowing to congressional campaigns.

[37] James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict: How to Solve the China Problem," *National Review*, June 29, 1971: 693.
David Brudnoy, "Nixon Risks Losing Conservative Votes on Red China," *Human Events*, May 22, 1971: 9(417).

visit. The Washington D.C. chapter held a protest "ping-pong" tournament in Lafayette Park to oppose all diplomatic relations with China.[38] In short, little support amongst the grassroots flourished for Nixon's decision. Instead of helping restore U.S. honor, conservatives now viewed him as a traitor.

Within a month of Nixon's decision to visit China, the conservative leadership spoke in a unanimous and stern voice to oppose his presidency. In August 1971, leaders from most of the major conservative organizations signed a unified declaration removing their support for his administration. Leaders of the American Conservative Union, YAF, *National Review*, *Human Events*, the New York State Conservative Party, the Conservative Book Club, and the American Security Council all signed the declaration censuring Nixon. Although they mentioned their disapproval of many of his domestic spending projects, this was not their problem with Nixon. Their primary bugaboo stood with his foreign policy. They faulted him for his failure to be a strong commander of the U.S. armed forces during the Cold War. Specifically, his decision to visit China and, "*above all*, his failure to call public attention to the deteriorated American military position in conventional and strategic arms… which can lead to the loss of our deterrent capability."[39] Nixon's foreign policy ideals, which revolved around accepting a détente with communism, lost him the respect of the conservative movement.

The Nixon White House kept abreast on what outsiders said about the administration, including paying attention to the Right's views. Internal memos indicate that Nixon carefully

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[38] Ping-pong was particularly symbolic because the U.S. and Chinese national ping-pong teams played one-another in an attempt to demonstrate the warming relations between the two nations. DC YAF Pamphlet, Box 340, Young Americans for Freedom Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[39] Taken from an advertisement announcement placed in *National Review*.
"A Declaration," *National Review*, August 10, 1971: 842.

watched the conservative press and constantly tried to anticipate its response to his decisions. He also tried to cultivate closer ties with them. These actions resulted in a series of articles in *Human Events* in 1970 about the conservatives whom Nixon employed.[40] In mid 1971, shortly before his China announcement, he asked National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger to sit down with friend Bill Buckley to convince him to support the SALT negotiations.[41] Following the meeting Buckley refused to either endorse or denounce SALT, but the rest of the *National Review* editorial board remained antagonistic toward the talks.[42] Despite Nixon's best attempts to court leading conservatives, he failed. Instead of commending the president, the Right's leadership attempted to use ardent anti-communism to unify in opposition of Nixon.

The split from Nixon wound up hurting conservatism. There is much evidence suggesting that while grassroots conservatives disapproved of the China visit, they continued to have faith in Nixon. Instead of opposing the president, they turned against the conservative leadership. Their disenchantment with the Right's leadership further divided the movement. Much like in the final days of Johnson's presidency, the movement struggled with infighting. Following the announcement that they no longer endorsed Nixon, letters poured into both the *National Review* and *Human Events* offices arguing in support of the president. Feelings intensified so much that

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[40] "This Week's News from Inside Washington: Conservatives in the White House," *Human Events*, April 4, 1970: 5(253).

[41] Memo from Haldeman to Kissinger 8 June 1971, Box 81, Folder 2, HR Haldeman Papers, Richard Nixon Presidential Papers, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

[42] Through a close reading of Buckley and Kissinger's personal correspondence, Buckley had a life-long admiration for Kissinger, even when the two disagreed on final policy decisions, such as the visit to China.

National Review received more letters regarding its anti-Nixon stance than any other issue in 1971. The topic elicited much impassioned responses from within the conservative community.[43]

Both magazines publicly addressed the issue of readership dissent, though *Human Events* put a far more positive spin on it. In an August 1971 column the magazine's editors acknowledged that "some" readers "vigorously disagree" with its anti-Nixon stance, however, they concluded that "we feel certain the majority will be in accord with this decision."[44] This hypothesis proved untrue as many grassroots supporters put their faith in their president. The bombardment of anti-Nixon rhetoric coming from conservative intellectual leaders did little to make the grassroots disown him.[45]

Nixon's commitment to SALT, his China visit, and the failure of the Cambodian invasion raged as political problems for the conservative movement. At the same time, conservatives began to recognize that Vietnamization was failing and that the United States could not find a foreseeable win in the Vietnam War.[46] Foreign policy and anti-communism propelled the movement's ideology during the 1960s, and at this time conservatives found themselves unable to affect their own president's foreign policies.

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[43] One example comes from the Russell J. Fuhrman to Buckley, 5 March 1972, Personal Correspondence, WBP, Yale University.

[44] Front Page Editorial, "Leading Conservatives 'Suspend Support' of Nixon," *Human Events*, August 7, 1971: 1(593).

[45] Most likely this was because Nixon's prestige as president was greater than the prestige of editing a magazine or appearing on a television show (such as Buckley did).

[46] By early 1972, articles within the conservative press began appearing such as: James Burnham, "The Protracted Conflict: I'll Tell You a Secret," *National Review*, February 18, 1972: 144.
This article explained why the U.S. was about to lose the Vietnam War.

The disgust within the movement's leadership toward Nixon boiled over so that they relished the chance to challenge his re-nomination in 1972. The first sign that conservatives would revolt against Nixon in the election came during YAF's 1971 national convention. At the convention, YAF voted to endorse a presidential ticket of Vice-President Spiro Agnew and Governor Ronald Reagan.[47] By January 1972, the movement's leadership followed YAF as it moved further away from the standing president.

Approximately two months before the New Hampshire primary, Representative John Ashbrook, the former president of the American Conservative Union, announced his candidacy for president in the New Hampshire Republican primary. Ashbrook's main complaints against Nixon were both foreign policy and with Nixon's handling of the Vietnam War. Ashbrook's candidacy represented the conservative movement's challenge to Nixon in the 1972 primaries. Few outside of the movement's leadership knew Ashbrook, which severely limited his campaign. As a four-term Congressman from northeastern Ohio, Ashbrook stood virtually no chance of winning a party primary against a popular incumbent president. Even with this knowledge, most conservative organizations endorsed Ashbrook. He immediately became the darling of the conservative press, with many conservative leaders hoping that perhaps Ashbrook's campaign could force Nixon to adopt more conservative principles.

The Ashbrook endorsements only helped to propel a larger split between the movement's leadership and its grassroots, as many conservatives became angry with their leaders for the delusional and hubris nature of their endorsement of Ashbrook.[48] The

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[47] Molly Ivines, "The Observer Goes to a YAF Convention," *The Texas Observer*, 24 Sept 1971, Box 340, Young Americans for Freedom (magazine and clippings) Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[48] One example is: Letter from Rusher to Frank Masland, 4 February 1972, Box 57, Folder 3,

conservative grassroots never rallied around him, and Republican voters never took to him either. In the end, after entering primaries in three states, Ashbrook failed to garner more than 10% of the Republican vote. He barely received twice as many primary votes as anti-war candidate Representative Pete McCloskey. The conservative media spent nearly two consecutive months advancing Ashbrook's cause, only to see him roundly defeated by Nixon. This sharply contrasts to 1964, when conservatives upset the GOP establishment and captured the primary victory for Barry Goldwater. They failed horribly to pull off a similar victory for Ashbrook eight years later.

Following the 1972 national conventions, the movement's leadership reluctantly endorsed Nixon, but they did so because of his opponent Democratic Senator George McGovern. McGovern won the Democratic primary largely on the support of a large coalition of New Left supporters. Conservatives feared the consequences of a McGovern victory, considering he garnered a large amount of support from groups such as Hippies, women's liberationists, civil rights activists, and the anti-war movement. Conservatives spent half a decade identifying themselves as the antithesis of this New Left movement, and suddenly Nixon's opponent was the candidate *du jure* of the New Left.

Despite McGovern's liberal coalition, many conservatives supported the idea of abstaining from voting. William Rusher, publisher of the *National Review*, wrote to a friend in August 1972 that a Nixon victory would be bad for the nation since: "Nixon is nothing more than a tidy-looking screen behind which the collapse of the American society can (and does) continue without anyone being required to notice it."[49] Others debated this point, believing that McGovern

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WRP, Library of Congress.

[49] Letter from Rusher to Ted Robertson, 15 August 1972, Box 76, Folder 10, WRP, Library of

represented the worst possible outcome for the nation. Ironically, John Ashbrook was one of the few conservatives to publicly endorse Nixon in the general election, largely because Nixon promised not to prematurely end the Vietnam War. Long after Ashbrook withdrew as a presidential candidate, he announced his reluctant support for Nixon. He based his support on the presumption that the Democratic alternative would be "even worse" for the country than Nixon.[50]

A poem published in *National* Review in October 1972 best summarizes the conservative view of the election:

> I sign for the days of McCarthy
> (The knowing will know I mean Joe),
> When Nixon was poison to Harry
> And Hiss was securely in tow.
> How sweet to recall the revulsion
> When Helen Gahagan got hers;
> When checkers was more than a pastime
> And Adams was smothered in furs.
> I *liked* him ascending from manholes
> Or selling a second-hand heap.
> The most I can manage today is,
> He's better than Little Bo-Peep.[51]

The poem demonstrates a longing for the days when Nixon ardently opposed communism, following in the footsteps of Senator Joe McCarthy. Most importantly, it indicates the fear of Nixon losing to "Little Bo-Peep" (McGovern). Conservatives held their noses while voting for their sitting president, whom they had disavowed a year earlier. The movement was lost as it

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Congress.

[50] Editorial, "This Week's News from Inside of Washington: Ashbrook's Reluctant Vote for Nixon," *Human Events*, September 2, 1972: 5(629).

[51] W. H. von Dreele, Poem: "I Remember Nixon," *National Review*, October 13, 1972: 1102

failed to substantially change the national political discourse in the months leading up to the election.

Ending the War in Vietnam

Throughout the election, the only issue where conservatives continued to support Nixon concerned Vietnam. Nixon's reluctance to concede the war gave them hope that he would renew the war effort in his second term.[52] Despite fear he would fail, they still constantly gave him advice on the war. The combination of Nixon's continued prosecution of the war, coupled with the fear that McGovern would quickly remove all combat troops if he won the presidency, kept conservatives reluctantly tied to Nixon throughout the campaign.

Shortly before the November election, National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger announced a breakthrough in the Paris Peace talks and proclaimed "peace is at hand."[53] Until that point, Kissinger had a poor rapport with conservative leaders. Outside of *National Review* editors, notably William F. Buckely who was very friendly toward Kissinger, most on the Right disliked and distrusted him.[54] In one survey of the Conservative Book Club members, Kissinger's favorability ranking was slightly above that of Walter Cronkite, whom conservatives

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[52] One instance of conservatives supporting Nixon's strong pro-war policy is: "This Week's News from Inside Washington: How Nixon Can Make Vietnamization Work," *Human Events*, May 13, 1972: 3(355).

This belief held true even after the election, an example of that is: Front Page Editorial, "Last Chance for Tough Viet Agreement," *Human Events*, November 25, 1972: 1(889).

[53] Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 459.

[54] Buckley's support for Kissinger was based partially in personal admiration for Kissinger and his academic background, though the two had frequent policy disputes. Source: Personal Correspondence, Henry Kissinger Folder, WBP, Yale University.

believed was a liberal propagandist, and moderate Republican George Romney.[55] Conservatives distrusted Kissinger largely because he was quick to offer concessions to the Soviet Union, and conservatives disapproved of all treaties with the Soviets. In one instance, William Loeb, publisher of the *Manchester Union Leader*, wrote to pundit Elizabeth Churchill Brown, that he could not believe that Nixon relied on Kissinger. Frustrated by Kissinger's continued influence on Nixon, Loeb wrote: "I don't see how the President didn't recognize this fellow for the phoney [sic] he is from the moment he saw him. And to think that this charlatan is the Preisdent's right hand!"[56] In short, the Right believed that Kissinger was a bad influence on Nixon's foreign policy.

When Kissinger announced that the U.S. and North Vietnam were nearing a peace treaty, this worried many on the Right. Conservatives initially raised a skeptical eye to this claim, but they did not immediately attack the proposed deal. They would have accepted a cessation of fighting if it brought about a safe, secure, and non-communist South Vietnam. Despite their wishes that the war end, they doubted that Kissinger was acting as an honest peace broker. They noted his poor "track record in standing up to the Communists," as one of the reasons why they believed his peace proposal might hurt the South Vietnamese. The terms of the peace agreement remained secret, and thus, despite their skepticism, conservatives refused to oppose it outright.[57]

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[55] Romney and the Right had an especially tense relationship because he attempted some last-minute maneuvers to keep Goldwater from winning the 1964 primary.
Survey from: Membership Survey of Conservative Book Club, 1969, Box 368, Conservative Book Club Folder, GRP, Columbia University.

[56] Letter from Loeb to Brown, 16 February 1971, Box 2, Folder 24, Elizabeth Churchill Brown Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[57] Front Page Editorial, "Will Kissinger's Secret Diplomacy Undermine Saigon? Asian Experts Concerned," *Human Events*, October 21, 1972: 1(769).

By the time details of the peace plan leaked to the public, Nixon had already won re-election. Immediately after his victory, conservatives implored him to re-open negotiations with the North Vietnamese and gain more favorable terms. Reverend Daniel Lyons, who had previously been an enthusiastic supporter of Nixon's Vietnamization, suddenly turned very sour. Lyons re-appeared on Manion's radio program to complain that the proposed peace accord conceding defeat. He accused Kissinger of signing a peace accord solely to make himself look good in the public spotlight. Lyons believed that the United States could achieve victory, and he argued that Nixon and Kissinger threw that possibility away.[58] A great deal of conservative literature agreed with Lyons's perspective on the imperfectability of the peace accords.

Regardless of conservative opposition, in January 1973 Richard Nixon signed the Paris Peace Accords and the United States ceased military operations in South Vietnam. With that signature, Nixon managed to hurt the conservative movement, disagreeing with them on almost every major foreign policy decision of his presidency. The movement's ideology required a strong adherence to foreign policy and anti-communism, and yet a Republican president who received their support was uninterested in supporting their foreign policy goals.

A few weeks after Nixon signed the peace accords, William Rusher wrote a memo to the *National Review*'s editorial staff complaining about the effects of Nixon's policies on the conservative movement. In this memo, Rusher wrote: "Nixon's ambiguity, not to say double-jointedness, is currently preventing conservatives from sounding like their old, once-confident selves."[59] Rusher outlined his distaste for Nixon and his policies. Additionally, Rusher blamed

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[58] Daniel Lyons, "Man On The Go: Expert On Southeast Asia Prospects For Peace Now," *Manion Forums,* 24 December 1972, Box 84, Folder 4, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[59] Rusher to Buckley, 21 February 1973, Inter-Office Memos 1973, WBP, Yale University.

Nixon for the discord in conservatism.

Others agreed with Rusher that Nixon caused problems for the movement. Neil McCaffrey, president of the Conservative Book Club, wrote panicked letters to Rusher and others proposing the theory that Nixon's defeat in 1972 (even to the likes of McGovern) would be far more beneficial to the movement than another four years of Nixon in the White House. McCaffrey believed that the conservative leadership would only be able to regroup once Nixon left the White House. Accordingly, even if McGovern turned out to be a terrible president, he would at least create a window of opportunity for conservatives to unite and recapture the political offensive and reshape the American political system.[60]

While Rusher and the *National Review* discussed the negative effects of Nixon on the movement, Jeffrey Bell—formerly of the American Conservative Union—wrote an article for *Human Events* calling Nixon's first term "the most politically unpleasant" Bell had suffered. Like Rusher, McCaffrey, and several others, Bell placed the movement's problems on Nixon's shoulders and not with the movement's leadership or ideology.

However, the weak grassroots support for Ashbrook's campaign demonstrates that Nixon remained popular with many conservatives. Additionally, conservative grassroots activists focused more attention on opposing the New Left than on protesting Nixon's policies. A disconnect appeared between the grassroots sentiment toward Nixon and the disdain of the movement's leadership to Nixon. Rusher admitted as much during a post-election analysis of Nixon's strategy. Rusher believed that Nixon drew distinctions between issues that the "Archie Bunker" conservatives considered important, namely: "busing, abortion, amnesty and the Supreme Court," and the issues that intellectual conservative journals of opinion found

[60] McCaffrey to Rusher, 17 July 1972, Box 57, Folder 7, WRP, Library of Congress.

important. Rusher and the intellectual conservatives cared more about "wage and price controls, Red China policy, SALT agreements, etc." These moral issues helped galvanize the New Right in the late 1970s. The difference between the elite and grassroots indicates the tension in the movement.[61]

The split between the intellectual elite and the "Archie Bunker" type of conservatives was real and it demonstrates what issues mattered to whom. The grassroots had started to care more about domestic moral issues than about foreign policy, especially Southern grassroots conservatives. For the first time in the Vietnam War era, parts of the conservative coalition began to focus more on domestic and moral issues than on foreign policy and anti-communism. Without the leadership's help, the movement's discourse changed.

Because of the changing attitudes of the grassroots, many within the conservative leadership, including Rusher, should have been happier with the end of the Vietnam War. The same week that Nixon signed the Paris Peace Accords, the Supreme Course handed down its infamous *Roe V. Wade* decision. American political discourse responded by focusing on abortion far more extensively than at any previous period. For once there was an obvious "Archie Bunker" issue for the conservative leadership to write about and support. Without the distraction of the Vietnam War at hand, the conservative movement could focus more attention on the social and moral issues of the day.

In Jeffrey Bell's unusually long four-page article in *Human Events*, he concluded with a call to optimism. He reminded his readers that the long-term prognosis for the movement remained positive and that conservatives must begin focusing on the opportunities presented to them. What Bell did not recognize at the time was that the conclusion of the Vietnam War served

[61] Rusher to Priscilla Buckley, 17 November 1972, Box 123, Folder 3, WRP, Library of Congress.

as the best opportunity available to conservatives. Libertarians had disagreed with the war. Many conservatives had lost faith in the war. Some organizations had stopped growing because of popular opposition to the war. Overall, Vietnam no longer served conservatism well. Nixon's ending the prolonged conflict provided a new set of opportunities for conservatives nation-wide.

Conclusion:
The Birth of the New Right

The Vietnam War changed the political culture of the United States. Throughout the war, American military and political leaders promised that the U.S. was winning the war. Despite their assurances, after ten years of fighting, bloodshed, and domestic turmoil, South Vietnam fell to communism. Neither the United States nor the conservative movement was the same. The movement's leadership failed to lead the grassroots and create a positive, pro-active conservative agenda throughout the war. However, when the war ended, conservatives were able to grow their ideology, allowing the movement to expand. In the mid 1970s, Americans witnessed the revival of conservatism; its ideology was more robust, with a more complicated domestic policy agenda and a new figurehead. Governor Ronald Reagan and his presidential campaigns of 1976 and 1980 led the rebirth of conservatism. Reagan replaced Senator Barry Goldwater as the leading elected conservative official. With a new figurehead and new ideas, the New Right was born.

Supporting the war created divisions within the movement. Anti-war libertarians became increasingly vocal in their opposition to the war, and by 1969 they were rapidly exiting the movement. Libertarians were leaving to join the New Left movement, which was a movement that the majority of conservatives viewed with contempt and hatred. Additional tensions arose when conservative leaders, frustrated by Richard Nixon's war strategy and his détente policies, supported Representative John Ashbrook in his short-lived presidential campaign. Many grassroots conservatives remained loyal to the Republican president, creating further divides within the Right.

The trauma and problems derived from supporting the Vietnam War created a unique opportunity for the movement to grow and develop into the New Right movement and to usher in Ronald Reagan as president. Throughout the war, conservatives were searching for a new, unifying ideology which could help revitalize their movement. As the U.S. signed the Paris Peace Accords in 1973, the national political no longer focused on the war, forcing the Right to concentrate on other issues. Other issues included a more religious-based conservatism, especially in the wake of the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973. The New Right was the new political movement that sprang up in the mid 1970s, almost immediately after the Vietnam War ended, and it helped lead Ronald Reagan to the White House.

In order to fully understand the birth of the New Right in U.S. history, it is necessary to study the effects of the Vietnam War on the conservative movement. Supporting the war created divisions and rivalries within the Right. These divisions hindered the movement's growth throughout the war, but following the war's conclusion they also led to the birth of the New Right. Contemporary conservatism has its roots in the clash surrounding the Vietnam War, as the war had an impact on the movement long after the United States signed the Paris Peace Accords.

Early Support

Lost among the post-Vietnam historiography is that in 1964, the conservative movement was not convinced that the war was worth fighting. At the time there were many within the movement's leadership and grassroots who questioned the purpose of fighting a land war in a relatively small and otherwise unimportant East Asian nation. Some conservative leaders, notably Marvin Liebman, promoted a campaign in early 1964 asking President Lyndon Johnson

to stop sending U.S. troops to Vietnam unless there was a real effort "to win" the war.[1] Liebman's campaign was the culmination of several years' worth of efforts to either get the United States government to take the fighting seriously or withdraw and concede South Vietnam to the communists. These conservatives believed that if the U.S. was not willing to put in sufficient effort to achieve victory, it made more sense to withdraw and conserve resources for alternative battles. They did not believe that the fighting in Vietnam would decide the outcome of the Cold War. They also recognized that, unless Johnson was willing to radically increase U.S. military presence there, then it was not worth the loss of life. The period before 1965, when many within the movement did not embrace a stronger war effort, is important in order to fully understand the conservative movement's relationship with the Vietnam War.

Following Johnson's crushing defeat of Goldwater in November 1964, conservative leaders focused their energies on improving grassroots morale and finding an issue to rally behind, and the Vietnam War was an easy choice. The war provided them with an issue that was easy to understand—supporting a war—with a clear, simple, and patriotic message. Additionally, the communist North Vietnamese fighters provided a readily identifiable boogieman. The presence of communist aggressors (which is how the Right portrayed the North Vietnamese) was an added benefit because anti-communism served to unite the fusionism coalition in the early 1960s.

Once the president began a war against a communist nation, the anti-communist instincts within the movement compelled conservatives to support the war effort. As James Burnham wrote in March 1965, Vietnam became an important Cold War battleground "because so many

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[1] William F. Buckley, "On the Right: Time to Move On," *The George Mathew Adams Service, Inc*, 16 May 1964, On the Right 1964 Folder, WBP, Yale University.

people think it so."[2] He believed that Vietnam's importance was a self-fulfilling prophecy, that the more people who supported it, the more important it was. Prior to Johnson's expansion of the war, Vietnam held no real significance within the greater Cold War struggle. Conservatives believed that the United States put its reputation on the line with the introduction of a large quantity of troops into the Southeast Asian nation. At that point, Vietnam was an important war to most conservatives. Speaking for many within the movement, Burnham believed that once the United States entered a meaningful fight it could neither back down nor surrender.

By 1965, as Johnson rapidly expanded the war, conservatives were some of the leading proponents of a greater war effort. By the end of the year they were urging Johnson to allow the U.S. military to expand the bombing campaign and to end the policy of not bombing civilian sanctuaries, which limited bombing targets. Additionally, they argued for the expansion of the war into Cambodia and Laos, and the mining of Haiphong Harbor. Some conservatives also wanted the U.S. to use atomic weapons against the North Vietnamese to demonstrate resolve. Within a few months of Johnson's expansion of the war, conservatives were some of the most ardent pro-war supporters. They were also very harsh critics of the methods employed by Johnson and the military. The Right believed that the United States should only fight the war if it intended to win, and it did not believe the methods Johnson employed would achieve victory. That Johnson was employing inadequate strategies served to increase conservative anger. The Right did not want to support this war in 1964, largely because it believed that the U.S. would not fight to win. Now the movement's prediction was coming true, yet it felt compelled to endorse the war.

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[2] James Burnham, "The Third World War: While in That Corner," *National Review*, March 9, 1965: 186.

Aside from attacking Johnson's military strategy, the movement spent much of the early Vietnam War years (1965-68) re-evaluating its own internal identity. It had to deal with the political reality that Johnson defeated Goldwater, the first major-party candidate to run for president as a conservative in the post-World War II era, by a record margin. Complicating matters was the escalation of the Vietnam War throughout the post-election period. Conservatives needed to simultaneously expand its political appeal, resolve internal disputes, while also supporting a new war on foreign soil. This combination proved increasingly difficult as the war became unpopular.

The conservative ideology of the early Vietnam War years was a new, populist, grassroots-based version of the conservative ideology. This populist conservatism was strongly rooted in an anti-liberalism identity. This new conservatism was a response to the liberalism and military strategy of the Johnson Administration. The Right stood against almost every liberal policy and organization, without offering proscriptive policy solutions to the problems facing society. The theme of opposing the New Left and various liberal organizations dominated the literature during this period. Rage and hate were more common within the movement than policy and pragmatism.

Conservatives were angry at the national political climate. The movement found it difficult to overcome the circumstances of being in the political minority. Liberals controlled all three branches of government (conservatives believed that even the Supreme Court leaned heavily liberal during this period), and conservatives were forced to fight to retain control of the Republican Party.[3] Under siege, conservatives simplified their ideology so that they no longer

[3] As described in chapter four, conservatives were fighting with moderate Republicans for control of the party. Others have also covered this topic in more depth, including: Brennan, *Turning Right*; Critchlow, *Schlafly*; Critchlow, *Conservative Ascendancy*; Dallek, *Right Moment*;

defined themselves by how they were going to change government and instead by how they opposed its growth. The only government policy they supported was an aggressive Vietnam campaign. Even this related to an anti-liberalism identity since the New Left was the catalyst behind the anti-war movement.

Hatred of the Left helped excite grassroots supporters. Average, grassroots conservatives during the 1960s were engaged and angry about politics. During this period there was a boom in a populist variant of conservatism. This was the period when YAF was at its peak in terms of both visibility and membership. YAF represented the most prominent cadre organization, and it engaged the base of the national conservative movement. Its ability to grow during this period demonstrates that this negative self-identity resonated with the grassroots.

YAF's strategy of frequently running counter-protests helped the organization grow. The strategy allowed YAF to feed off the anger at the grassroots and to retain support among average activists. Many YAFers bonded around their status in the political minority, their shared experiences helped them identify as a politically oppressed group. The New Left grew stronger throughout the period as it staged larger, more vibrant protests. This provided easy targets for conservatives to rally against and to establish the grassroots as a more unified, anti-New Left movement.

The grassroots embraced the fight against liberalism. This fight hurt the movement, as in the late 1960s there was a dearth of new intellectual ideas. Without new ideas, the movement's political prominence did not grow substantially. This was largely because conservatives accepted a populist-based anti-liberalism identity, which included advocating for a stronger Vietnam

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Gifford, *Center*; McGirr, *Suburban Warriors*; John Micklethwait, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).

strategy. Supporting the war and opposing the Left helped keep the Right engaged in politics and kept the movement from dissolving, but it also did not help the movement gain support among a larger share of the population.

The conservative leadership was often distraught with the movement's anti-New Left identity and its lack of ingenuity. This identity represented a rising populist streak within the movement, and the leadership was not comfortable with that, largely because they believed it accented the negative rather than positively pursued solutions for society's problems. From 1965 through 1968 conservative leaders repeatedly wrote about problems within their own movement. Many used the term malaise to describe what was happening within their movement. They believed that without any new ideas, they were set for extinction. In 1966, Neil McCaffrey called the *National Review* and fusionism a "failure" because it was unable to push forward with new ideas following Goldwater's defeat.[4] Frank Meyer echoed McCaffrey's sentiment, when he called on the American Conservative Union to sponsor a conference to address the "crisis in the conservative movement."[5] Even organizations that financially thrived during this period, such as YAF, experienced an over-zealous focus on liberalism and Vietnam. From 1965-68, many major organizations expressed fears that without a positive issue to advocate, the movement would become politically unstable.

To jumpstart conservatism out of its malaise, the movement's leadership discussed starting several new campaigns to rally the grassroots. They looked for a magic bullet, a single

[4] Memo from Neil McCaffrey to Buckley, William Rusher and Jim McFadden, 19 April 1966, Inter-Office Memos 1966, WBP, Yale University.

[5] Memo from Meyer to Directors of the American Conservative Union, Re: "Proposed Conference," 11 September 1965, Box 58, Folder 3, MLP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

issue campaign which could change the national political discourse. Goldwater proposed ending federal control over national parks and the American Conservative Union proposed ending the U.S. Postal Service's monopoly over mail delivery.[6] Both proposals were serious conservative ideas put forward to help revitalize the movement. The problem is that both proposals were essentially dead on arrival because they were not issues that could sustain a large national campaign, without which the leadership on the Right felt deflated.

Nixon Divides the Right

The 1968 presidential election ignited change in the movement. Nixon's electoral victory altered the way the country viewed the war, how the U.S. fought the war, and it temporarily reversed the political marginalization of conservatism. After Nixon's inauguration in January 1969, the movement became far more upbeat about the prospects for victory in Vietnam. Throughout the movement, there was the belief that Nixon had a plan for victory and that he would lead an aggressive war strategy, unlike Johnson. However, Nixon quickly disappointed the leadership while retaining the general support from the grassroots. Nixon's early pronouncements that he would only accept "peace with honor" gave many conservatives hope, and the grassroots never lost faith in Nixon's abilities to achieve peace. However, Vietnamization quickly disenchanted the movement's leadership.

Nixon expanded the war by bombing more targets than did Johnson, but he quickly began decreasing the number of American soldiers fighting. As a nod to the popular anti-war sentiment, Nixon began withdrawing troops almost immediately, causing concern among several

[6] Goldwater to Dr. Glen Campbell (Director of Hoover Institute), 5 July 1967, Box 336, Folder 6, Roger Freeman Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

conservatives. In *Human Events*, retired general Thomas Lane questioned why Nixon removed troops and what his ultimate goal was. Lane argued that removing troops would make it more difficult for the United States to negotiate a peace treaty with the North Vietnamese, and that the troop withdrawal would eventually hinder the military.[7] There was a general sense of distrust toward Nixon as the Right's leaders questioned whether he was more concerned with domestic popularity or sound military strategy.[8] Despite their wariness, in 1969 most conservatives remained cautiously supportive of Nixon's plan, wishfully thinking that he was going to win the war.

Victory in Vietnam was one of the most important goals to almost every conservative. Before Nixon's election, a war fatigue settled in at the elite level, and with Nixon's election they hoped that he would win the war so that conservatives could begin to reshape society. However, they understood that as long as the war continued, the public would remain divided. For conservatism to flourish, Nixon needed to win the war.

By 1970 the Right's leaders increased their agitation for a more pro-active war strategy and began questioning whether Nixon was going to have more success than his predecessor did. In June 1970, conservative radio commentator Dr. W.S. McBirnie told his audience that his greatest fear was that Nixon would end the war too soon and before the United States achieved total victory. McBirnie believed that the United States needed to fully invade and destroy North Vietnamese troops in Cambodia who were going across the Cambodian-South Vietnamese

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[7] General Thomas Lane, "War Requires More Than Troop Withdrawal," *Human Events*, June 21, 1969: 1.

[8] One example of the distrust between the Right and Nixon is: Christopher Emmet to Mildred Levy, July 1968, Box 85, Folder 28, Christopher Emmet Papers, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

border and attacking U.S. troops. At one point in his radio address, McBirnie invoked the memory of General George Patton, whom he believed: "would have cranked up his tanks and rolled through North Vietnam in a week."[9] Although McBirnie was an extreme anti-communist, more so than many other conservatives, his thoughts on this matter spoke for much of the movement. The rest of the movement's discourse makes it clear that they wanted to see a more aggressive strategy used by Nixon to fight and win the war.

Nixon's overall strategy frustrated the leadership. It feared that Nixon was not sufficiently committed to winning the war. The movement also opposed his gradual troop withdrawals. Complicating the situation for the Right, many within the leadership supported his expansion of the war into Laos and Cambodia. After Nixon announced the Laotian campaign, former congressional representative Walter Judd wrote to Nixon to congratulate him on fighting the war "intelligently and successfully" and because Nixon was finally changing his predecessor's policy of fighting "endlessly and fruitlessly."[10] By 1971, there was a consensus within the elite that the war needed to end quickly, and that Nixon needed to expand the war in order to win it. Judd's letter to Nixon echoed the Right's discourse that it was time to get tough on North Vietnam.

Throughout the war's last four years, from 1969-73, Nixon vacillated between the war strategies of rapid expansion followed by disengagement and dramatic peace overtures. Nixon's strategy was essentially to inflict maximum damage so that North Vietnam had no choice but to surrender and end the war. But he kept a constant watch on public opinion, and liberal protests

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[9] Dr. W. S. McBirnie, "A Heart-to-Heart Letter from Dr. McBirnie," *Dr. McBirnie Newsletter*, June 1970, Box 34, Folder 1, RRP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

[10] Telegram from Walter Judd to Nixon, 26 March 1971, Box 31, Folder 16, WJP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

made it difficult for him to aggressively expand the conflict for a long period, hindering his ability to wage an overly destructive strategy. Nixon felt he was unable to fight as aggressively as he wanted. Because of that, his war policies often disappointed the conservative elite.

Aside from the Vietnam War, the other two major decisions that upset the elite were Nixon's visit to China and the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) signed with the Soviet Union. The elite believed both policies weakened the U.S. strategic position in the Cold War. They believed that both policies required the U.S. to make concessions without reciprocation by China and Russia. The elite disagreed with the underlying principles of détente and neo-conservatism, which strove for improved relations with communist nations.

In 1972, Representative John Ashbrook challenged Nixon in the Republican primary. The Right's leadership consolidated its support for Ashbrook against Nixon. Ashbrook was a little-known conservative congressional representative and an active leader of the American Conservative Union. He quickly became the political darling of the leadership when he ran against Nixon for the Republican Presidential nomination. The elite hoped that this would either help defeat Nixon, or at least push him to the right, making him a genuine conservative. Unfortunately for them, Nixon did not intend to become the conservative mantle-holder. He witnessed Goldwater's defeat in 1964, and Nixon refused to repeat that political mistake. Additionally, Nixon was never an ardent conservative. Ideologically his domestic policy was centrist and his foreign policy included support for détente and a neo-conservative approach to foreign policy that included a large element of *realpolitik*. Appeasing the Right's leaders was not a sufficient reason for Nixon to change his ideology. Once the Democratic Party nominated Senator George McGovern, a liberal politician, as his general election opponent, Nixon believed

that he needed to become more moderate, not more conservative in order to win the general election.

In addition to attempting to push Nixon further to the Right, the decision to oppose Nixon and support Ashbrook's candidacy backfired because the grassroots never bought into the plan. Even with complete support, it would have been difficult for the leadership to defeat Nixon or change his political ideology, but without their support it was impossible. The majority of the grassroots were loyal to the sitting president. They were happy that Nixon talked like a conservative and that he promised not to give up on either the Vietnam War or the fight against liberalism. The conservative grassroots never expressed any interest in disowning Nixon. The few letters kept by the conservative organizations, and the few polls of the era that explicitly cover the topic of the Right's relationship with Nixon, indicates he retained their support throughout the early 1970s.[11]

Despite the problems registered amongst the elite against Nixon and his plans, there was a large contingent of the grassroots supporters who never lost faith in him. This segment of the conservative movement remained supportive of Nixon, largely because he was a Republican president who frequently discussed the threat posed by international communism. The grassroots looked forward to supporting a president who was one of their own, and they were willing to give Nixon the benefit of the doubt. As long as his intentions remained noble, they did not lose faith in his execution.

[11] The letters came from the *National Review* files located at Yale University in William F. Buckley's papers and at the Library of Congress in William Rusher's papers. Additionally, there are many letter scattered throughout the Hoover Institute and at the Chicago Historical Society in Clarence Manion's papers.

Following the 1972 presidential election, William Rusher, the publisher of the *National Review*, wrote a letter to a member of the editorial board. He wrote:

> I am struck by the rather careful distinction Nixon seems to have made, over the past two years, in determining which conservative positions he would endorse and which he would jettison. He seems to have remained solidly, almost noisily conservative on what might be called the Archie Bunker issues - ie, those which were visible and disturbing to lowbrow conservatives: busing, abortion, amnesty and the Supreme Court. On the other hand, he has been much more cavalier in the matter of issues that the 'Archie Bunker' types could be dependent upon to disregard, but which preoccupy (for example) small journals of conservative opinion: wage and price controls, Red China policy, SALT agreements etc.[12]

Rusher astutely described Nixon's strategy. Nixon rallied the grassroots Right by focusing his domestic rhetoric toward topics of interest to the grassroots. Nixon's neo-conservatism allowed him to portray himself as an anti-communist foreign policy hawk while also negotiating foreign treaties with communist nations. Certainly many grassroots conservatives disapproved of Nixon's foreign policy, but as long as he had a large focus on his strident anti-liberalism rhetoric he retained the support of the grassroots. This helps explain why Ashbrook's candidacy failed to take root in any meaningful way.

The grassroots responded viscerally to foreign policy events, disagreeing with communism rather than debating more nuanced foreign policy strategies. Although the grassroots disapproved of détente, they put faith in Nixon that he would not make any major decisions without wringing concessions from the communists. They allowed Nixon leeway partially because of his reputation as an ardent anti-communist. Although there were many who questioned individual moves, as a whole, they did not appear to turn against Nixon. He retained

[12] Memo from Rusher to Priscilla Buckley, 17 November 1972, Box 123, Folder 3, WRP, Library of Congress.

support even as he announced his visit to China in 1971, which was the decision least supported by the Right. Still, he had many supporters and defenders from conservative movement activists.

War Causing Fissures

Part of the reason why Nixon was able to drive a wedge within the movement was because he implicitly understood the changes taking place within the Right's grassroots. The Vietnam War changed the conservative movement's coalition, but the elite did not fully accept these changes. The movement retained its anti-communist ideology, but the remainder of its ideology fluctuated during this era, and the elite fought against the changes. The conservative leadership tried to keep the movement unified, even in the face of libertarian defection.

Libertarians began defecting, especially the younger generation of grassroots libertarians, largely because they disapproved of the war. They believed that the United States was acting as an unjust imperialistic power forcing capitalism upon the South Vietnamese. College age libertarians were also concerned for their safety and opposed the war out of fear of dying in a war they did not support. In addition to opposing the war, these libertarian youths were culturally similar to the New Left, often attending similar colleges, parties, and rallies. Because of their cultural similarities, they often dressed and acted similarly to members of the New Left, with long hair and baggy clothing. This led to frequent conflicts between college-age libertarians and traditionalists. For instance, when traditionalist conservatives insulted liberals for their outfits, which they frequently did, the traditionalists were also insulting libertarians. Between their anti-war stance, and their cultural similarity to the New Left, the libertarians became increasingly opposed to the rest of the conservative movement.

As the war progressed, libertarians recognized they had more in common with the anti-war New Left movement than the pro-war conservative movement. By 1969, many within the libertarian movement felt they were no longer equal partners in the conservative movement. Whereas Goldwater's ideology had a heavy dose of libertarianism in it, the late 1960s libertarians believed that the Rights traditionalist elite's obsession with winning the Vietnam War, coupled with the ardent anti-New Left identity of the grassroots supporters, meant that the movement was no longer welcoming to libertarians. As the war continued, the anti-New Left rhetoric turned the conservative movement into a less hospitable home for anti-war libertarians.

Events came to a head at the 1969 YAF national convention in St. Louis, Missouri. At the national convention, the Libertarian Caucus protested YAF's support of the Vietnam War by burning draft cards on the convention floor. This became a symbol of the problems within the greater movement. Libertarians, who five years earlier supported the overall goals of conservatism and aided Barry Goldwater's campaign, burnt their draft cards on the floor of the largest gathering of conservative youths in the nation. All the while, the majority of the movement and organization called for stepped-up war measures, including the usage of atomic bombs. YAF was at a crossroads as the libertarians were walking out of their organization.

There was a variety of responses by libertarians following the 1969 YAF convention. Some joined with the Students for a Democratic Society, the premiere New Left organization. Others formed their own organization, including the Student Libertarian Alliance and the Society for Individual Liberty. Neither organization had a strong presence for more than a few years, but both had brief periods where they were relevant on campuses. Both of those organizations foreshadowed the creation of the Libertarian Party, a national political third party. Founded in 1972, the Libertarian Party represented the final decision by many grassroots and elite

libertarians to permanently sever their ties with the conservative movement. At its founding, the Libertarian Party advertised itself as the only major party to oppose both government intervention in the economy and the Vietnam War. This identity was a direct attack at the Republican Party, which had served as the conservative movement's home and which supported the war.

Libertarians hoped that the formation of their own national party would make them more popular nationally, but unfortunately for them, it made them less relevant politically. Libertarianism did not explode as a major political ideology in the United States. The libertarian philosophy remained a part of conservatism and the Republican Party, as it still does today. However, because libertarians left the movement, the libertarian philosophy became less influential within conservatism compared to the fusionism period. Vietnam was the largest issue that pushed libertarians out of the movement. The changes that took place within the conservative movement's ideology between the nominations of Goldwater in 1964 and Ronald Reagan in 1980 are the result of the Right's response to the Vietnam War.

As libertarians deserted the Right, many conservatives still believed that the federal government should remain small; however the cry for a small government was different than during the fusionism period. Traditionalists believed that an activist government subverted societal values and was reminiscent of communism. During the fusionism period, this helped them work with libertarians in forming the conservative movement. Comparatively, libertarians believed that the government could not intervene without a subsequent loss of individual freedom. To prevent the loss of freedom, libertarians believed that government should minimize laws and leave people alone. The libertarian stance was a more rigid ideological philosophy based on individual liberty than the traditionalist beliefs, which in the 1960s was the belief that

small government helped create a more traditional society. Many libertarians believed that government's only role in society was intervention to prevent crime and protect society. After that, any government was bad government.

Traditionalists never fully supported this narrow definition of when a government should intervene in society. They liked smaller government, and they wanted taxes low, but they were not ideologues about government intervention. They believed that some government intervention was both useful and necessary. When they did oppose governmental power, they often did so because they found small government as a pragmatic solution to a problem. For instance, when traditionalists opposed the Vietnam draft in the 1960s, they did so because they believed that it would end domestic opposition to the war, not because conscription was an evil form of oppression by the federal government. Many traditionalists had no problem with requiring Americans to join the military. Comparatively, libertarians opposed the draft because they viewed it as government enforced slavery of millions of Americans. When traditionalists believed that a more active federal government benefited their ends, then they supported the active government. Thus, in 1966, traditionalists lobbied for a more forceful ban on trade with Communist China. Robert LeFevre, Dean of the libertarian school Rampart College, refused to join the lobbying effort because, "I am not at all certain that laws are proper devices in instances of this sort."[13] LeFevre believed that no U.S. company should trade with any communist nation, including China, but the government should not compel a boycott of the communist nation. Comparatively, traditionalists believed that government expansion here benefited their goal of hindering China's economic growth. These are just two examples of how the ideology of the

[13] LeFevre (Dean of Rampart College) to Charles Edison (Businessman's Committee on Trade with Communist China), 30 November 1966, Box 12, No Folder, MLP, Hoover Institute Archives, Stanford University.

libertarians and traditionalists differed. In both cases, the traditionalists were not ideologically opposed to government intervention, so long as it supported their cause. When their goals did not match the government's goals, they turned against government intervention.

Traditionalists and libertarians were natural allies at the onset of the Vietnam War. Both opposed massive government expansion and communism. Before Barry Goldwater's presidential bid, fusionism worked to unite the movement. However, their opposing views about society and the role of the war changed the cooperative nature of fusionism. Traditionalists' anti-New Left identity and their pro-war views made libertarians feel marginalized within the movement. Traditionalists, meanwhile, felt betrayed by libertarians who joined with liberal anti-war protests. The movement's coalition began falling apart over the Vietnam War.

The Birth of the New Right

Five days before the United States and North Vietnam signed the Paris Peace Accords, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its ruling in the case *Roe v. Wade.* This case shook the foundations of U.S. politics and culture for the remainder of the century. In the case the Court ruled that women had a constitutional right to choose to abort an unborn fetus. For the first time in U.S. history, abortions were legal throughout the nation. A new national issue emerged out of this Supreme Court case, as it galvanized Christian Evangelicals, a demographic that was previously unaffiliated with any political movement.

Christian Evangelicals were not closely associated with the conservative movement before the Vietnam War. Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* barely mentions religion in it. Although conservative magazines, publications, and organizations had a disproportionately large Catholic influence, they rarely used their mediums to proselytize. Where

religion appeared, it was not the same religious beliefs as Christian Evangelicals. Fusionist conservatives felt that U.S. society should have an underlying belief in the Judeo-Christian God, but that did not require a strict Evangelical spirit. Religion mattered, but it was no more important than general moral and societal values.

Conservatism was able to incorporate Christian Evangelicals into the movement during the Vietnam War largely because Evangelicals were generally anti-communists and supportive of the war efforts. Christian organizations promoted the idea that communist nations withheld freedom of religion, helping those organizations maintain their continued support for anti-communism throughout the Cold War. Christian Evangelicals also colored their anti-communism in religious rhetoric, equating communism to Satanism. These Evangelicals were unquestionably opposed to communism. This helped make them natural allies of the conservative movement in the 1970s and beyond. As anti-communism helped tie the bonds between the different ideologies in fusionism, it also helped bring Christian Evangelicals into the movement.

Despite the natural alliance between conservatives and Christian Evangelicals, there was not always a closely accepted bond between their organizations. Conservatives did not always instinctively accept that religion should play a primary role within their movement. In the week that the U.S. signed the Paris Peace Accords and the Supreme Court issued the *Roe* decision, conservative publications devoted a great amount of space and effort to the end of the Vietnam War. Noticeably absent was a discussion of the impact and relevance of the *Roe* decision, there was also no anger from traditionalists immediately after the ruling. Although Vietnam represented a torturous past that consumed U.S. politics for the previous decade, it is clear that the traditionalist elite did not appreciate the importance of the *Roe* decision.

Looking at the first conservative publications in the weeks following the signing of the Paris Peace Accord and the *Roe* decision, and it is evident that traditionalists missed the magnitude of *Roe.* In the January 27, 1973 edition of *Human Events*, there was a front-page editorial titled: "Have Critical Changes Been Made in New Viet Pact?" The article called on Nixon to disavow the peace plan unless it included significant concessions by the North Vietnamese, including a complete withdraw by North Vietnamese forces from South Vietnam and a strengthening of the U.S.-South Vietnamese military alliance. That these demands by *Human Events* were unrealistic did not matter to the magazine.[14] This article relates to nearly two months' worth of articles and editorials devoted to trying to cajole Nixon into using his recently won electoral mandate to leverage a better deal with the North Vietnamese. *Human Events* believed that the peace plan's flaws persisted without these changes as it would lead to a communist take-over of South Vietnam.

In the same issue, there was no mention of the *Roe* case. One week later, the magazine included a small, one-column article as its first comments about the case. *Human Events* had a weekly "This Week's News from Inside Washington" section that was a series of short political editorials. Buried within that section was *Human Events*' only acknowledgement of the *Roe* case. In the issue, the journal proclaimed that the Supreme Court's ruling shocked legal experts. The article indicated that *Human Events* disapproved of the result, but there was no indication that the magazine viewed this as a major issue. This was the only story about abortion for several months within the magazine.[15]

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[14] Front Page Editorial, "Have Critical Change Been Made in New Viet Pact?" *Human Events*, January 27, 1973: 1(65).

[15] Editorial, "This Week's News from Inside Washington: Abortion Decision Surprises Conservatives," *Human Events*, February 3, 1973: 5(85).

This followed a trend within *Human Events* to ignore abortion as a major issue. Throughout the early 1970s, there was no major story or editorial about abortion within the magazine. Abortion first appeared in 1972, typically as subtle references to the issue within much larger articles. Those references usually worked to inform the readers that George McGovern, the liberal Democratic presidential nominee, supported legalization of abortion. The only article devoted to a thorough discussion of abortion was deep within the magazine on page twenty-two and it denounced an episode of *All in the Family* where Maude, a main character, has an abortion. In this critique, *Human Events* argued that the episode was inappropriate because there was no dialogue on the show over the moral implications of the decision. The article insinuated that had the episode included a larger debate over the ethics of abortion, the magazine would not have opposed the episode.[16] At a time when the base of the conservative movement was becoming increasingly religious, and when the power and prominence of religious conservatives was growing, this insinuation by *Human Events* stands as an odd contrast to the rest of the movement, demonstrating the disengagement between the elite and grassroots on the role of religion in society.

As with *Human Events,* much of the rest of the conservative movement's leadership did not recognize the power that abortion and religion were about to play in altering the political climate for the rest of the twentieth century. Traditionalist conservatives tended to default towards an anti-abortion stance, however not all of them were ideological about this position. Some, like Clarence Manion, were devout Catholics who opposed abortion on religious and

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[16] " 'Maude' Is Bad Taste," Richmond *News Leader*, appearing in *Human Events*, December 16, 1972: 22(966).

moral grounds.[17] However, Clare Boothe Luce is an example of those who strongly supported the right of a woman to choose to abort a fetus.[18] Although many conservatives opposed abortion on religious grounds, none expected it to revitalize the movement.

The week after the Supreme Court issued the *Roe* decision, the *National Review* also did not acknowledge the decision. It took a month before the magazine ran a story devoted to *Roe*, and that article, written by John Noonan, Jr., a lawyer, explained the legal arguments used by the Supreme Court to justify the decision. Still, it was clear that Noonan, an occasional contributor to the magazine, disagreed with the Court's decision. He even recommended that the nation pass a constitutional amendment clarifying when life began.[19]

The following month, *National Review* Publisher William Rusher wrote a memo to the rest of the editorial board informing them that the magazine's circulation was down significantly from the past few years. Rusher told the editorial board that something needed to happen to increase both circulation and profits. Rusher's top suggestion, which he formulated in consultation with Associate Publisher Jim McFadden, was to publish "matching articles for and against abortion." Rusher offered a larger list of topics, but he made it clear that abortion was his top choice; interestingly absent from the list was the Vietnam War. Despite conservative anger about the outcome of the war and even though many conservative leaders had not ceased advocating for increased aid to South Vietnam, Rusher was not willing to drag the *National*

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[17] Clarence Manion, "Killing for Convenience: Are We Loosing the Right to Live?" *Manion Forum*, 8 February 1970, Box 84, Folder 2, CMP, Chicago Historical Society.

[18] Clare Boothe Luce, "Two Books on Abortion and the Questions They Raise," *National Review*, January 12, 1971: 27.

[19] John T. Noonan, Jr., "Raw Judicial Power," *National Review*, March 2, 1973: 260-264.

Review down that path. Rusher found new issues for the magazine and the movement to focus on.[20]

A strong connection exists between the incorporation of abortion and morality into conservative politics, and the divisions that took place within the movement during the Vietnam War. Namely, the loss of libertarians from the movement altered conservatism's ideology. Many libertarians were against restricting abortions. Ideologically, libertarianism supports individual rights and responsibility, including the right to abort a pregnancy. Comparatively, many traditionalists believed that abortion was a sign of the eroding values of society and argued that society should outlaw them. Thus explaining why most traditionalists opposed legalization of marijuana, sex education classes, and abortion. Traditionalists believed that the state should play a role in maintain perceived traditional Judeo-Christian values about sex and drugs. Many libertarians did not support continuing the older traditional values.

Although traditionalists and libertarians squabbled over legalization of marijuana during the 1960s, it was their disagreement over the Vietnam War that truly divided the two ideologies, pushing them apart from one-another. The loss of libertarians permanently altered the movement's ideology and social makeup. Overall, libertarians were less religious and they pushed conservatism to fight more for small government and less intervention. Christian Evangelicals were less concerned with individual freedom and more concerned with maintaining a moral society.

Following the Vietnam War, the loss of libertarians was nearly complete. Many libertarian leaders, like Murray Rothbard and Karl Hess, were completely isolated from the rest

[20] Memo from Rusher to the Editors, 17 April 1973, Box 123, Folder 4, WRP, Library of Congress.

of conservatism's intellectual leadership. Even Frank Meyer, the libertarian-leaning founder of fusionism admitted in a 1969 column that the greatest threat to conservatism was an internal dispute between the libertarians and the rest of the movement. In his column, Meyer conceded that he had little left in common with the extreme libertarians and that their ideology was "indistinguishable from that of the SDS."[21] The movement's demographics were changing, and much of the internal dispute stemmed from libertarians' anti-war views.

As the decade wore on, traditionalists recognized that they had a lot more in common with Christian Evangelicals than with libertarians. Both held the importance of religion and traditional moral values within society. They were also ardent anti-communists who supported the Vietnam War and a hawkish foreign policy. The hardest part for the two groups to join and form the New Right was to get Christian Evangelicals involved in the conservative movement. Previously Christian Evangelicals remained outside of the greater political discourse, but the *Roe* decision, along with other political changes, such as President Jimmy Carter's decision to remove non-profit status to private schools in 1978, helped push Evangelicals into the political fray.[22] Additionally, New Right leaders such as Paul Weyrich and Richard Viguerie, who were involved in the conservative movement in the 1960s, helped persuade Christian Evangelical

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[21] Frank Meyer, "Principles and Heresies: Libertarianism or Libertinism?" *National Review*, September 9, 1969: 910.

[22] Among sources which discuss the importance of the decision by Carter's IRS in revoking the non-profit status of Southern private schools are: Schulman and Zelizer, eds., *Rightward Bound*, Chapter 5; Justin Watson, *The Christian Coalition: Dreams of Restoration, Demands for Recognition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 19-20; Richard Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead* (Falls Church, VA: Viguerie Co, 1981), Chapter 11.

pastors, such as Reverend Jerry Falwell, to get involved in the conservative movement. Once Evangelicals became more intimately involved, the movement's ideology changed.[23]

Leaders of the New Right political movement found the movement on the ideological assumption that religious and moral values should play a prominent role in politics and society. Ronald Reagan was adept at using morality as a reason to vote for him. Politics, religion, and society were mixing during the late 1970s, and much of this was because of the efforts of the New Right. Without the Vietnam War and the loss of libertarians, conservatism would not have incorporated Christian Evangelicals into the New Right, thereby permanently altering the American political system.

[23] Diamond, *Roads to Dominion: Right-Wing Movements and Political Power in the United States*, 172-75; Micklethwait, *The Right Nation: Conservative Power in America*, Chapter 4; Viguerie, *The New Right: We're Ready to Lead*, Chapter 11.

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Henry Kissinger Papers
H.R. Haldeman Papers
Richard Nixon Presidential Papers
White House Special Files

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[1] Since I began researching this dissertation, the National Archives has relocated the Richard Nixon Presidential Papers to his Presidential Library in California. I visited his archives while they were still housed in College Park.

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