Race, Conservative Politics, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Postcolonial World, 1948–1968

by

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ABSTRACT

Race, Conservative Politics, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Postcolonial World, 1948–1968

By Ann K. Ziker

This dissertation analyzes the rise of conservatism in American politics from 1948 to 1968, paying special attention to the impact of the civil rights movement and race on postwar political realignments. Unlike previous studies, which have concentrated chiefly on domestic policy issues such as court-ordered desegregation, busing programs, welfare, and taxation, this work focuses on debates over U.S. foreign policy. It considers topics such as the development of an international human rights ideology, the growing force of revolutionary nationalism, and the progress of decolonization to chart the emergence of a distinctively conservative vision for American power in the world. As the dissertation argues, a natural symmetry existed between political responses to the African American freedom struggle and views on U.S. foreign relations in a rapidly decolonizing world; civil rights opponents easily projected their beliefs about racial difference into the global arena, and, although many national conservative leaders worked to distance themselves from the open defenders of racial segregation, they unreservedly asserted that the Asian, Arabic, and African residents of newly decolonized states were not entitled to the same rights as Europeans or North Americans. The dissertation thus offers a new interpretation of the role of race in modern conservatism.
This study contains three parts: Part I suggests that what traditionally has been called "massive resistance"—the white South's opposition to integration after the 1954 Brown decision—might be better understood as a broader dissent from the emerging global ideology of human rights. Part II uses the Cold War's arrival in Africa to suggest how decolonization fused the politics of race and the politics of U.S. foreign policy, creating common ground for segregationists and national-security conservatives. Part III describes the evolution of a conservative philosophy on American power in the world, which rejected calls to demonstrate sympathy with anticolonial movements and instead advocated unequivocal support for Western Europe and anticommmunist states like South Africa. Throughout, the dissertation contends that ostensibly color-blind positions on U.S. foreign policy in reality rested on a narrow, exclusionary interpretation of democratic freedoms and human rights.
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INTRODUCTION: REVOLUTIONS & COUNTERREVOLUTIONS, 1948–1968

It is commonplace for Americans today to think about the two decades between 1948 and 1968 as the era of a civil rights revolution. Loosely bracketed by Harry Truman's Presidential Committee on Civil Rights and the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights era remade U.S. law and society, despite some promises left unfulfilled. The revolution scored its most dramatic and gritty victories in the American South, where an alliance of ordinary people and extraordinary leaders cracked open the entrenched system of black disfranchisement and Jim Crow segregation. Alongside the monumental achievements of the African American freedom struggle, other groups of citizen-activists helped expand the reach of American democracy by scuttling the decades-old quota system that governed U.S. immigration and by revising naturalization policies that made certain nationalities ineligible for citizenship.

For those Americans who remember the political and cultural paroxysms of 1968, it may be just as common to think of 1948–1968 as the staging ground for new levels of divisiveness and polarity in U.S. politics. Historians, certainly, are increasingly inclined to think of the postwar period—once considered the halcyon days for liberal reformism—as the incubator for a conservative counterrevolution that reached its apex in 1980, when Ronald Reagan won the presidency.¹ As the multifaceted civil rights revolution picked up momentum,

¹ Far too voluminous to itemize here, historians and writers have produced a torrent of important new studies on modern conservatism. From opponents to sympathizers, from scholars to New York Times opinion columnists, American conservatism has gone from what Alan Brinkley once called an "orphan in historical scholarship" to one of the most widely discussed topics in twentieth-century political history. See Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," American Historical Review 99 (April 1994), 409–29, quotation 409. The chapters that follow discuss the central insights and cite the most important works from this scholarship.
true to the laws of physics, it sparked an equal and opposite reaction; whether
the issue was voting rights, immigration reform, or residential desegregation,
reform advocates encountered resistance from dogged defenders of the status
quo. The effects of these counterrevolutions are etched into present-day America
as deeply as the effects of the civil rights revolution—perhaps more deeply.

It is less common, though equally apt, for Americans to recall the postwar
decades as a time when global revolutions remade the international landscape.
From 1948 to 1968 nationalist insurgencies demolished virtually the entire
European colonial edifice, creating dozens of new independent states in Asia,
Africa, and the Caribbean. Although profound inequities of military might and
wealth persisted, in the postwar years the “great power” model of diplomacy
gave way to a more complex web of relationships among nations, especially as
leaders from the decolonized world asserted their interests in global affairs. In
the world of ideas, revolutionary visions of human rights and human sameness
gained strength, and the newly created United Nations attempted to codify some
of these visions into international law.² Like the U.S. civil rights revolution,
nationalist revolutions met tenacious and often brutal resistance; and, like the
civil rights struggle, anticolonial movements did not radically alter the
distribution of power or instantly erase discriminatory practices. Nevertheless,
by the late 1960s the world looked markedly different than it had when World
War II ended.

² Helpful overviews include Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2005); Paul Gordon Lauren, Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of
Racial Discrimination, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), chapters 5–7; and Lauren,
The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: University of
If it is rare for Americans to think about the upheavals between 1948 and 1968 in transnational terms, it is rarer still for them to interpret the schisms in postwar U.S. politics as a response to global transformations. Yet the conservative counterrevolution and the unraveling of American liberalism may be best understood through a narrative that interlaces domestic and international events. America’s civil rights revolution and the revolutions that happened across the world were connected by real and imagined threads. Painstaking historical research has shown that many African Americans conceived of their freedom struggle as one component within a wider fight for human rights—a fight against all forms of institutionalized white supremacy, including Jim Crow segregation, apartheid, colonialism, disfranchisement, and discriminatory labor systems across the globe. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to suggest that the conservative counterrevolution in the postwar United States similarly should be understood as a product of a changing world, not merely as the product of a changing nation.

By now a well-known tale, the story of conservatism’s ascent encompasses the so-called white backlash against legislated racial equality, in the South but also in the urban centers of the North and upper Midwest; the revolts against student radicalism, feminism, Black Power, and countercultural lifestyles; the flagging support for tax-funded social entitlement programs and public facilities; and the growth of a suburban Sunbelt, built around an ethos of individual choice.

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and privatization. After more than a solid decade's worth of new scholarship on these subjects—from the pioneering community studies set in northern cities by Thomas J. Sugrue and Arnold Hirsch to Matthew Lassiter and Kevin Kruse's seminal new works on the urban South—we now know quite a bit about the individuals who dissented from liberalism and why they did so. Many of the most visible dissenters resided in the American South, although the scarred streets of Detroit in 1943 and Chicago in 1967 caution us loudly against casting racial anti-liberalism as an exclusively southern phenomenon.⁴

Curiously underemphasized in these familiar narratives, however, are the central foreign policy debates of the postwar decades—indeed, the entire set of political issues that Americans had to confront as revolutions abroad transformed the world map. This dissertation features many recognizable actors from the story of liberalism's declining fortunes among the U.S. electorate. But, rather than focusing on the usual topics like school desegregation, welfare, or tax policy, I concentrate on wars for national independence, decolonization, the

edicts of the United Nations, and the rising force of nationalism. By doing so, I
do not mean to diminish or dispute the importance of domestic issues. Nor do I
question the fact that many of America's most heated battles over racial equality
were intensely local in nature, unfolding in individual neighborhoods, school
districts, and church parishes. Rather, I maintain that white resistance to racial
equality had both a local and a global perspective. To fully understand the
political realignments of the 1960s—and in order to fully understand the polarity
and bitterness that continue to paralyze U.S. political life today—we must give
equal time to matters of America's role in the world.

Contemporaries, liberal and conservative, appreciated the interplay
between domestic and international political questions, and historians too need
to bridge the gap. To do so, this dissertation advances two distinct claims. First,
in Part I, I present evidence for a simple but overlooked historical fact: white
defenders of racial inequality perceived threats to their way of life from places
well beyond the borders of the United States. Part I focuses on white
conservatives in the American South, where resistance to racial change was more
systematic, more consuming, and more raw than in other regions of the nation.
Southern whites were forced to contend with the global sources of pressure to
reform America's racial practices, including the swell of international human
rights protests after World War II, the impact of revolutionary nationalism on
world politics, and the presence of newly decolonized member states at the
United Nations. To combat the civil rights revolution in the United States, white
southerners also had to fiercely resist the broader set of ideals enshrined the
Atlantic Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, and the 1948 Universal
Declaration of Human Rights. Compelled to engage with issues like
anticolonialism and international human rights, the conservative white South discovered a disdain for liberal foreign policy choices every bit as forceful as their contempt for domestic liberalism.

Part II moves the narrative beyond the U.S. South to trace the rise of a national conservative movement and the development of a conservative vision for U.S. foreign policy. The key tenets of modern foreign-policy conservatism took shape around events in places like the Congo and Algeria, places where revolutionary nationalism and the Cold War collided. As liberals tried to differentiate American power from European colonial power, conservative leaders advocated a unified Western alliance and categorical support for Western interests, even if that required the U.S. to back colonial rule, apartheid states, or dictatorial regimes. A natural symmetry thus existed between views on American racial politics and views on U.S. power in a rapidly decolonizing world. As I contend in Part II and Part III, southern civil rights opponents easily saw their values reflected in the conservative philosophy of America’s role in the world. In short, the conservative foreign-policy vision that developed in the early 1960s was capacious enough to accommodate the interests of anticommmunist conservatives and the defenders of white privilege.

As the force of revolutionary nationalism reverberated across the postwar world, American conservatives had to tailor their philosophies to fit a dramatically changed world. Following Matthew Connelly’s provocative suggestion that diplomatic historians “take off the Cold War lens,” this dissertation regards anticolonial revolutions and decolonization as defining
issues of the mid-twentieth century world, along with the Cold War.\(^5\) While
most historians have focused on U.S. policymakers' response to the rising power
of nationalism, I emphasize how the U.S. response to decolonization contributed
to the fracturing of U.S. domestic politics. Whether it was a rural white
segregationist opposing an international covenant on human rights or a well-
heeled intellectual denying that blacks in the Congo were equipped to handle
political freedom, self-described conservatives in the United States resisted the
emerging pressures to expand individual rights, especially the right of self-
determination. By showing how conservatives used decolonization as a wedge
issue to advance their incipient political movement, I join a growing body of
scholarship that illustrates how global developments influenced the course of
American political history, rather than always focusing on how U.S. actions
abroad shaped world history.\(^6\)

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\(^6\) Historians of European empires were the first to show how events in overseas colonial territories refracted back in the politics and culture of the metropole. This scholarship flowed from the seminal work of literary critic Edward W. Said. See Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978); see also, for example, Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999). Recently U.S. historians have applied insights from the study of European empires to the study of America's role in the world. The most significant works in this vein include: Michael Salman, *The Embarrassment of Slavery: Controversies over Bondage and Nationalism in the American Colonial Philippines* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001); Mary A. Renda, *Taking Haiti: Military Occupation and the*
Conservative visions for U.S. foreign policy cannot be understood in isolation from the course of liberalism in the two decades after World War II; as such, I devote significant space in the dissertation to describing and analyzing the tenets of Cold War liberalism. Liberal activists increasingly pointed to the evolving international landscape as grounds for domestic reform. Beginning in the days of Harry Truman and the 1948 report of his Presidential Committee on Civil Rights, anticommunist liberals had applied a single line of reasoning to the twin foreign-policy dilemmas created by America’s internal race relations and America’s close relationship with European colonial rulers. Roughly hewn, the liberal formulation argued that to win the Cold War, the United States had to win hearts and minds; to win hearts and minds, America had to make good on the promises of its vaunted ideals of freedom. This meant alleviating the worst symptoms of racism, the murders and mobs that landed the U.S. South on the front cover of newspapers around the world, and it also meant reaching out the hand of friendship to nations in Africa and Asia, those that were independent as well as those that were struggling to achieve self-rule. The election of John F. Kennedy breathed new life into the reformist agenda of Cold War liberalism; through massive allotments of economic aid and programs like the Peace Corps,
the Kennedy liberals fashioned a new vision of U.S. power in what they called the “emerging world.”

From 1948 into the Kennedy era, liberal officials made halting progress toward policies that reflected these ideals. But for the budding conservative movement, the unevenness of liberals’ actual achievements hardly mattered. Conservatives objected to the very premise of Cold War liberalism, the very principle that international opinion or United Nations forums should shape the direction of American policy. Conservatives further appreciated that a parallel mindset guided liberal policymaking home and abroad—and they hastened to develop their own responses to the postwar global revolutions.

When historians have asked questions about how American foreign relations splintered the U.S. electorate (and they have not done so often), they have almost always concentrated on the American Left’s disenchantment with liberalism. Undoubtedly this has a great deal to do with the fact that academic historians—especially specialists in U.S. foreign policy—ranked among the most important critics of the foreign policy choices of centrist, establishment liberals.8

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8 Within this group, the influence of William Appleman Williams, a historian at the University of Wisconsin, cannot be overstated. His *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1959) was received poorly when it first appeared in 1959, but his ideas later gained a widespread following. See Paul Buhle, *William Appleman Williams: The Tragedy of Empire* (New York: Routledge, 1995).
By the end of the 1960s, as the U.S. war in Vietnam dragged on, a resurgent American Left ripped to shreds the hopeful vision that Kennedy had so skillfully and so beguilingly packaged for the American public: a faith in America's fundamental righteousness, in the exceptionalism of American values, and in the potential for U.S. power to remake the world for the better. Nourished by intellectual sources as diverse as the postcolonial thought of Franz Fanon, the manifestos of African American radicals, and the countercultural poetry of Allen Ginsberg, leftist critics pieced together a crippling indictment of the anticommunist liberalism that the Kennedy administration embodied.

Far more poorly understood is the 1960s development of a conservative critique of Cold War liberalism, even though conservatives responded to many of the same issues that estranged the new Left from centrist liberalism. If leftist critics grew disillusioned with American liberals for quietly picking up the remnants of European imperialism in Vietnam and elsewhere, conservatives lashed out at liberals for not doing enough to bolster European rule in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East when it had faltered in the first place. If the Left dissented from liberal anticommunism, convinced the Vital Center had grown too militaristic and sacrificed too many ideals in the name of the Cold War, the Right accused liberals of being too soft, too unmanly to be entrusted with the grave task of waging war against America's mortal enemies in the godless Soviet Union and Communist China. If leftists came to despise liberalism for its trust in the innate goodness of American power in the world, conservatives wanted to revive American exceptionalism in as robust an expression as possible: a guiding philosophy where America's mission to defeat Communism was so inviolable, so indubitably right that whatever the United States did in the service of
anticommunism was in the interest of the entire world, where any foreign leader that served American aims was worthy of U.S. loyalty and praise.

These conservative perspectives, I argue, coalesced as global anticolonial revolutions remade international politics in the two decades after World War II. From a strategic security standpoint, the foreign policy crises I focus on—in places like the Congo and Angola—may not have been the most crucial Cold War battlegrounds. Yet these were some of the places where liberal policy choices most enraged conservatives, where conservatives saw the greatest opportunity to differentiate their policy vision from liberal policy views. A comprehensive account of the fault lines that still fracture U.S. politics therefore must consider both America’s domestic rights revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s and the international revolutions for human rights and universal self-determination.

* * *

Neat labels always fit a bit uneasily around large-scale political movements. Philosophies are rarely pure, and humans rarely conform to the precise patterns that categorization schemes imply. As historians, moreover, we know that terminology can take on a life of its own, digging intellectual furrows that can confine the path of scholarly inquiry. Still, we cannot escape terminology; all we can do is clarify how and why we select particular terms for use.

Throughout this dissertation, especially in Part II, I rely on the term "conservative." The label "conservative" must be used gingerly when writing about the United States in first two decades after World War II. Today conservatism is so inseparable from Republicanism that it is easy to forget the
time when conservative ideas had nothing to do with party identification. Yet in
the late 1940s, 1950s, and even into the 1960s a self-described conservative might
have been a Democrat (especially if he or she lived in the South) or a Republican.
Today it is also hard to recall the time when the conservative philosophy had
little real power over the policymaking agenda. But, during the time period
covered in this dissertation, 1948–1968, conservatism mostly operated outside of
the halls of power, save for a handful of maverick senators and congressmen. At
that moment conservatism was an intellectual and political movement struggling
to establish its identity, and even within the embryonic movement, no single
definition of the word “conservative” prevailed. Free-market economists
(sometimes known as “classic liberals”), anticommunist intellectuals, religious
traditionalists, Cold War hawks, die-hard southern segregationists—all of these
groups tried to drape the conservative mantle around their philosophical
positions, despite their disparate policy agendas.

For some of the individuals in this study—mainly the well-known figures,
like William F. Buckley or Barry Goldwater—we can confidently apply the label
“conservative,” for these are the figures that modern conservative movement
proudly claims as its forefathers. This study also features an array of everyday
men and women who garnered neither fame nor widespread name recognition,
and their views can be more difficult to classify as unequivocally conservative.
With historians like Donald Critchlow, Michelle Nickerson, and Lisa McGirr, I
maintain that grassroots warriors deserve a lion’s share of the credit for inciting a
conservative revolution in American politics. Fragmentary historical evidence,
however, makes it difficult to construct a full picture of these grassroots
conservatives’ political philosophies. Generally speaking, I characterize
historical actors as conservatives when one of the following conditions was true: the individual self-selected the descriptor; he or she avowed support for a recognizably conservative organization or publication; or his or her stated political views closely mirrored the policy recommendations endorsed by leading conservatives. When possible, I supply the evidence that has led me to classify particular grassroots activists as conservatives.\(^9\)

I should also clarify that, by and large, the people who appear in this study were ideologically dedicated conservatives—what today we might call the movement’s “base”—not an up-for-grabs block of moderates or an ill-defined silent majority. These individuals spent time reading books and articles written by conservative authors; they wrote letters to congressmen, organized local meetings for their neighbors, and joined or contributed money to right-wing organizations. They were, in short, the crusaders and activists who helped make conservative movement thrive.

The most important subgroup in this study—white southern conservatives—also can be the most difficult to classify. If today’s leading conservative thinkers were put in charge, they would all but extirpate the open defenders of Jim Crow segregation from the history of modern conservatism.\(^10\)

Yet, even if contemporary conservatives do not acknowledge segregationists as a legitimate part of their movement’s lineage, some of the most intensely racist

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southern activists—people like Citizens’ Council officer William J. Simmons or Mississippi judge Tom P. Brady—routinely described the white South as the bedrock of a conservative ethos. The white South did cultivate a brand of conservatism that differed somewhat from the political agendas of conservatives in the Northeast or the West, and that difference revolved almost entirely around race. Self-identified conservatives from around the nation expressed misgivings about federal civil rights law, but in the U.S. South conservatives were more likely to place race at the center of their anti-liberal protests and were more willing to make brazen appeals to white supremacist sentiment. I will use the term “racial conservative” or “segregationist” interchangeably to refer to individuals who actively opposed integration, the enfranchisement of black voters, and or the doctrine of racial equality—most of whom, though not all, were also white southerners.

Still, terms like “racial conservative” or “segregationist” are not without their flaws, so I apply these terms with some reservation. As historians such as David L. Chappell and George Lewis have shown, white southerners in the era of civil rights were deeply divided about whether to defy the Brown v. Board decision, and, if so, how to proceed. Opinion research suggested that a disproportionate majority (significantly more than three-quarters) of white southerners opposed the 1954 Supreme Court ruling on integration—by this measure nearly all whites in the South were segregationists. Yet the white response to the civil rights movement covered a wide spectrum: a tiny fraction welcomed reform; a vocal minority forcefully resisted change; and in between
the two poles a substantial number elected to remain on the sidelines. Even within the group of active resisters, unity was always more veneer than reality.\textsuperscript{11}

Perhaps even more problematic, the term “segregationist” evokes a cardboard image of the southern redneck—or, as historian Charles M. Payne put it, “the ignorant, the pot-bellied, and the tobacco-chewing.” Only recently have historians moved beyond a reflexive demonizing of white southerners in the civil rights era. The label “segregationist” or even “racial conservative” serves to set white southern conservatives apart, to highlight their backwardness and separateness. Not only does this overlook the fact that racial anti-liberalism was never an exclusively southern phenomenon, but it also contradicts what recent scholarship—and this dissertation—has worked to show: that southern segregationists thought of themselves as full-fledged members of the national conservative revolution and gradually retooled their open racism into a message about individual choice and personal freedoms.\textsuperscript{12} So I use the term “segregationist” with these caveats in mind.


Recent scholarship on race, the South, and conservatism has forced historians to rethink the concept of "massive resistance," another complicated piece of terminology relevant to this dissertation. In mid-February 1956 newspaper reporters quoted (misquoted, according to historian George Lewis) Virginia's senior senator Harry Flood Byrd as stating, "if we can organize the Southern States for massive resistance to this order [the Brown decision], I think that in time the rest of the country will realize that racial integration is not going to be accepted in the South." Thereafter "massive resistance" became a convenient label to tack onto the white South's varied tactics for obstructing court-ordered desegregation. Numan Bartley's classic study, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South during the 1950s*, which for roughly three decades represented the sole scholarly attempt to understand white southerners in the era of civil rights, helped ossify a particular definition of the term "massive resistance." Certainly Bartley recognized the unevenness of white resistance—his book operated around a state-by-state approach—but he depicted anti-civil rights activism as an elite-driven phenomenon, which implied a strong degree of centralization, cohesion, and synchronization.13

The phrase "massive resistance" is undeniably apt as a descriptor for certain activities in the post-Brown South, such as the 1956 "Southern Manifesto" in Congress, "pupil placement" laws, and the jeering white mobs that screamed, taunted, and spit at schoolchildren and their parents. But, as this study

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maintains, massive resistance must be seen as one component a broader white conservative resistance to the idea that all people were entitled to basic democratic rights and fundamental freedoms, simply on the basis of their humanity. If we think about the two postwar decades as a moment when new ideas about basic human rights emerged, American battles over civil rights can look less like micro-level struggles over schooling, housing, and public facilities and more like high-level clashes over ideas about human equality and the universalism of rights.

Bartley’s early history also established the chronological parameters for thinking about massive resistance. For him, the 1954 Brown decision marked the starting line for white southern resistance, and the organized resistance approached its endpoint in the early 1960s, after it became clear that the federal government would eventually step in to curb the South’s defiance. The surge of scholarship on southern conservatism has effectively revised the idea that resistance simply petered out with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Historians such as Kevin M. Kruse and Joseph Crespino have charted the evolution of resistance into a broader language of conservatism. One of the contributions of this study, however, is to show that white resistance also had a longer genesis, one that stretched back into the late 1940s. By widening the lens to capture international as well as domestic events, we can place white resistance to civil rights against a more comprehensive, more sweeping backdrop.

Looking beyond the United States also allows us to achieve a better understanding of the role of race, racism, and civil rights politics in the formation of the modern conservative coalition—a subject that has drawn substantial
attention from historians and contemporary news commentators alike. (Indeed, for several weeks in the fall of 2007 the *New York Times* editorial pages featured a lively exchange on the question.) With good reason, historians have written extensively about the impact of the African American freedom struggle and the Civil Rights Act on political realignment in the United States. But attention to foreign-policy topics yields several new insights about racism and conservatism.

First, racist views were not confined to the domestic political arena; as decolonization gave Asian, African, Arab, and Caribbean states a new voice in international affairs and as the multicultural United Nations brought U.S. diplomats in contact with racially diverse political actors, white racism translated directly into perspectives on U.S. foreign relations. Even as self-described conservatives assiduously avoided racialized language in *domestic* affairs, they often showed no qualms about expressing openly discriminatory views about Arabs or Africans in recently decolonized states. Southern defenders of Jim Crow and national conservatives leaders may not have openly allied around the issue of African American civil rights, but they readily came together through their common scorn for liberal policy in the formerly colonized world.\(^\text{14}\)

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Introducing the topic of U.S. foreign policy into histories of postwar conservatism appears crucial when we consider the state of conservatism, particularly southern conservatism, in the formative first years of the 1960s. At the dawn of the new decade, nationally prominent conservative leaders were making a concerted effort to marshal churning right-wing discontent into a viable political coalition. They were in search of the issues that galvanized the broadest possible slice of conservatism's potential base—and even in the South, conservative leaders conceded that racial segregation was not that issue. U.S. foreign policy gave southern segregationists common ground with anti-Communist hawks; and it gave national conservative leaders a way to appeal to southern supporters without openly embracing legal segregation and disfranchisement. Anticolonial revolutions in a Cold War world supplied a space where the views of white southern segregationists, intellectual conservatives, and anti-Communist crusaders aligned, helping the white South move from regional isolation to an electoral linchpin for the post-1964 conservative counterrevolution.

Norton, 1991), tended to emphasize a top-down "southern strategy," where Republicans made thinly veiled racial slurs to win what GOP strategists referred to as "George Wallace" voters. Without entirely upending Carter's basic hypothesis, scholars such as Crespino and Kruse, White Flight, give more credit to grassroots-level white conservatives, who crafted their own ideological worldview about the rights of parents, homeowners, and business owners. Racial politics were still absolutely central to this perspective, but Crespino and Kruse show that southern opposition to tax policies or business regulation were organically held views, not merely "code language" for white racism.
PART I: WHITE SOUTHERN RESISTANCE & GLOBAL REVOLUTIONS, 1948–1959

Shortly before the presidential election of 1956, Diana Mae Keith sat down to assess the state of national and international affairs. A married, self-described conservative Democrat from Dallas, Texas, Keith had been feeling “rather disturbed” about the drift of American politics. Ranking near the top of Mrs. Keith’s list of grievances were the issues of race and civil rights. She identified herself as a member of the Texas Citizens’ Council, and, undoubtedly thinking about the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, she derided the U.S. Supreme Court for its recent rulings.

Keith had discussed her political concerns with “many, many associates and friends” in the Dallas area, and, together, she and her acquaintances had reached a conclusion. They determined that the “greatest deterrent to [their] way of life” was not Earl Warren’s Supreme Court, not the influence of the liberal Democratic establishment, not the threat of international Communism, but the United Nations. The United Nations was, in her view, “the heart of the octopus,” the “main thing we must eliminate.” In Keith’s mind “all of the other things we are fighting”—here she named the political agendas of the NAACP and the liberal Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)—were merely “arms” of the octopus. To strike at the source, Keith believed that conservatives should marshal their efforts behind getting “the US out of the UN and the UN out of the US.”

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1 Diana Mae Keith to Martin Dies, August 7, 1956, file 3, box 139, Martin Dies Papers, Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, Liberty, Texas, hereafter cited as SHRL. It is likely that Keith borrowed the octopus image from a pamphlet published by pro-segregation minister Carey Daniel, discussed in chapter 1. Daniel, also a Texas Citizens’ Council member and
Diana Mae Keith and her fellow conservative Texas Democrats exemplified a simple fact that has gone virtually unnoticed among historians: postwar white southerners realized that their “way of life,” the ironclad racial hierarchy that had stood literally for centuries, faced a two-pronged assault. The rising power of the indigenous African American freedom movement had deeply unnerved white southerners, as had the Court’s decisive blow to legal segregation. But domestic events only accounted for part of what had Diana Keith so on edge. To fully understand her profound sense of unease, we must also examine postwar political forces outside the United States—in particular, the global protests for human rights and for colonial independence.

In the civil rights era white southerners like Keith experienced a sense of bewilderment and shock as attacks rained down on their near-hardwired beliefs about racial difference. As historian Jason Sokol writes, the African American freedom struggle “struck at the very foundations of southern life,” permanently disrupting the attitudes and everyday practices southern whites had always known, and “many whites felt these changes just as deeply as, if much differently than, African Americans.”2 Mirroring the seismic transformations in southern society, a constellation of changes struck at the foundation of the international system that white Americans had always known. The first two chapters aim to show that white southerners also experienced the changing world.

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with the same types of anxieties, uncertainties, and, in some cases, animosities that characterized their reaction to the black freedom struggle.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights capped a tremendous upsurge of international pressure to make the United Nations (UN) not merely an instrument for collective security but also an engine for eradicating racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. Sensing rare opportunity in the extraordinary circumstances of the postwar world, a remarkable range of nongovernmental organizations, both national and transnational, petitioned for meaningful international action to protect fundamental human rights. At the inaugural meeting of the United Nations, held April 1945 in San Francisco, delegates from Asian, North African, and Caribbean states pushed the United Nations away from a purely diplomatic function and toward a reform-oriented agenda. Together, traditional state actors and private citizen-crusaders helped forge a global doctrine on the rights and freedoms of all people.

When the United Nations adopted the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the international body gave sanction to an ideological framework that flew in the face of nearly everything that Keith and like-minded conservative southern Democrats believed. The white South’s alarm system, of course, had already been tripped by President Harry Truman’s 1947 decision to convene a commission on civil rights—the 1948 “Dixiecrat” bolt attested to that. To a certain extent, it goes without saying that southern defenders of segregation disdained the concept of universal human rights. The white South’s unrelenting suppression of African American protest made it painfully obvious that white southerners did not believe, as the 1948 Universal Declaration proposed, that “all members of the human family” deserved basic freedoms or that “race, colour,
sex, language, [and] religion” had no relevance to the provision of rights. Yet white resistance to the U.S. civil rights movement has rarely been discussed in terms that acknowledge the international context.3

Lacking a mechanism for enforcement or the authority of an international treaty, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by itself, affected absolutely no material or legal change for any citizen of the world. Moreover, by the time Diana Keith registered her anti–UN squall, the various proposals for a binding human rights covenant lay buried beneath an avalanche of political resistance, much of it from the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the United States had scrupulously guarded its national sovereignty at every step of the UN’s development, ensuring that white southerners like Keith had few tangible reasons to fear encroachments on their “way of life,” the steady drumbeat of

human rights activism kept conservative white southerners in a state of constant vigilance in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

So too did the postwar burst of revolutionary nationalism unsettle the South's calcified notions of racial difference. Especially for activists from beyond Europe and North America, the concept of human rights went hand-in-hand with the issue of colonialism. Since notions of innate human inequality had underwritten the colonial system, the emerging ideal of universal human rights naturally provoked forceful outcries for universal self-determination. The global tumult of World War II expedited anticolonial movements, especially in Southeast Asia, where imperial Japan had dislodged Western rulers, and nationalist insurgencies garnered organizational, military, and ideological potency in the postwar years. From the floor of the United Nations General Assembly, Asian and African leaders exerted diplomatic pressure on Western powers, firing a steady salvo of demands for total colonial liberation. Although the Universal Declaration of 1948 had remained silent on the colonial question, conservative white Americans like Keith nevertheless perceived the United Nations as the nerve center for anticolonial protests.

The power of these international campaigns for human rights and self-determination permeated American politics. As both chapter 1 and chapter 2 demonstrate, the liberal policymaking establishment—including Democratic stalwarts such as Harry Truman and Hubert Humphrey—contended that unless the United States moved in step with the world community, the nation would forfeit its moral stature in global affairs. In the arena of grassroots politics, liberal and progressive organizations of all stripes rallied behind the human rights and anticolonial principles underlying the UN Charter and, often, urged policy elites
to strengthen and expand the UN’s authority. American activism on behalf of international human rights and self-determination, of course, also coincided with protests for civil rights legislation at home.

Arguing, as Truman’s February 1948 civil rights message to Congress did, that the “position of the United States in the world” obligated the nation to “correct the remaining imperfections in [its] practice of democracy,” liberal white Democrats bundled civil rights together with other reform initiatives, both domestic and foreign. They endorsed changes in U.S. immigration policy and in the political status of U.S. territories like Hawaii; looking abroad, the liberal orthodoxy preached a warm embrace of the multilateral United Nations and its founding documents, foreign aid for economic development, and, if done circumspectly, U.S. leadership in promoting self-rule for imperial or colonial territories. Together, postwar liberals maintained, these national and international programs would redeem America’s reputation in the world and promote the nation’s interests in foreign affairs.4

Thus, when southern Democrats ferociously resisted domestic civil rights legislation, they found themselves bumping up against the entire cluster of liberal reform initiatives: the UN, civil rights, immigration and naturalization, foreign aid, and anticolonialism. Often, white southerners displayed an all-consuming, single-minded fixation on the politics of race. But in the postwar world the politics of race played out in global as well as domestic venues. As both chapters of Part I propose, the South’s upholders of white supremacy had to

contend with the global politics of human rights and anticolonialism in order to preserve their views on the domestic politics of race. White resistance to civil rights should be viewed as one part of the wider southern dissent from the full slate of human rights principles.

With this broader context in mind, we may construct a more comprehensive account of the political fissures that formed during the postwar decades. First, we see how international events, along with national changes, drove the course of southern conservatism in the immediate postwar era. Second, when we center southern anti–civil rights activism within a broader arc of anti–human rights activism, we can think differently about the standard chronology of massive resistance. Far from purely a post–Brown v. Board phenomenon, white racial conservatism intensified as soon as it became clear that diplomacy and peacekeeping would not be the only functions of the United Nations. Presently, historians tend to write about two spikes of white southern resistance—one in 1948, the year of the Dixiecrat revolt, and one after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling in Brown—separated by a trough of relative inactivity. The curve looks smoother, less episodic, when we introduce topics such as the UN Convention on Genocide in 1950 or the decade-long battle over Hawaii’s admission to statehood. Through a perspective that integrates international and domestic events, we find white southerners resisting a near-constant stream of challenges to their “way of life,” some from within the South, and some from far beyond.
CHAPTER 1: THE POLITICS OF RACE, THE POLITICS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The 1948 Democratic National Convention is more commonly remembered for disputes over states’ rights than for serious discussion of human rights. Attendees at the fractious Philadelphia convention watched as pro-states’ rights delegates from Mississippi and Alabama marched out of the meeting hall in protest. The 1948 party platform induced a larger group of mutinous southern Democrats to establish the breakaway States’ Rights Democratic Party only two days after the general convention concluded. Yet when Hubert H. Humphrey, the meeting’s last scheduled speaker, entreated his fellow Democratic convention-goers to embrace the cause of civil rights—the impassioned address that ensured passage of a civil rights platform plank and precipitated the southern walkout—he aimed these pointed words at the South’s representatives: “The time has come for the Democratic Party to come out of the shadow of states’ rights and walk forthrightly into the bright sunshine of human rights.”

When Humphrey delivered this line, his raspy voice nearly at a shout, the plucky young Minneapolis mayor had America’s shoddy record of domestic racism at the forefront of his mind. His paramount goal was to marshal votes for Harry Truman and the legislative recommendations of Truman’s special commission on civil rights, so most historians quote Humphrey’s famous words

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without comment, apparently considering “human rights” to be an interchangeable synonym for “civil rights.” Yet other bits of Humphrey’s speech suggest that his juxtaposition of states’ rights and human rights was a deliberate and meaningful reference to the international context. Over the eighteen months prior to Humphrey’s Philadelphia address, the United Nations (UN) Commission on Human Rights held periodic meetings to negotiate terms for an international bill of rights. With “two billion members of the human family” looking to the United States for world leadership, Humphrey maintained, America could ill afford to ignore the groundswell of human rights protests. The doctrine of states’ rights consigned the United States to global isolation and left the nation out of step with the promising direction of postwar change. After the applause that greeted the “sunshine of human rights” remark had died down, Humphrey declared that “people—human beings” were the predominant “issue of the twentieth century,” and he exhorted the Democratic Party to align its values with what he perceived as the emerging values of the postwar world.

The soon-to-be-Minnesota senator was among the segment of the American policymaking establishment who saw the changing world of the late 1940s as a moment of opportunity, even a moment of inspiration, for the United States. The southern delegates who filed out of the convention hall, on the other hand, bore witness to the yawning political fault line that Humphrey’s speech had cracked wide open. Human rights protests gained unmistakable power in

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the postwar world, and southern conservatives were as keenly aware of this fact as liberal northerners. But where Humphrey saw brilliant sunshine, conservative Democrats sensed a gathering thundercloud.

Certainly the domestic civil rights debate drove an enormous wedge into the postwar Democratic Party. However, over the course of Truman’s second term and into the 1950s, liberal Democrats and conservative southern Democrats increasingly lined up on opposite sides of international human rights questions as well. As representatives from Asia, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Africa worked to transform the United Nations from a peacekeeping body to an agent for human rights reform, the white South grew increasingly resistant to U.S. participation in the international organization. The domestic politics of race drove the region’s animosity toward the UN, but events beyond American borders also convinced the white South to assume certain ideological and policy positions. A comprehensive account of the rupturing Democratic Party must integrate the political narratives of American civil rights and international human rights.

Before we may turn to the crux of this chapter’s story—to explore why white conservative southerners harbored such ill will toward the UN and its founding ideals—we must examine what I shall call the “human rights moment” from two different perspectives. First, the chapter narrates the emergence of the modern doctrine of human rights and tries to recreate the palpable sense of hope and change that accompanied the end of World War II. Then, relying heavily on the report of Harry Truman’s Presidential Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR), the chapter explores how the international politics of human rights were redirecting the course of political liberalism in the United States. These two
intersecting tales, together, furnish the context to fully understand why conservative white southerners feared the United Nations as intensely as they did.

* * *

Before we begin, a brief word on definitions: The academic study of human rights remains in adolescence, although scholars with a range of specialties, including historians of American foreign relations, recently have turned to the subject with vigor. As might be expected for a subject as broad in scope as human rights, scholarly studies inevitably run headlong into questions of definition: what, precisely, does the category of human rights entail? For historians trying to trace the origins and intellectual genesis of a human rights doctrine, definitional problems are even more acute. Does it make sense to think about eighteenth- or nineteenth-century philosophies of human rights? How should we categorize, for instance, the American Declaration of Independence or the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen? Certainly both are landmark statements on the rights of individuals, but neither purported to extend to all of humanity—rather, both contained unspoken qualifications based on race, nationality, and sex.3

Since it is well beyond the scope of this project to parse the precise origins of the modern ideology of human rights, I shall apply a less sweeping, more historically contingent definition of “human rights.” Paul Gordon Lauren, author of a respected synthesis on international human rights, supplies a

working definition that this chapter will adopt. Lauren culls several essential beliefs from the diverse, multinational sources of human rights philosophy: the notion that “all people” should “enjoy certain basic and inherent rights simply by virtue of being human beings”; that these rights were due to “all men, women, and children on earth as members born into the same human family”; and that this common humanity might create “a world without borders or other distinctions that divide people,” where “gender, race, caste or class, religion, political belief, ethnicity, or nationality” had no bearing on the guarantee of rights. These are essentially the concepts inscribed in the Preamble to the United Nations Charter and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Throughout this dissertation, when I refer to an ideology of human rights or a human rights doctrine, I mean a philosophy where the condition of being human is sufficient for the provision of basic rights and freedoms and where discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, or sex is expressly prohibited.4

I. THE POSTWAR WORLD AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOMENT

The Atlantic Charter was supposed to cause a stir. Outlining in fewer than four hundred words a vision for the postwar peace, the document aimed to inject a sense of purpose and a moral heft into the fight against international fascism. Still, when Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill hammered out the Charter’s tenets aboard the British ship Prince of Wales in August 1941, neither

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man fully foresaw the far-reaching impacts that the pithy statement ultimately would have.\textsuperscript{5}

Roosevelt and Churchill intended Americans, Britons, and West Europeans to be the primary receptors for the Charter’s message. Yet nestled among the eight “common principles” were a handful of phrases that coursed and crackled, lightening-like, through the colonial world. The president of an ascendant world superpower and the prime minister of the world’s largest imperial ruler had pledged to “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live” and expressed the “wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.” Certainly the United States and Great Britain had made these types of soaring rhetorical promises before 1941. But the sixth of the Charter’s eight points contained a string of words, added at the eleventh hour, with truly “radical implications,” to quote historian Elizabeth Borgwardt.\textsuperscript{6}

In point six the two heads of state proclaimed that the postwar peace should “afford assurance that all the men in all the lands may live out their lives in freedom from fear and want.” Perhaps they anticipated that the words lifted from Roosevelt’s triumphant January 1941 message to Congress—“freedom from fear and want”—would prove to be the Charter’s most intoxicating image. Instead it was the clause “all the men in all the lands” that reverberated with the greatest force. As Borgwardt maintains, the “all the men” clause became a

\textsuperscript{5} For the full text of the Atlantic Charter and historical essays on its context, see Douglas Brinkley and David R. Facey-Crowther, eds., \textit{The Atlantic Charter} (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994).

milestone in the history of international human rights. Not only did the words “all the lands” imply a truly global reach, but the phrase “all the men” also indicated that the Charter’s principles applied to individuals as well as to nation-states."

Rather unintentionally, then, the Atlantic Charter accelerated a chain reaction in international affairs. Roosevelt and Churchill’s compact appeared before the United States even had entered World War II and four long years prior to Japan’s surrender, but as the war years passed the Atlantic Charter came to function both as a blueprint for the peace and as a powerful symbol of hope. In a very real sense the Charter’s fateful words “all the men in all the lands” inaugurated a new framework for thinking about human equality and supplied a new language for talking about international human rights.

* * *

In its content and in its unforeseen consequences, the Atlantic Charter was redolent of another shimmering ideal for a postwar world: President Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, first presented to Congress in January 1918. At the Paris Peace Conference the following year, Wilson aspired—unsuccessfully—to build a post–World War I world order on principles of free seas, free trade, open diplomacy, self-determination, and collective security through a League of Nations. European peace negotiators chiseled away at Wilson’s anticolonial tenets, and Wilson’s Republican foes in the U.S. Congress signed the death sentence for American participation in the League of Nations. Even without

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these external restraints Wilson's proposals contained limitations and exclusions: for instance, full independence for Asian, African, and Caribbean colonies (including those held by the United States) was never on the table.

But Wilson's eloquent pronouncements rebounded in unexpected ways. Delegations of Serbs, Indians, Jews, Arabs, Senegalese, and many other groups traveled to Paris, brimming with hope that the peace treaty might fulfill their desires for independent self-governing states. In perhaps the most famous episode, the Vietnamese nationalist Ho Chi Minh, under the pseudonym "Nguyen Ai Quoc" (Nguyen the Patriot), implored Wilson to make good on the promise of universal self-determination at the 1919 conference. Countless nongovernmental organizations also flocked to Paris to put issues like women's rights and the rights of ethnic minorities on the agenda. Historian Erez Manela has argued that Wilson's brand of liberal internationalism found an "unintended but eager audience" in places as diverse as China, Korea, Egypt, and India. Manela wisely dacks the suggestion that Wilson created the drive for self-determination in East Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern territories. Still, he concludes that the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 piqued the hopes and anticolonial aspirations of "colonized, marginalized, and stateless peoples from all over the world." The American president's ideals of self-determination and openness in international relations "took on a life of their own" in the world beyond Europe, and, quite unwittingly, Wilson—and World War I itself—helped transform anticolonial nationalism into "a major force in world affairs."\(^8\)

Similarly, the Atlantic Charter served as a catalyst for protest movements already underway in different places around the world. International observers immediately grasped the revolutionary potential that lay within Churchill and Roosevelt’s August 1941 joint declaration. A testy Churchill had to arrange an unscheduled appearance before the House of Commons to clarify that the Atlantic Charter referred to the territories “under the Nazi yoke,” not to the “regions whose peoples owe allegiance to the British crown,” and that he had no intention of liquidating the Empire.⁹

Churchill’s protestations notwithstanding, prominent anticolonial activists harnessed the Charter’s language to their goals. In the Dutch East Indies the nationalist leader Mohammed Hatta insisted that the Charter should guarantee Indonesian independence after the war. “Does not,” he asked, “the ‘Atlantic Charter’ carry the solemn assurance of the Big Powers that they ‘recognize the right of all peoples to live under a government of their own choice?’”¹⁰ Mohandas Gandhi shrewdly pointed out that the exalted language of the Atlantic Charter “sound[ed] hollow so long as India, and for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and American has the Negro problem in her own home.” In South Africa late in 1943, the African National Congress released a new organizational charter. Known as “African Claims,” the document reprised the Atlantic Charter’s structure. Writing from “the standpoint of the African in the Union of South Africa,” the African Claims used a line-by-line analysis of the Atlantic Charter to demand legal, economic, and political equality for black

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South Africans. The eminent South African leader Nelson Mandela later remarked that the Atlantic Charter “reaffirmed faith in the dignity of each human being.”\textsuperscript{11} And, closer to home for Roosevelt, African American leaders yoked the values of the Atlantic Charter to their campaign against discrimination, disfranchisement, and racial violence.\textsuperscript{12} The transformation put in motion by the Atlantic Charter was arguably more qualitative than material; nevertheless, the document provided a focal point for the surge of postwar protests against racial discrimination and colonialism. The words of Hatta, Gandhi, and Mandela hint at the mounting international pressures on the United States to, as Humphrey put it, step into the sunshine of human rights.

With the ink on the Atlantic Charter barely dry, Japan’s December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor propelled America into the global war. On the first day of 1942 twenty-six countries, soon to be joined by twenty others, issued the Declaration of the United Nations—another indication that the Charter had sent enduring aftershocks through the world community. The declaration’s most important purpose was to cement a military alliance against the Axis powers. Yet signatory nations also endorsed the principles enumerated in the Atlantic Charter, and they assented to “preserve human rights and justice in their own lands as well as in other lands.” In this sense, the Charter helped break ground for the postwar establishment of the United Nations.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11} Gandhi quoted in Borgwardt, \textit{A New Deal for the World}, 8–9; on Mandela, see ibid., 29, and Lauren, \textit{Evolution of International Human Rights}, 139.

\textsuperscript{12} Anderson, \textit{Eyes off the Prize}, 17.

\textsuperscript{13} Lauren, \textit{Evolution of International Human Rights}, 140, 155.
Roosevelt took another significant step toward translating the Charter’s ideals into a permanent international institution when he established an Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy that same year. The president tapped seasoned State Department diplomat Sumner Welles—a man with deep personal convictions about humanitarianism and human rights—to chair the Subcommittee on Political Problems, which broached the delicate subject of a new supra-national organization. The subcommittee recommended that the postwar peace treaty include an international bill of rights. Venturing into a minefield of unresolved controversies, it also contended that the protection of human rights had to transcend the jurisdiction of individual nation-states:

These human rights shall be guaranteed by and constitute a part of the supreme law of each state and shall be observed and enforced...without discrimination on the basis of nationality, language, race, political opinion, or religious belief, any law or constitutional provision to the contrary notwithstanding.\(^{14}\)

Here, Welles elaborated on the Atlantic Charter’s “all the men in all the lands” clause; to be meaningful, the notion of human rights had to apply to all individuals, regardless of background and regardless of internal national laws. Immediately the committee’s work elicited scorn from powerful figures like Secretary of State Cordell Hull, who thought Welles’s vision fanciful and utterly unfeasible.

Such doses of hardheaded realism did little to subdue the swell of enthusiasm for an international bill of rights. In the U.S. and around the world, groups of private citizens and nongovernmental organizations lobbied Allied leaders to issue a meaningful statement on human rights. One of the most

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 158.
influential, the U.S.-based Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, took on the responsibility of selling the idea of a permanent United Nations to the American public, hoping to avert an eruption of American isolationism such as had doomed Wilson's League of Nations. With financing from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Commission issued a series of reports in support of a strong, active international peacekeeping body. Their fourth and final report endorsed "the creation of a Permanent United Nations Commission on Human Rights...to deal with the protection of human rights wherever their violation." African Americans and anticolonial nationalists—sometimes working collaboratively—also mobilized to fight for an international organization with legitimate power to protect human rights. Paul Gordon Lauren, a pioneering historian of international human rights, heaps credit on citizen-activists, contending that nongovernmental activists were instrumental in the creation of a new, global language of human rights.  

Hoping for a revolutionary expansion of human freedom, many of these activists were dismayed and chagrined with the results of the 1944 summit at Dumbarton Oaks. Even Nazi atrocities and the sheer scale of World War II's destructiveness were insufficient to jar the great-power nations into ceding any consequential degree of national sovereignty. Representatives from the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China assembled at Dumbarton Oaks, a sprawling estate near Washington, D.C., to sketch plans for a permanent

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international organization. The soon-to-be-victorious Allied powers approved a basic framework for the United Nations, featuring a strong Security Council, composed of the four great powers, and a weaker General Assembly, in which all nations of the world would have representation.

China’s delegation did the most to put human rights on the agenda at Dumbarton Oaks. Lead Chinese negotiator Wellington Koo wanted to bind the new United Nations to “the right of self-determination” and “the equality of all states and all races.” These proposed clauses met open hostility from the American, British, and Soviet representatives. On the topic of human rights the United States offered a tepid statement for consideration—one that emphasized the duty of each individual nation-state to protect “human rights and fundamental freedoms” within its own borders and insisted that the UN “refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of any state”—only to watch this mild clause shot down by the Brits and the Soviets, who thought it too radical. Simply put, the “Big Three” leaders saw the United Nations primarily as an instrument for maintaining collective peace and security, not as a guarantor of human rights.17

But the Great Power nations failed to comprehend what Lauren describes as the “power of the visions of human rights” that had emerged during the war years. As Lauren quips, “Crusades once unleashed are not easily reined in or halted.” Lauren may overstate the sense of inexorable momentum, but after

Dumbarton Oaks international human rights protesters redoubled their pressure-campaigns on the Allied nations.

The euphoric atmosphere at the inaugural United Nations Conference on International Organization (UNCIO) confirmed that the conservatism of the Great Powers had not deterred those determined to make human rights a priority. The historic meeting convened in April 1945, in San Francisco, California. Using the Dumbarton Oaks plans as a baseline, UNCIO participants were charged with drafting and ratifying a charter for the United Nations. Immediately, delegates from the Asian and African continents signaled their discontent with the Great Powers’ vision for the permanent international organization—and demonstrated their expectation that the UN make good on the promise of “all the men in all the lands.” An Egyptian representative, for instance, conceded that Dumbarton Oaks had placed “limits” on the U.N.’s jurisdiction and had deemphasized human rights in favor of collective security. Still, encapsulating the reigning spirit in San Francisco, he remarked: “It is however indubitable that the principles of the Atlantic Charter have fostered so much hope throughout the world, that they ought to be put forward as the aims of the new World Organization.” India’s Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, sister of Indian nationalist Jawaharlal Nehru and a prominent international activist, implored UNCIO participants to draft a charter to protect “fundamental human rights for all men and women, irrespective of race, color, or creed.” The Filipino

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18 For instance, in a speech at the San Francisco conference that urged delegates to add a specific prohibition on racism to the UN Charter, Carlos Romulo of the Philippines referred to “flame of hope that swept the Far East when the Atlantic Charter was made known to the world. Everywhere these people asked the questions: Is the Atlantic Charter also for the Pacific? Is it for one side of the world, and not for the other?” Romulo quoted in Lauren, Power and Prejudice, 165.
delegation urged conference-goers to act “in the spirit of brotherhood and racial equality.” When representatives from all around the world gathered in San Francisco, the Great Powers found themselves under intense pressure to contend with the subject that closed sessions of Dumbarton Oaks had largely ignored: human rights.\(^\text{19}\)

The final product of UNCIO—the Charter of the United Nations, adopted June 26, 1945—testified to the success of these steady human rights crusades. Although many activists and nationalist leaders left San Francisco disappointed that the Charter had not expressly condemned racial discrimination or colonialism, the UN Charter had far more to say about human equality and human freedom than the relatively modest Dumbarton Oaks blueprint. The Charter’s preamble expressed “faith in fundamental human rights...in the equal rights of men and women of nations large and small,” and the first Article proclaimed that human rights should be applied “without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.”\(^\text{20}\)

After the San Francisco conference adopted an organizational charter, the work of interpreting the UN’s reach and scope began. Another round of power-struggles ensued: the same member-states that had campaigned for a strong human rights provision in the Charter also prodded the UN to draft an international bill of human rights and take decisive action to end institutionalized racism. Only a year after UNCIO adjourned, at the first full

\(^{19}\) Egyptian representative quoted in Lauren, *Evolution of International Human Rights*, 181; Pandit and the spokesperson for the Philippines quoted in ibid., 183.

session of the United Nations, representatives from Egypt offered an antidis
discrimination resolution for the General Assembly’s consideration. The
proposal to condemn all forms of religious and racial prejudice met resounding
approval from the Latin American, Asian, and Middle Eastern delegates, who
called the issue of racism “vital,” “one of the most important questions which the
conscience of this august Assembly must face.” ²¹

But these attempts to compel UN action on racial discrimination were
greatly encumbered by what is commonly known as the “domestic jurisdiction”
clause of the UN Charter. Stowed away in the seventh section of Article 2, easily
missed amid the exalted language on rights, the domestic jurisdiction clause
read: “Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United
Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic
jurisdiction of any state or shall require Members to submit such matters to
settlement.” The domestic jurisdiction clause may have saved the UN Charter
from suffering the same fate that befell Wilson’s League of Nations when it came
before the U.S. Senate for ratification, but it also severely curtailed the UN’s
power to address human rights violations within the borders of a particular
nation-state. ²²

Undeterred, in June 1946 India appealed to the international body on
behalf of the Indian-origin laborers in the Union of South Africa. South African
law placed restrictions on Indians’ ability to buy land or move freely, and the
government of India claimed that the racist policies flouted UN treaties. South

²¹ Lauren, Evolution of International Human Rights, 205.

African officials darted for cover under the domestic jurisdiction clause, asserting that the international community had no sovereignty over its internal laws and practices. Indian leader Vijaya Pandit nonetheless believed South Africa could serve as a “test case” for the new international body: would the UN act to enforce the principles enshrined in its charter? “Millions of voiceless people...are looking to us for justice,” Pandit proclaimed. In a vote that heralded a deepening crack within the infant United Nations, the General Assembly passed a resolution proclaiming that South Africa’s apartheid regime was “contrary to the Charter” of the organization and urging reform. The United States abstained from the vote, and Britain, Belgium, Canada, and other predominantly white Western powers sided with South Africa.\footnote{Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 86–88; Lauren, *Power and Prejudice*, 182–83.} Since the domestic jurisdiction clause stood in direct tension with the Charter’s professed ideals, nations like India believed they could use political pressure to compel the international community to act.

With international pressures for genuine human rights reform showing little sign of abating, the Assembly authorized the creation of a permanent Commission on Human Rights and a new UN division on human rights. Eleanor Roosevelt assumed leadership of the new commission. In January 1947 representatives from China, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, Lebanon, the Philippines, India, Chile, Panama, Iran, and Uruguay gathered together to debate what a human rights declaration should entail, and, not surprisingly, deep
philosophical and political clashes developed. Nor did it help that the work of
the Commission coincided with the rapid deterioration of U.S.-Soviet relations.24

Remarkably, despite the hardening of Cold War tensions and the
extraordinary range of competing interests, the Commission on Human Rights
successfully produced a draft declaration on human rights during its third
session in May and June 1948. A subcommittee of the General Assembly,
charged with reviewing the draft, held almost ninety meetings and fielded just
shy of 170 proposed amendments—and this for a declaration that had no binding
authority. After further rounds of spirited debate, on December 10, 1948, the
General Assembly of the United Nations voted forty-eight to zero (with eight
abstentions) to adopt the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.25

The Declaration was simply that: a declaration, without jurisdictional
authority and without an apparatus to force compliance with the stated
principles. Although the Commission on Human Rights drafted a human rights
covenant in 1953, which would have elevated the Declaration to the status of
legally binding international treaty, the escalating Cold War shelved this
proposal indefinitely. Still, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
carried undeniable symbolic power. It crowned years of tenacious campaigning
by world leaders and by private citizens, often working through transnational
organizations. In the years after the 1948 Universal Declaration came to fruition
these international political forces continued to push to make human rights and
the principles of the Atlantic Charter a reality. By the end of Truman’s first term,

human rights protests had gained sufficient energy and momentum that politically active Americans—liberal and conservative—had to contend with the gale force of the human rights moment.

II. AMERICAN LIBERALISM AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOMENT

Formally submitting the United Nations Charter to the U.S. Senate for ratification, President Harry Truman—perhaps a bit wryly—remarked that “[n]o international document has been drawn in a greater glare of publicity than this one.”26 Indeed, at every stage of development, groups of private American citizens clamored for a voice in shaping the new United Nations Organization. So insistent were the demands and so intense was the public pressure that the State Department consented to allow forty-two organizations to send “consultants” to the 1945 San Francisco conference to participate in drafting the Charter.

Although the consultants had neither a clearly defined role nor any real power—their official capacity was to supply “opinions and advice” to the U.S delegation—a menagerie of organizations sent representatives to the UN. Overwhelmingly, the groups stood for ecumenical, liberal, internationalist values; many also favored domestic reforms in the areas of civil rights and immigration policy. They included the NAACP, the American Jewish Conference (AJC), the Federal Council of Churches, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the American Federation of Labor, the League of Women Voters, and the Council on Foreign Relations, although a smattering of more

conservative groups, such as the National Association of Manufacturers, also attended the San Francisco meeting. Spokespersons from the left-leaning groups pleaded with chief U.S. negotiator Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinus Jr. to make human rights a priority in the United Nations Charter.\textsuperscript{27} Many of these groups had mobilized well before the German and Japanese surrenders were on the horizon, evidence that private American citizens contributed eagerly to the international upsurge of human rights protests.

After the UN came into existence another crop of citizen-lobby groups sprung up to support the international organization and its values: the Americans United for World Organization; Women United for the United Nations; and the American Association for the United Nations (AAUN), to name several of the most significant.\textsuperscript{28} AAUN activism aptly illustrated how the evolving global context created new forms of domestic liberal activism. An offshoot of the Carnegie Endowment’s Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, the AAUN vigorously promoted multilateralism in U.S. foreign policy, a strengthened human rights doctrine, and the ideal of a unified human family.

Director Clark Eichelberger praised the UN General Assembly as an idyllic


\textsuperscript{28} Many of these organizations regularly testified before Congress; see, for instance, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Charter of the United Nations, 432–33, 452–55 (representatives from the Americans United for World Organization); and 510–14 (American Association for the United Nations). On Women United for the United Nations, see Nunnely Olsen, “One Nation, One World.”
"world's town meeting," where "all nations, irrespective of size" could gather as equals; attendees at the AAUN's 1951 conference in Chicago affirmed their belief that "all people are equal and united in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God." The group regularly lobbied for a binding Covenant on Human Rights that would give teeth to the 1948 Universal Declaration.29

The earnest campaigning of these American citizen-organizations demonstrated yet another layer of public pressure facing U.S. policymaking elites: the domestic political campaigns of citizens' groups. Generally speaking, postwar liberals warmly embraced a vision of a progressive United Nations, designed to maintain world peace and to safeguard the fundamental rights of all people. Certainly some groups championed a more revolutionary vision than others—and no subset of U.S. political activists labored as tirelessly for international human rights as African Americans.30 Regardless, as Humphrey's 1948 convention speech hinted, white liberals as well as black Americans reshaped their political philosophies in response to the changing conditions of


the postwar world. This re-imagined liberal vision layered international issues—such as multilateral cooperation and the importance of a positive world image of the United States—with domestic issues, such as civil rights and U.S. immigration policy. Though we should be wary of overstating the white liberal commitment to genuine racial equality at home or abroad, this section aims to suggest how the global politics of the human rights were exerting a measurable pull over the American politics of race.

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From the vantage point of white postwar liberals, the global politics of human rights always folded into the global politics of the Cold War. The start of the Cold War and the nightmares of fascism transformed the American Left. Popular Front politics fitfully gave way to a new breed of liberalism—a "fighting faith," to quote the primer of postwar liberalism, Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s The Vital Center. Disabused of much of its prewar utopian idealism, the new liberalism exhorted its followers to steel themselves for battle against Communism, to collapse any space for compromise or collaboration with the totalitarian menace. In this spirit, the vital-center liberals were eager to erect another sort of iron curtain: an impenetrable wall separating themselves from activists that harbored Marxist or leftist sympathies, a consuming desire that confined and checked the liberal reform vision.\(^{31}\)

As mainstream white liberalism shed some of its prewar radicalism, a new package of legislative recommendations emerged. This program called for gradual civil rights reform, an overhaul of America’s restrictive immigration and naturalization system, a minimum wage hike, federal housing programs, and infusions of economic aid in developing states around the world. Cold War liberals placed their faith in progressive social policies like these to mitigate the desperate circumstances that they believed engendered radicalism and Communism.\textsuperscript{32} Sensing the mounting international pressures to end racial discrimination and promote human rights reform, anticommmunist liberals worried that America’s reputation—and with it, America’s strategic position in the global Cold War—would suffer without U.S. support for the United Nations and its ideals.

America’s ascent to a position of Cold War superpower also subjected the nation’s policies to a previously unknown degree of external scrutiny. Not only did the U.S. rivalry with the Soviet Union and Communist China make diplomatic officials more sensitive to criticism about American hypocrisy, but the creation of the United Nations also furnished a new venue where U.S. ambassadors had to interact face-to-face with Asian, Arabic, and Latin American representatives, many of whom considered racial equality and anticolonialism—not anticommmunism—the crucial, defining issues for the postwar world.

America’s prominent stature at the United Nations only magnified the global spotlight shining on U.S. race relations, a point raised by the powerful labor leader and Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) member Walter Reuther. Speaking in May 1947, shortly after an all-white jury in South Carolina acquitted a group of white men who had confessed to the lynching and near-decapitation of Willie Earle, an African American man, Reuther told Truman: “From all corners of the Earth, the eyes of the people of many races and colors are turned upon American today to see if we can practice the principles we preach in the councils of the United Nations.”33

Indeed, just a few months later, two different African American organizations tried to use the United Nations and the international community as a weapon in their fight against legalized racism. Very shortly before India challenged South African law before the United Nations, the National Negro Congress (NNC) brought its own statement of grievances before the international body. On June 6, 1946, the left-wing African American organization submitted a petition, written by the historian Herbert Aptheker, alleging that conditions for black Americans were “intolerable” and charging that the U.S. government had stood by idly as blacks were “terrorized,” “lynched” and “segregated like pariahs.” Calling the United Nations “the highest court of mankind,” Aptheker stated that the NNC felt “forced” to turn to international channels for redress. The NNC, however, plagued by internal discord, disorganization, and financial

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33 Reuther quoted in Anderson, Eyes Off the Prize, 100.
shortfalls, failed to muster enough organizational energy to follow through with the petition, and the effort fizzled.  

But the NNC’s disappointment did not stymie a second, better-organized attempt by the NAACP. W. E. B. Du Bois set out to compile an exhaustive report on violations of African Americans’ human rights. A rash of murders and gruesome acts of violence against returning black war veterans, combined with the tensions surrounding housing shortages in the urban North, supplied Du Bois with ample material. After more than a year of planning, bargaining, and strategizing, the NAACP successfully filed a petition to the Human Rights Division of the United Nations in late October 1947. Both the mainstream press and major black newspapers swiftly picked up the story of “An Appeal to the World: A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States of America and An Appeal to the United Nations for Redress.” So too did news organs in the Soviet Union, which, as Du Bois had hoped, leaped at the chance to expose American hypocrisy. Furious, the white American liberals at the UN maneuvered to keep the NAACP petition off the agenda, but even the efforts of Eleanor Roosevelt could not silence the publicity.  

As the NAACP attempted to yoke the power of the UN’s human rights principles to their battle to upend Jim Crow in the United States, in 1946 a group of American attorneys argued that the United States had to enact an anti-

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34 For discussion of the NNC’s petition, see Anderson, Eyes off the Prize, 81; Plummer, Rising Wind, 171–75; and David Henry Anthony III, Max Yergan: Race Man, Internationalist, Cold Warrior (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 225–27.

35 Anderson, Eyes off the Prize, pp. 93–108, gives the NAACP’s petition the most extensive study.
lyching law in order to comply with the terms of the United Nations Charter. The National Lawyers Guild, a progressive alternative to the more staid American Bar Association, pointed to Article 55 and 56 of the UN Charter, in which signatory nations had pledged to protect "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion."36

Few white anticommmunist liberals were willing to go so far as to claim that the UN Charter legally obligated the United States to pass anti-discrimination acts; however, many Cold War liberals did suggest the United Nations created a moral imperative to reform American racial practices. Beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s well-placed members of the Truman administration acknowledged that racist practices at home threatened to compromise U.S. foreign policy objectives. Dean Rusk, whose duties in the State Department at the time included relations with the UN, penned a November 1947 memo noting that the international press frequently covered incidents of racial violence or discrimination in the U.S., and Secretary of State Dean Acheson remarked, "[T]he existence of discrimination against minority groups in this country has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries."37

What these State Department officials admitted with a note of reluctance, liberal lawmakers and organizers proclaimed more vigorously: to restore the gloss on America's international image, the United States had to keep pace with


the worldwide human rights protests and curb the worst human rights violations in the United States. Humphrey’s thunderous oratory before the 1948 Democratic convention cast America’s civil rights dilemma as a problem of international relevance. The United States must stake out a “morally sound position,” said Humphrey, articulating what many liberal Democrats already believed and what conservative southern Democrats did not want to hear. “We can’t use a double standard ... for measuring our own and other people’s policies. Our demands for democratic practices in other lands will be no more effective than the guarantee of those practices in our own country.”38 Longtime diplomat and liberal icon Chester Bowles framed the matter even more plainly in a 1952 speech at Yale. “The colored peoples of Asia and Africa...seldom think about the United States without considering the limitations under which our 13 million Negroes are living. I can think of no single thing that would be more helpful to us in Asia than the achievement of racial harmony in America.”39

Eager to ward off allegations of American hypocrisy that might taint U.S. leadership at the United Nations, the AAUN backed legislation to end segregation and racism at home. As the group’s 1951 conference resolution contended, the United States could not maintain “the moral position of our country in world councils...unless at home we raise our own standards by eliminating practices of racial and religious discrimination.” By the AAUN’s third annual conference in 1953, the organization’s calls for domestic race reform

38 Transcript, Humphrey speech, available at Minnesota Historical Society website.

had intensified further. "Racial segregation and discrimination are inconsistent with the basic principles of our own Constitution and of the United Nations Charter," the group proclaimed, and segregation laws "retard United States leadership in the councils of the United Nations." In the hopeful wake created by the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, liberal citizen-lobby groups like the AAUN pressured U.S. policymakers to strengthen America's moral position at the UN through civil rights and immigration reform.

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One of the crowning documents of early Cold War liberalism, the report of Harry S. Truman's Presidential Committee on Civil Rights (PCCR), perhaps most effectively demonstrates the interactive relationship between Cold War liberalism, human rights politics, and America's politics of race. Truman convened the PCCR largely in response to the string of violence that greeted returning African American war veterans; in early December 1946, after several gruesome—and highly publicized—instances of mob violence against black ex-servicemen, Truman, acting on advice from close aides, issued an executive order and created the PCCR. But, along with the egregious vigilante attacks within the United States, both Truman and the members of his special commission were cognizant of the pressures for change from outside the United States.

The report of the PCCR, To Secure These Rights, issued in late October 1947, invoked the "growing international implications" of discrimination in the United States to justify speedy implementation of civil rights legislation. As the report's authors observed, the "the subject of human rights" had become "a major

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concern of the United Nations." Facing a world atmosphere of heightened sensitivity to human rights violations, the United States had little choice but to stay in tune with global forces. "It would indeed be ironical," the authors commented, "if in our own country, the argument should prevail that safeguarding the rights of the individual is the exclusive, or even the primary concern of local government." Prefiguring Humphrey's convention speech, the PCCR portrayed southern notions of states' rights as antithetical to the progress of world history.41

Similarly, when Truman presented the PCCR recommendations to Congress in February 1948, his introductory remarks referred to "essential human rights" rather than the narrower concept of "civil rights." The president stressed the need to align American policy with the direction of global change; as he reminded members of Congress, concurrent with the PCCR's work, "the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations is now engaged in preparing an international bill of human rights by which the nations of the world may bind themselves by international covenant to give effect to basic human rights and fundamental freedoms." If the United States was to protect its "moral position" in the world and its "leadership" against totalitarianism, the nation could ill afford to ignore these global outcries for greater equality and human rights. Truman, in other words, cited the human rights work of the United Nations to underscore the urgency of civil rights reform in the United States.42

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Indeed, the PCCR’s recommendations reflected the committee’s belief that discrimination against “any racial, religious, or national group in the United States” presented a “serious obstacle” to the foreign policy aims of the United States—the comprehensive package of reform legislation covered African American civil rights issues, but it also tackled other forms of legalized racism that tainted America’s international reputation. The first six items on the ten-point program, which Truman submitted to Congress in February 1948, included the creation of a Civil Rights division in the Department of Justice, an anti-lynching law, and complete repeal of poll taxes and other barriers to the franchise. \(^{43}\) Truman and the PCCR also classified the unequal political status of U.S. territories and the entrenched discrimination against Asian-Americas as pressing civil rights problems. Although these topics often have been overshadowed by a focus on African American civil rights, Truman’s final four recommendations indicate how global concerns directed the PCCR’s attention.

PCCR executive secretary Robert K. Carr saw U.S. overseas territories as a prime opportunity to mend America’s battered international image. Writing in June 1947, Carr contended, “Our treatment of our dependencies is vital to the strength of our foreign policy....The United States also has a reputation to uphold in the eyes of the dependent peoples of the world.”\(^ {44}\) Aiming to mollify those “dependent peoples of the world,” Truman’s 1948 special message to Congress called for expanded self-government for the territory of Washington

\(^{43}\) To Secure These Rights, 146-47; 151-73.

\(^{44}\) See Robert K. Carr to PCCR members, June 19, 1947, folder “Civil Rights in Our Dependencies,” box 17, Records of the PCCR (RG 220), Truman Library.
D.C., since, as a presidential aide noted, racism in the nation’s capital “create[d] a symbol of American discrimination” and cast doubt on America’s “sincerity in international affairs.”45 The president further endorsed statehood for Hawaii and Alaska, a “grant of citizenship” for Guam and American Samoa, and an expanded “measure of self-government” for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The PCCR urged Congress to end what committee member Channing Tobias called the “notorious” and “rigid racial discrimination and segregation” in the Panama Canal Zone. 46

On the topic of discrimination against Asian-origin Americans—a subject that attracted even more attention from lawmakers after 1949, when the Cold War arrived in East Asia—the PCCR advocated the repeal of laws that forbid aliens from owning land or becoming naturalized citizens, as well as restitution for Japanese-Americans who had been interned during World War II. The committee and the president added immigration and naturalization reform to their agenda: “All properly qualified legal residents of the United States,” Truman told Congress, should be permitted to become naturalized, fully equal citizens. (A few years later, in September 1952, Truman established the President’s Commission on Immigration and Naturalization [PCIN], after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 fortified the national origins quota

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46 Truman, Message to the Congress, February 2, 1948, box 26, Nash files, Truman Library. On Tobias and the Panama Canal Zone, see bound notebook, “Minutes of Meetings...of PCCR, Hanover, June 30–July 1, 1947,” box 27, Nash files, Truman Library. 679–84 (quotation 683), and To Secure These Rights, 171. On liberals and the Panama Canal Zone, see also Paul Blanshard, “Jim Crow at the Canal,” Survey Graphic (a journal of liberal and progressive opinion), May 1947, 288–89, 314.
system in U.S. immigration policy. The PCIN and Truman, who vetoed the 1952 act, considered the quota system a detriment to U.S. foreign affairs.) Each of these legislative actions, the president concluded, would help the United States retain its leadership position in the world. But failure to act, he implied, would estrange the United States from the world community and undermine international efforts to “build a world family of nations.”

It can hardly be said that the postwar United States government eagerly embraced a strong international human rights agenda—quite the contrary, the U.S., along with other Western powers, obstructed the more revolutionary proposals for change and deliberately hobbled the enforcement power of the United Nations. Nevertheless, the politics of human rights were exerting a real impact on America’s domestic politics. Most significantly, grassroots organizations in the United States applied steady pressure on lawmakers to make the concept of human rights meaningful in postwar America and in the postwar world. In turn, U.S. policymakers and political elites used the creation of the United Nations as a rationale for racial reforms at home.

When white southerners, like those who stormed out of the 1948 Democratic convention, sought to staunch the mounting pressure for civil rights legislation, they were forced to contend with an interconnected web of other issues: the efforts to define the scope and purpose of the infant United Nations; the relationship of the U.S. within the international organization; the obligations for change that came with American global leadership, and many others.

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Postwar liberals were binding civil rights together with other policy recommendations, and conservative southern Democrats had to confront the entire package if they hoped to defend the institutions of Jim Crow segregation.

III. Racial Conservatives and the Politics of Human Rights

As the first year of a new decade dawned, District Attorney Leander H. Perez made the long journey from Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, to the chambers of an office building in Washington, D.C. There, over the final days of January 1950, a subsection of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee convened to review the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and contemplate whether the United States of America would join forty-three other nations in ratifying the Convention.

Responding in large part to revelations of unimaginable Nazi crimes, which fully surfaced only after the German surrender, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted the Genocide Convention in late December 1948. Half a year later, in June 1949, President Harry Truman submitted the text of the Convention to the Senate, along with his recommendation for ratification. Representing the Truman administration’s State Department, Dean Rusk opened the January 1950 Senate hearings. “There can be no doubt,” Rusk intoned, “that the other nations of the world will be tremendously influenced by the action of the United States Senate.” “Our earnest hope,” Rusk continued, was for the U.S. Senate to ratify the Convention promptly and send a message “to the rest of the world that the United States is determined to maintain its moral leadership in international affairs.” Following Rusk came a steady stream of representatives from liberal American citizens’ organizations—several Jewish organizations, the
Federal Council of Churches of Christ, the NAACP, the National Council of Negro Women, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs—all exhorting speedy ratification of the Genocide Convention.49

Then Leander Perez strode to the witness stand. From the opening lines of his prepared statement Perez made his contempt for the treaty plain. Truman staffer Stephen J. Spingarn characterized the Genocide Convention as an attempt to “give legal effect to certain principles found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” and this was precisely what Perez feared.49 The Genocide Convention, he pronounced, was “nothing more than rank meddling in our domestic affairs.” If the Senate gave consent, the ratified treaty “would compromise our system of constitutional government” and “internationalize matters which are solely within our domestic jurisdiction.”

He began his oral testimony calmly, reminding members of the Senate Committee about Article 2, Section 7 of the UN Charter, the domestic jurisdiction clause. In a detached manner he quibbled with the wording of a particular provision, suggesting that the Convention’s phrasing created a loophole that would make it impossible to hold nation-states responsible for genocide. His tone steadily climbing toward shrill, Perez purported to unmask “the real purpose of this so-called Genocide Convention.” The treaty, he stated, “plainly is not aimed against a repetition of the genocide horrors of the Nazis” (a dubious


enough claim, even had it not come from a man with a predilection for vicious anti-Semitic slurs). Perez believed he had sniffed out the real reason why the Truman administration wanted the treaty to pass: to transfer authority over certain criminal investigations from the states to the U.S. federal government. “Federal courts would have exclusive jurisdiction of all matters of prosecution and law enforcement ... of criminal cases coming under any of the broad interpretations that can be placed under these genocide provisions.” In short, Perez thought the Genocide Convention amounted to little more than a backhanded federal attack on lynching and southern-style justice—what he euphemistically referred to as “the municipal sovereignty reserved to all the States of the Union.”

By the time Perez approached the end of his testimony his composure had waned. “The so-called Genocide Convention,” he sputtered, was “a sham and a farce and the propaganda...which has been spread to sell these poor, well-thinking people of the United States to support it is the rankest piece of hypocrisy practiced on the people of this country.” The Convention would obliterate every sacred value that the “patriots who rebelled against the British crown” had died to secure. “If we are men, we will tell those today who are misled and who urge upon you gentlemen of the Senate to ratify this monstrosity, that you will preserve our constitutional form of government, that you will not resort to the dishonest subterfuge of amending and destroying the most precious blood-bought provisions of our Constitution.” The Senate must not permit the “fake, so-called Genocide Convention” to “destroy our American

institutions” or “to deprive the States and the people of the States of their right of self-government.” Thanking the chairman, he left the witness chair.51

A little over a year later, in late May 1951, Mississippi Representative John E. Rankin similarly blasted the United Nations in the chambers of the U.S. House. “Mr. Speaker,” began the southern Democrat, a man cut from the same demagogic, white supremacist cloth as Theodore Bilbo, “the American people are disturbed today as they have never been disturbed before, and they have a right to be.” The enemies of America had infiltrated the United Nations—an organization so iniquitous that, according to Rankin, that “no reference to God Almighty, or to Jesus Christ, is allowed at the opening of their unholy assemblies”—and the international organization was “attempting to interfere with the laws of every State in this Union.”52

The Mississippi congressman laid out his evidence. “They are attempting to outlaw the alien land laws of certain States, when they have no more right to meddle with them than they would have to revoke the Ten Commandments,” Rankin began. He referred to California’s alien land laws, a set of state


regulations dating back to the 1910s that forbade land ownership by any alien resident not eligible for naturalization, precluding Chinese, Japanese, and other East Asian immigrants from owning land in the state. Three years before Rankin’s speech, the U.S. Supreme Court held in Oyama v. California (1948) that the alien land laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment, and in their decision Justices Black and Douglas stated that California’s laws also violated the United Nations’ promise of “human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction for race.” Simply by mentioning the UN in a U.S. domestic court case the Justices set off a maelstrom, drawing fire from the likes of Rankin all the way up to the American Bar Association and setting off a flurry of calls for a constitutional amendment barring treaties from overriding state or national laws.53

The UN, Rankin continued, was “trying to change our marriage laws,” and, indeed, the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights had included an article that read: “men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.” This provision alone was sufficient to convince Rankin and his anti-miscegenation ilk of the UN’s malevolence. Next, he alleged that the UN was “trying to interfere with the school laws in the various States, with the sole purpose of stirring up race trouble throughout the country.” It is not clear whether Rankin had a

specific UN action in mind here or if he simply was reacting to the common
overlap of pro-civil rights and pro-United Nations sentiments. In either case,
Rankin clearly considered the United Nations a menace to his treasured
institutions: states’ rights in lawmaking and rigid segregation for schools and for
intimate relations.

In 1950 and 1951, when Perez and Rankin delivered their respective
diatribes, the NAACP’s legal challenges to school segregation were still wending
their way through the court system. The Supreme Court had issued a few
landmark rulings on discrimination, such as Smith v. Allwright (1944), which
outlawed the whites-only primary, and the Court made two important rulings on
segregated higher education facilities in 1950 [Sweatt v. Painter and McLaurin v.
Oklahoma State Regents]. African American activism also spiked in the immediate
postwar period, especially with respect to voter registration. Still, the Brown
decision—historians’ usual jumping-off point for discussing white resistance to
civil rights—lay several years in the future.55

Nevertheless, these two southern spokesmen for white supremacy could
sense the gathering pressure. Rankin and Perez felt the rumblings of change
from black voter-registration drives, from an increasingly sophisticated NAACP
strategy, and from the Truman White House. However, they also felt the


55 On court cases that preceded Brown, see James T. Patterson, Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil
On black voter-registration drives after Smith v. Allwright, see John Egerton, Speak Now Against the
Day: The Generation Before the Civil Rights Movement in the South (Chapel Hill: University of North
Carolina Press, 1994), 380–82; 394–98; Patricia Sullivan, Days of Hope: Race and Democracy in the
New Deal Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 169–70; 207–10; and Charles
M. Payne, I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle
international buildup of pressure against America’s legally sanctioned racial hierarchy. They realized, in short, that not all threats to their cherished way of life came from within the borders of the United States. Accordingly, they mobilized the forces of resistance against changes to the international and domestic order.

As section 2 suggested, the American liberal establishment constructed an integrated reform philosophy, one that encompassed both domestic civil rights and international human rights issues. When white southern conservatives like Perez or Rankin resisted civil rights legislation, they also had to resist the broader language on international human rights that emerged with vigor in the late 1940s. To be certain, Perez and Rankin both ranked among the most intemperate and vitriolic of the South’s elected officials—Rankin in fact remained in office for scarcely more than a year after the 1951 House speech. But the fact that these retrograde white southerners felt compelled to resist the growing symbolic power of the UN suggests that historians have underestimated both the scope and the duration of southern “massive resistance”—and missed the ways that international changes, as much as civil rights, drove a wedge between the liberal and conservative wings of the midcentury Democratic Party. The remainder of this chapter focuses on the international changes surrounding the UN and its founding documents; the next chapter turns to arguably the most important change of the postwar period, anticolonialism and decolonization.

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Thanks to the Senate’s seniority system for determining committee chairmanships, the white South found itself propitiously positioned to resist international treaties like the Genocide Convention or the proposed Covenant on
Human Rights. Under the Constitution all international treaties required Senate approval, and Dixie Democrats, who enjoyed substantial clout on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, could prevent treaties from even making it to the Senate floor. In 1944 NAACP officer Walter White angrily but accurately observed that southern Democrats, the same men who had stonewalled federal anti-lynching legislation, “head or dominate more than sixty percent of the Senate and House Committee which determine not only the domestic legislation but foreign affairs and the shape of the postwar world.” Texas Democrat Tom Connally, the powerful chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and an inveterate defender of southern states’ rights, headed the U.S. delegation to the 1945 San Francisco meeting that drafted the UN Charter; he personally helped engineer the inclusion of the domestic jurisdiction clause, which undercut the UN’s ability to address human rights violations within the border of any nation-state.\(^56\)

Southern racism also had helped animate anti-internationalist sentiments after World War I, when President Wilson’s League of Nations dream perished on the sword of congressional ratification. In 1919 Missouri Senator James Reed had this to say about American participation in the League of Nations: “Think of submitting questions involving the very life of the United States to a tribunal on which a nigger from Liberia, a nigger from Honduras, a nigger from India . . . each have votes equal to that of the great United States.”\(^57\)

\(^56\) White quoted in Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 31. On southerners blocking legislation from coming to the floor, see ibid., 180.

But after World War II, white southerners as a group were only slightly more inclined than other white Americans to disapprove of an international organization for collective security and peacekeeping. In the mid-1950s and early 1960s the opinion researcher Alfred O. Hero conducted roughly eleven hundred interviews with white southerners on a range of foreign-policy topics. His research, which combined qualitative interview data with numerical information from large-scale polls, revealed no evidence that postwar isolationism was stronger in the South than in other regions. At least in the late 1940s and early 1950s, as Hero explains, white southerners “felt that the United States should help to build a stronger UN” and “that Congress should support the Marshall Plan.”

However, as the 1950s went on, Hero and his team of researchers detected an upward trend in southern anti-internationalist sentiment, especially among those white southerners designated as “segregationists.” Hero used questions such as “In general, do you think Negroes are as intelligent as white people—that is, can they learn just as well if they are given the same education” to delineate segregationists from other white southerners. His opinion research data

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58 Alfred O. Hero, *The Southerner and World Affairs* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 389. In 2006 I contacted Professor Hero by phone at his home in Michigan, inquiring about the full transcripts from his original interviews. Sadly, he informed me that he had disposed of the transcripts about a year earlier, as he no longer had a place to store the files. Nevertheless, his book is an extremely useful compendium of qualitative and quantitative information about the white South and international issues. See also Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1789–1973* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002). Fry writes at a very broad level, analyzing in broad brushstrokes the South’s tendency toward nationalistic, anticomunist policies and disdain for nations of the formerly colonized world. Like Hero, for the period after 1960 Fry too emphasizes that the South was displayed a greater level of “hostility toward the United Nations,” and a predisposition toward “unilateral” approaches to foreign policy, 223. See further discussion on the topic in Alexander DeConde, “The South and Isolationism,” *Journal of Southern History* 24 (August 1958), 332–46; and Irving Howards, “The Influence of Southern Senators on American Foreign Policy from 1939 to 1950” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1955).
suggest that by 1956 segregationists were 50 percent more likely to support U.S.
withdrawal from the United Nations than non-segregationists. Using
newspapers as an additional measure of how pro-segregation views correlated
with foreign policy perspective, Hero further showed that whereas “racially
conservative” newspapers and “racially moderate or liberal” papers had aligned
on “international issues” immediately after World War II, the two camps “were
diverging more and more...on world affairs” into the second half of the 1950s.59

South Carolinian James F. Byrnes, a staunch segregationist who served
briefly as Truman’s secretary of state, provides an anecdotal illustration of the
phenomenon Hero describes. Byrnes began with great faith in the promise of the
UN; he used his 1947 memoir, Speaking Frankly, to indulge in a bit a self-
congratulation with respect to the United Nations. “Without our initiative, the
United Nations probably would not have been created to promote and maintain
international peace and security,” he wrote with an air of satisfaction. And in
1953 Byrnes accepted—over howls of protests from civil rights advocates—
President Eisenhower’s nomination to serve as a U.S. delegate to the UN.60

But with time Byrnes grew disenchanted. A little more than a decade
later, Byrnes bitterly declared, “The United Nations of today is not the
organization we sponsored in 1945.” From his vantage point the United Nations
had strayed alarmingly far from the “primary purpose” that he and other
American diplomats had envisioned. Instead of working “to maintain
international peace and security,” as Byrnes intended, the United Nations had


devolved into an ineffective tool of the "Afro-Asian governments." He accused these nonwestern states of having "ignored" the peacekeeping and security function of the UN, instead acting as though the UN's "primary purpose is to secure the independence of Colonials."\(^{61}\)

Human rights and the elimination of racial discrimination appeared nowhere on Byrnes's agenda for U.S. domestic politics, and he had no interest in seeing the United Nations take on matters of human rights, anticolonialism, or ingrained systems of white supremacy. Yet thanks to steady pressures from nongovernmental organizations and from nations like India, Indonesia, Egypt, and, later, Ghana, the United Nations drifted toward a more activist mission that included human rights and decolonization.\(^{62}\) For instance, some UN member-states continued their crusade to turn the organization into an agent of change for racial minorities and other oppressed groups. In 1950, for instance, a conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released a paper stating that race was a "social myth," not a "biological fact," that "all men belong to the same species," and that antimiscegenation laws had no legitimate or scientific basis (a paper UNESCO later recanted under political pressure).\(^{63}\)

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\(^{61}\) On Byrnes' controversial nomination to the UN, see Anderson, *Eyes off the Prize*, 241–43. James F. Byrnes, "The United States and the United Nations," speech in Jackson, Mississippi, February 6, 1962, transcript copy in folder 2, box 152, Tom Anderson Papers (Collection 157), Special Collections and University Archives, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Eugene (hereafter cited as ORE), both quotations on p. 7.

\(^{62}\) Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 136, explains that the UN effectively became "an anticolonial battlefield."

Racially conservative southerners like Byrnes may have welcomed a multilateral diplomatic organization to preserve global peace—especially since the domestic jurisdiction clause had mollified concerns about national sovereignty—but the segregationist South had no tolerance for a United Nations that promoted universal human rights and self-determination. As Hero’s polling data and the case of James Byrnes suggest, we cannot summarily brush aside white segregationists as knee-jerk isolationists. But the conservative whites clearly grew more and more alarmed as nonwestern nations states gained a voice in the General Assembly, as African Americans like Du Bois or Bunche connected civil rights and human rights, and as the documents like the 1950 Statement on Race appeared.\textsuperscript{64}

As Leander Perez and John Rankin’s testimonies attested, white southern conservatives were panicky over the possibility that the supra-national United Nations would erode local control over law enforcement, education, marriage regulations, economic practices, and daily customs; die-hard segregationists accused liberal policymakers of using UN treaty law as a backdoor entry to expand U.S. federal power with respect to civil rights. And so, in 1951, when Senator John W. Bricker, a Republican from Ohio, proposed a constitutional amendment to make executive agreements and international treaties subject to ratification by two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, and by the House, and by all forty-eight state legislatures, the white South enthusiastically joined the charge. As

\textsuperscript{64} As an example of a conservative who drew negative attention to W. E. B. Du Bois and the NAACP petition, \textit{An Appeal to the World}, see statement of Mrs. Enid H. Grisworld (representing the conservative National Economic Council), Senate Committee on the Judiciary, \textit{Hearings on S. J. Res. 1, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Relative to the Making of Treaties and Executive Agreements} [Bricker Amendment], 83rd Cong., 1st sess., February 18, 19, 25, March 3, 10, 16, 27, 31, and April 6–11, 1953, 175.
they campaigned for checks on the power of treaty law, conservative southerners ventured into alliances with other opponents of the United Nations.\footnote{Historian Duane Tananbaum, The Bricker Amendment Controversy, offers a comprehensive account of the Bricker Amendment battles.}

The Bricker Amendment aimed to dramatically curtail the U.S. president's ability to enter into treaties or executive agreements. The Constitution already stipulated that treaties needed a two-thirds Senate majority to take effect, but it placed no such restriction on executive agreements—and certainly it did not require individual states to ratify international treaties, a standard so impractical and unwieldy as to be practically insurmountable. For many conservatives, southern and non-southern, this was precisely what they wanted: a firewall against any international treaty, convention, covenant, or binding declaration that could alter the domestic laws of the United States. The Board of the NAACP shrewdly recognized what the conservative South saw, saying the amendment was "motivated, at least in part by a sectional desire to impede progress in human relations, ... bolster the anti-civil rights filibuster and set up an additional roadblock to civil rights."\footnote{Quoted in Anderson, Eyes off the Prize, 235.}

The slow grind of the Senate's procedural wheel meant that three years elapsed between Bricker's initial proposal of the amendment in 1951 and the time when the bill finally emerged from committee review and the hearings process for a full vote in the first two months of 1954 (still before the May 1954 Brown ruling). Due in no small part to the intercessions of newly elected president Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Senate narrowly defeated the Bricker Amendment in early 1954, when the final amended version came to the floor for a vote. Only a
single vote prevented passage. In various iterations, the Bricker Amendment resurfaced a number of times thereafter in the Senate, though it never came as close to passing again.

From its inception, Senator Bricker’s crusade to amend the Constitution received tremendous intellectual, organizational, and financial support from the American Bar Association (ABA) and one of its ex-presidents, Frank Holman. A Rhodes scholar and senior partner at a large law firm based in Seattle, Holman had a long track record of anti-liberal political organization—he despised Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal policies—and he invested more than $30,000 of his own financial resources to the Bricker campaign. Holman led the charge to wrangle together different constituencies with a stake in limiting the scope and power of the United Nations, and he made overt appeals to the white South and the states’ rights doctrine.

The introduction to his 1954 book, The Story of the Bricker Amendment, stressed the risk of UN treaties being used to invalidate U.S. laws or override the nation’s constitutional lawmaking process. Unless the public pressured Congress to adopt the Bricker Amendment, Holman warned, “the American people would soon find that both the Congress and the State Legislatures” might be “completely by-passed in their constitutional function of legislating for the people of this country.” Like Leander Perez, Holman accused the Truman administration of plotting to foist civil rights legislation on the nation via international treaty rather than congressional measure. “It should be noted that

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67 Holman served as the ABA president for the 1948–1949 term. On Holman’s background, see Tananbaum, The Bricker Amendment Controversy, 8–9; on his personal spending, see Anderson, Eyes off the Prize, 218.
Mr. Truman’s Civil Rights Commission suggested that instead of continuing to try to get his controversial civil rights program through Congress...the whole program could be easily achieved by first making a treaty on it.” Likely thinking about the African American and white liberal claim that the U.S. had to pass civil rights laws to fulfill their obligations under the UN Charter, he cautioned that “Articles 55 and 56 of the United Nations Charter, with their broad provisions covering the whole field of human rights...can give to the Federal Government unlimited and unrestrained power over all local affairs.”68

In the Senate southern Democrats rallied to Bricker’s cause, along with most of the Republican side of the aisle. Georgia’s powerful representative Richard B. Russell lavished praise on his colleague from Ohio, saying that Senator Bricker had fought admirably against international treaties that were “fraught with danger to the fundamental rights of our people.” The conservative Virginia senator A. Willis Robertson (father of Christian evangelist Pat Robertson) similarly welcomed Bricker’s proposed bill. Southerners, he said, had “enough trouble with do-gooders in our own country telling us about how the Federal government should regulate...the problems of human rights which the Constitution clearly left to the States.” Senator Bricker’s amendment prevented the international UN from applying more of the “same type of pressure,” Robertson declared in 1951. Three years later Texas Democrat Price Daniel deemed the Bricker Amendment an absolutely necessary safeguard

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against UN attempts to "impose domestic laws which are binding upon the people of the United States."  

Along with Russell, Daniel, and Robertson, most of the South's most racially conservative senators stood with Bricker throughout the protracted process: James Eastland and John Stennis of Mississippi; Olin Johnston of South Carolina; Harry F. Byrd of Virginia; and Allen Ellender and Huey Long of Louisiana. The only southerners to consistently oppose any form of the Bricker Amendment were the region's liberal outliers, such as Arkansas's J. William Fulbright, Lister Hill of Alabama, and Tennessee's Estes Kefauver. Bricker also found strong allies in conservative Republicans like Barry Goldwater, Everett Dirksen, William Jenner, and Joseph McCarthy, just as liberal Democrats like Humphrey were Bricker's strongest foes. The breakdown of the Senate coalitions around Bricker confirms that fissures over civil rights mirrored the fissures over human rights issues in the postwar world.  

National organizations that crusaded for the Bricker Amendment knew that racially conservative southerners were natural allies. One instructive example came from the right-wing group called "For America." Formed in Chicago in early May 1954, For America still betrayed a trace of isolationist sentiment; for instance, the group's materials argued that the U.S. president should "enter no foreign wars unless the safety of the United States is directly threatened" and expressed support for the "policies contained in George Washington's Farewell Address." For America heartily backed Senator Bricker's

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69 All quotes from Tanenbaum, The Bricker Amendment Controversy, 30 (Russell), 31 (Robertson), and 70 (Daniel).

70 Ibid., 158–59.
proposed amendment, and if the Bricker Amendment and other safeguards on U.S. sovereignty could not be implemented, the groups advocated complete termination of U.S. membership in the United Nations.\footnote{71}

The \textit{New York Times} thought the founding of For America and the group's subsequent activities significant enough to warrant coverage; the national media attention likely had to do with the leadership roles of prominent prewar isolationists like newspaper mogul Col. Robert McCormick, John T. Flynn, and Gen. Robert E. Wood (all former members of America First).\footnote{72} Escaping the notice of the \textit{Times} staff, however, was the participation of many white southern Democrats, who were almost without exception fierce opponents of civil rights. Nearly a dozen members of For America's "National Policy Committee" were also affiliated with the staunchly segregationist Federation for Constitutional Government; in addition, Tom Brady and Mary Dawson Cain, both members of the Mississippi Citizens' Councils, Robert B. Crawford, president of the Virginia Defenders of States' Rights, and Hugh G. Grant, co-founder of the Georgia States' Rights Council, were among the well-known massive resistance leaders who joined For America's crusade against liberal internationalism.\footnote{73}

\footnote{71} "For America" promotional materials may be found in the personal papers of many conservative leaders. For two example, see "For America," undated newsletter, copy in folder 11, box 17, T. Coleman Andrews Papers, ORE; and "For America," undated newsletter, and "Americans: Do You Want to Repeal the Declaration of Independence?," undated pamphlet, copies of both in folder "For America," Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas Library, Lawrence (hereafter Wilcox Collection).


\footnote{73} Names that appear both on Federation for Constitutional Government (FCG) letterhead and For America letterhead include: Wallace D. Malone (Alabama); James D. Johnson (Arkansas); Hugh G. Grant (Georgia); W. Scott Wilkinson (Louisiana); Mary D. Cain (Mississippi); Tom P. Brady (Mississippi); C. L. Shuping (North Carolina); Micah Jenkins (South Carolina); Joseph (Joe)
Long after the Senate narrowly voted down the final version in 1954, the Bricker Amendment campaign continued to thrive among grassroots conservatives, who generated mountains of letters, pamphlets, broadsides, speeches, news editorials, and even full-length books in support of the bill. For a small taste of the ways that white southerners reacted to the Bricker Amendment, consider the constituent correspondence files of one southern senator, North Carolina’s Clyde Roark Hoey, a conservative Democrat who did vote in favor of the Bricker Amendment. In January and February 1954 alone, the months when the amendment finally came to the floor for a vote, Hoey received four bulging folders full of letters from concerned citizens. Most worried that the United Nations, its agencies, and its conventions were trying to interfere with the internal laws of the United States and thus posed a legitimate threat to their day-to-day lives.

Describing herself as a “young mother,” twenty-nine years old, North Carolinian Eleanor Rice wrote to Hoey: “I want my children to grow up under the Constitution, with no possibility of being undermined or superceded by any treaty with any foreign power...I hope you will continue to fight for this ‘Bricker Amendment’ with all your strength.” (She also implored Hoey to defend the

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C. Jenkins (Florida); J. Evetts Haley (Texas); Robert B. Crawford (Virginia). See list of names on For America’s National Policy Committee in Bonner Fellers to T. Coleman Andrews, September 17, 1956, folder 3, box 17, Andrews Papers, ORE; and For America,” undated newsletter, copy in folder 11, box 17, Andrews Papers. For list of FCG executive committee members (which included Grant, Brady, Haley, M. Jenkins, J. Jenkins, Johnson), see “States’ Rights and the Constitution,” undated ephemera, attached to a letter from Mrs. J. H. Bondeson to Martin Dies, May 31, 1957, folder 22, box 102, Martin Dies Papers, Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, Liberty, Texas, hereafter cited as SHRL. For a list of members of the FCG “Advisory Council” (including Shuping and Wilkinson), see “News Release: For Morning and Afternoon Papers of October 24, 1955,” Federation for Constitutional Government Ephemera, Wesley Critz George Papers (Collection #3822), Southern Historical Collection, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, (hereafter cited as UNC).
McCarran-Walter immigration act to prevent "undesirables" from entering the nation.) A husband and wife from Hendersonville, North Carolina, also voiced their firm support for the amendment. "We believe that all thinking American voters want this needed change. ... [W]e must not allow the United Nations to be in a position to do any of our legislating." In an example from Texas, Mrs. W. L. Pittman, who called herself "an American housewife," explicitly linked the Bricker battle with her concerns over civil rights. As she wrote to Texas right-wing congressman Martin Dies, "I would like for you to do all you can to get the Bricker Amendment in. If we don't get it, we stand losing our constitution. Also to help us keep segregation." Pittman, Rice, and the Hendersonville couple considered the principles inscribed in the United Nations to be in direct tension, even contradiction, with the principles of the United States Constitution. Their letters reveal fear that the United Nations sought to override U.S. laws, state and federal—and they saw the Bricker Amendment as a barricade against international attacks against the South's system of legal segregation and minority disfranchisement.

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74 Eleanor N. Rice to Clyde R. Hoey, February 8, 1954, and Paul E. and Kathryn F. Rudd to Hoey, February 6, 1954, both in folder 1 of 4 marked "Bricker Amendment 1954," box 140, subject series "Bricker Amendment," Clyde R. Hoey Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina. See the three other folders in the same box for many other letters. Similarly, Hoey's North Carolina counterpart in the Senate, Sam J. Ervin, also received hundreds of letters. See folders 594, 595, 1031–1033, 1315, and others in Legislative Series, Senate Papers, Sam J. Ervin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC. In these and other constituent correspondence files, letters often arrived in clusters—groups of letters from the same town or city, all written within days of one another, often using the similar language—indicating that neighbors or community groups had gathered together to discuss the issue and plan a letter-writing campaign. For instance, see a series of telegrams, all dated May 30, 1955, all from Greensboro, many of which used the same stock phrases about passing the Bricker Amendment to protect "individual liberties" and the U.S. Constitution, "in folder 595, Ervin Papers, UNC.

75 Mrs. W. L. Pittman to Dies, January 17, 1956, folder 2, box 127, Dies Papers, SHRL.
Although national security conservatives, economic conservatives, and anticommunist conservatives from across the nation lent their support to Bricker's crusade to safeguard U.S. sovereignty in world affairs, the racially conservative white South was especially keen to combat the emerging international language of human rights. Anti–United Nations activism in the postwar period typically has been written off as the stale leftovers of prewar isolationism. Undoubtedly there is a good bit of truth in this characterization, for those who opposed a strong United Nations typically cited concerns about protecting American sovereignty and voiced a near-reverent faith in the unrivaled superiority of the United States. Yet the eager participation of southern segregationists suggests that something else was at work in the Bricker crusade—an attempt to combat the values of equality and universal human rights embodied in the United Nations.

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During the same period when the UN enlarged its scope, the American civil rights movement picked up momentum, and the South's heightened anxiety about the future of Jim Crow likely contributed to the region's growing dislike for the United Nations. Edging closer to full-fledged paranoia, in the early and mid-1950s leading segregationist voices began looking for a target to blame. Many landed on the United Nations. Southern conservatives did not miss the overlap between pro–civil rights activism and pro–UN activism; to resist pressure for race reform at home, southerners felt that they also had to resist global pressure for human equality. The UN had neither the power nor the

Footnote: Hero also suggests that the upswing in anti-UN sentiment correlated with increased fears about civil rights activism. See Hero, The Southerner and World Affairs, 383, 393–98, 404–406.
impetus to take any real action against segregation and black disfranchisement in the United States. This was little comfort to the conservative white southerners who interpreted the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the 1950 Statement on Race, and a host of other documents as a personal, vindictive attack on their lives and customs.

With some good reason, leading segregationist voices fingered the UN as a key source of new ideas about race. The Yale-educated Mississippi judge Tom P. Brady was best known to white southerners as the author of Black Monday, a venomous but widely circulated tract skewering the Brown v. Board of Education decision. In Black Monday Brady reached both for the laws of biology and the laws of God to defend racial segregation. By endorsing integration "this Supreme Court seeks to set aside all the laws of eugenics and biology," wrote Brady. The judge considered it an inescapable fact that distinct races existed, and he further maintained that God had knowingly separated the races into decidedly unequal groups. "If God in His infinite wisdom had wanted a mongrelized, mixed man, that man would have been on this earth..."77

Struggling to figure out how any rational person could deny the reality of racial difference, the white supremacist Brady found a scapegoat in the United Nations. Brady, like many conservative Americans, thought the UN was a mere tool of international Communist revolutionaries, and he tended to see UN objectives and Communist objectives as two faces of the same enemy. In 1957 Brady delivered a speech to a gathering of right-wing anticommunists in

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Sacramento, California. Entitled “The Red Death,” the speech’s ostensible aim was to rail against godless Communism, and the first sections of his address covered plenty of familiar territory: the Soviet plot to “destroy the sovereignty of the forty-eight states,” to “socialize the industries of his country,” and “regulate the lives and affairs of the citizens.” After he roundly abused the Supreme Court and Eisenhower’s use of federal troops at Little Rock, Brady paused. “Let me briefly call to your attention a few more concrete examples which should convince even the most dubious that we have proceeded far into this [socialistic] revolution,” he told his already-sympathetic audience. “There are two organizations that threaten us seriously....[O]ne of them is the United Nations, and the other is its illegitimate off-spring, Unesco.”

“The United Nations is the springboard from which most of the Communist propaganda is brought into this country,” Brady averred. First, he accused the UN of trying to subvert loyal American patriotism beneath a chimera of world citizenship and universal brotherhood. Individual rights, the Mississippi judge implied, were the singular product of American history and culture (and when Brady said “American” he invariably meant “white” and “Protestant,” people who shared the background of the founders of the U.S. republic). In direct contradiction to Brady’s view of the world, the United Nations promoted ideals of universal human equality and emphasized the common humanity of all people, rather than their individual national identities. By doing so, the United Nations both denied what Brady saw as the clear superiority of the American nation and taught that ardent American patriotism was the mark of a “narrow, prejudiced, bigoted” person. As far as Brady was concerned, any institution that prioritized international harmony over
Americans’ “love of [their] country” aided Communism and menaced the security of the United States. For these reasons alone, Brady could stomach neither the United Nations nor the liberal policymakers who supported it.

Then he launched into a scathing denunciation of UNESCO. “Unesco desires to see an amalgamation of all of the races,” he contended. As evidence he pointed to UNESCO publications called “The Myth of Race,” “Racial Equality,” and “What is Race?” “These documents are scattered all over the world...These documents are circulated in our colleges and universities,” he blustered, and they “tell our college students that there is no such thing as a pure white man....that there are no racial differences save hair, skin, and eyes.” These “lies,” Brady implied, were responsible for the unyielding attack on treasured American institutions. “It is the United Nations and Unesco that dreams (sic) by night of one world, one court, one race, one church, one government.” Brady demanded that patriotic white Americans stand up to this conspiracy.78

Anthropologists, social scientists, and physical scientists had been maintaining that race had no biological basis for roughly two decades when

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78 Tom P. Brady, “The Red Death,” speech delivered in Sacramento, California, 1957 [no date], transcript copy in folder 10, box 56, E. L. Forrester Papers, Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, University of Georgia, Athens. For an example referred to in Brady speech, see What is Race? Evidence from Scientists (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1952). This booklet, written in language accessible to schoolchildren, explained that no “pure” race existed, that racial superiority had no scientific basis, and that there were “no grounds” to fear racial “mixing.” For another illustration of a prominent segregationist leader denouncing the UN as a source of dangerous ideas about race, see John U. Barr, “Nine Tools of Destruction,” Southern Digest, Vol. 2, March–April 1956, p. 6, series S20, reel 115, RWC. See also E. K. Snider to Sam Rayburn, January 11, 1957, folder 22, box 102, Dies Papers, SHRL. Snider wrote, “Our Supreme Court is being influenced by the ideals of the U.N. to ‘homogenize’ the races of the world,” and he, like Brady, accused the United Nations of actively promoting racial integration. For another example, see E.E. Williams, “The Goals of the Sons and Daughters of Free Men,” The Sons and Daughters of Free Men, September 1957 (Dallas, Texas), series S15, reel 114, RWC. See also E. E. Williams to Martin Dies, December 4, 1956, folder 33, box 104, Dies Papers, SHRL. Williams edited the Constitution Party News of Dallas County, apparently a one-man operation.
Brady gave his 1957 address. But documents like United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights attempted to translate academic ideas about human equality into a meaningful credo for the nations of the world—and these statements carried great symbolic power, even if they did not constitute an enforceable code of law. White southerners felt the international buildup of pressure. With phrases like “all members of the human family” and “a spirit of brotherhood” dotting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is little wonder that the UN’s founding documents riled the white South’s most ardent defenders of Jim Crow.79

Hard-line southern conservatives saw ideals such as “brotherhood” as a flimsy, gossamer cover-up for the real intent of the United Nations Organization: to eviscerate the divinely ordered hierarchy that segmented and ordered the world’s races and the world’s nations. As they maintained, this Communist-hatched plot was designed to integrate all of the races on earth, including the races in the American South, and pleasant-sounding images like “brotherhood” simply allowed Communists to palliate their schemes. The militantly racist, anti-Semitic Alabamian Asa “Ace” Carter used his talk-radio program to suggest as much to his listeners in 1955. Carter, who later scored a wide audience as a chief speechwriter for third-party presidential hopeful George Wallace, warned his listeners not to let the “perfumed words” and “pious phrases” dupe them.

Masquerading behind the “brotherhood” image were a host of legislative

79 For instance, the militant Alabama segregationist Olin H. Horton blamed Gunnar Myrdal for perpetrating “an entirely new philosophy about race,” overturning what Horton considered a more accurate view of human nature, Madison Grant’s 1892 treatise on racial purity and Anglo-Saxon superiority. Horton reminded his supporters that UN Secretary General Trygve Lie had appointed Myrdal to work at the UN’s European headquarters in Geneva. See Horton, “Memorandum to Members: History at the Wisdom of the Ages versus Philosophy Made to Order,” American States’ Rights Association, April 14, 1955, copy in series A98, reel 13, RWC.
proposals, Carter told those who tuned in, such as “the Genocide Treaty,” the “human rights commission proposals,” and “civil rights legislation,” all of which were backhanded ways to advance “racial integration and mongrelization.” He hastened to remind his fellow southern segregationists that accused spy Alger Hiss and the “communist-front member” Eleanor Roosevelt had been powerful figures at the United Nations—all the more reason, Carter contended, for white southerners to stringently oppose the UN and all its conventions.⁸₀

Notions of cross-cultural “brotherhood” or a transnational “human family” were particularly noxious to those white southerners who believed that God had purposefully separated human beings into distinct racial groups. Although southern clergymen in the postwar era were more reluctant to use Christianity to rationalize white supremacy than ministers in the nineteenth century had been, historians Jane Dailey and Paul Harvey have uncovered a “folk theology” of segregation that thrived among the southern laity. As Dailey writes, the subject of interracial sex functioned as the thread that stitched white racism and Christianity together, and regular white southerners engaged in a “titanic struggle” to protect their understanding of Christianity against the rising power of faith-based civil rights activism. A verse from Acts 17:26, “And God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined for them...the bounds of their habitation,” became a key bit of Scripture in this theological tug-of-war. Civil rights activists dwelled on the

first clause—"God hath made of one blood all nations"—whereas segregation's apologists underscored the latter phrase, "bounds of their habitation."81

Dueling interpretations of the Apostle Paul's words in Acts also shaped white southern resistance to the United Nations and to the ideal that all member-states comprised a unified human race. Transposing the "bounds of their habitation" clause from the segregated South onto the world map, racial conservatives argued that God had created distinct nations as well as distinct groups of people; he did not wish to see the nations of the world integrate into a single, cooperative international unit—what right-wing conservatives witheringly referred to as the "one-world" idea, or "one-worldism."

Conservative southern Christians resisted the prospect of integration in global affairs as fiercely as they resisted integration for black and white Americans.82

The case of Baptist pastor Carey Daniel, one of handful of southern pastors who openly fused Protestant Christianity and sordid racism, illuminates how white segregationists projected their domestic racial views into the international realm. When he was not ministering to members of the First


82 For one example, see Shirley [Mrs. Homer G.] Wells to Martin Dies, February 7, 1957, folder 34, box 104, Dies Papers, SHRL.
Baptist Church of West Dallas, Texas, Reverend Daniel occupied his time as an Executive Vice President for the Citizens' Councils of Texas. Although his church was a member of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), Daniel announced that his congregation would withhold contributions to the SBC's Christian Life Commission, which, in his words, was forcing "unconstitutional amalgamation laws" down the throats of Southern Baptists. (The Christian Life Commission, hardly a radical force for racial equality, had encouraged Baptists to comply with the Brown decision and follow "the scriptural teaching that every man is embraced in the love of God." )\textsuperscript{83} Indeed, Daniel is fairly well known to southern historians as a peculiarly hateful purveyor of biblical racism and as the author of the theologically dubious tract \textit{God the Original Segregationist}.

In the mid-1950s Daniel followed up with a second inflammatory tract, which bore the raucous, grammatically unwieldy title \textit{Segregation's Archenemy—[Alger] Hiss' United Nations: Let's get the U.S. out of the U.N.} Daniel marketed this anti-UN rant as a "sequel" to \textit{God the Original Segregationist}, a good indication that he regarded the international human rights and domestic civil rights movements as deeply enmeshed. In it Daniel expounded his view that the United Nations—just like integration—violated God's plan to keep the races separate and unmixed. \textit{God the Original Segregationist} relied heavily on the Biblical tale of the Tower of Babel, when God "drove asunder the nations" as punishment. Asserting that the UN was a mid-twentieth-century "parallel" to the Tower, Daniel wrote: "Like the Babel-builders, the U.N. is trying to unite the

nations of world while God wants them separate.” As he explained, “the Bible word for ‘race’ is ‘nation,’ so when it says that God has ‘driven asunder the nations,’ it means that He has forcibly separated and segregated the races of this earth, and that He means for them to STAY that way.” In his mind any attempt to “integrate both the races and governments of the world,” as Daniel accused the UN of trying to do, arrogantly defied and flouted the will of God.\(^8^4\)

Daniel admitted that he, along with many Americans, originally believed that the United Nations would be valuable as a tribunal for “international disputes” and as a peacekeeping body. But the UN’s turn toward matters of human rights alarmed and infuriated Daniel, convincing him that all “Christian citizens” should favor U.S. withdrawal. The domestic jurisdiction clause, he wrote, had proven to be a “false assurance,” for the United Nations had begun to “stick its long meddlesome fingers into the private affairs of its member nations” and “invade the realm of states’ rights and individual democratic rights.” Like Mississippi judge Tom Brady, Daniel blamed documents such as “UNESCO’s infamous ‘Statement on Race’” for threatening the South’s way of life.\(^8^5\)

Although civil rights scholar David L. Chappell may be correct to characterize Carey Daniel as a ringleader for “paranoid extremism,” Daniel’s was hardly a lone voice; other southern segregationists joined him in denouncing the UN’s symbolic attempt to level racial differences.\(^8^6\) A Florida Baptist author similarly invoked Acts 17:26 when he wrote, “Since God made the races, and

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\(^8^5\) Ibid.

appointed the bounds of their habitations,” any attempt to foster ideas of brotherhood, global culture, or a “one world hybridized human” violated the “Word and Will of God.” The pro-segregation North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights were sufficiently worried about the UN to add the following statement to their organization’s platform: “We are opposed to any form of super-government that would impair our national sovereignty. We are opposed to efforts to absorb our Country into the melting pot of a ‘One-World’ culture.” The Reverend James Dees, president of the Defenders, unabashedly contended that racial segregation derived from “the Divine Will and Plan” of God, and he extended his views on Jim Crow to the multicultural United Nations. Like Judge Tom Brady, Dees and the Defenders blamed the UN, UNESCO, and the “many so-called ‘liberals’” who supported internationalist values for the “current propaganda” about racial equality.  

Yet another example, Dr. D. M. Nelson integrated critiques of internationalism and a one-world philosophy into his 1954 defense of the South’s racial hierarchy. A former president of Mississippi College, Nelson agreed that God had deliberately “made the people into races,” and, like Brady, Nelson equated Communism and internationalism as two interrelated plots to undo the work of God. “Communism,” he wrote, “is based upon Karl Marx’s doctrine of internationalism and the classless society.” In Nelson’s reading of Marx, internationalism also sought “the obliterations of all national and racial

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87 Quoted in Harvey, Freedom’s Coming, 234.

88 North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights, Inc., undated ephemera, “Platform,” copy in folder 26, box 1, Erwin A. Holt Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC. For further evidence of Dees’s opinion that “Segregation is in accord with the natural law which is a product of God’s creation,” see North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights, Inc., “Some Major Arguments in Behalf of Racial Segregation,” October 23, 1960, copy in North Carolina Collection, UNC.
distinctions and the final amalgamation of all races." Convinced that human differences were a natural, unalterable, divinely sanctioned fact, Nelson vehemently resisted calls to integrate the races in the United States and the establishment of a world body based on a doctrine of fundamental human rights.

The ‘One-World’ idea with a one-world government is a popular thought today. This is a beautiful dream, but void of any possibility of reality. Racial differences and affinities cannot be ignored. Any proposition to efface national and racial borders is not the conclusion of sound reason and good judgment.\(^{89}\)

What Hubert Humphrey had called the "bright sunshine of human rights,"

Nelson derided as a quixotic reverie, a flagrant disregard for the laws of religion and nature.

Although the United Nations had limited power to advance the human rights doctrine, southern segregationists recognized the symbolic power of these ideas. After the UN Charter professed “faith in fundamental human rights,” after delegates from the nonwhite world championed human rights so passionately at the UN's opening sessions, and after an array of American citizen-lobbies sprung up in support of UN ideals, white southern conservatives were desperate to re-assert an alternate framework for thinking about human difference. Unless the South found a way to bolster the idea that the races of humankind were biologically distinct and therefore inherently unequal, the ideological pillars of Jim Crow segregation and black disfranchisement would collapse.

But the defenders of white privilege knew their counterattack had to address threats from beyond the borders of the U.S. South—white southerners saw fires popping up everywhere. As men like Nelson, Brady, Daniel, or Perez scrambled to extinguish the flames ignited by indigenous African American protest, they also had to attempt to smother new globally circulated ideas about human rights.

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If racially conservative southerners reviled the United Nations for promoting ideals of intrinsic human equality, religiously conservative whites disliked the ecumenicalism and secularism of the international organization. (Some, like Baptist Rev. Carey Daniel, fell in both camps.) A handful of fundamentalist Christians, Daniel among them, suspected the United Nations might be the prophetic Beast referred to in the Book of Revelations, which foretold of an anti-Christ global dictatorship that would rule the world before the Rapture, when Jesus would return to earth. For a wider swath of American conservatism simply resented American participation in an avowedly secular body, made up of delegates with an assortment of religious traditions and, worse, representatives of godless Communist states.

For these believers, America’s political institutions were rooted in Christian faith, so they abhorred the idea of subverting Christian America to the

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90 For some discussion of the United Nations and prophecy, see Paul Boyer, When Time Shall Be No More: Prophecy Belief in Modern American Culture (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), 264. For another example, see Darren Dochuk’s rich profile of J. Vernon McGee, the southern-born, self-described “country preacher” who led the wildly popular Church of the Open Door in Southern California. McGee denounced the “utter godlessness” of the United Nations, and he, too, suggested that the international body “can and will become the instrument in setting up the stage for [the] fulfillment of prophecy.” See Dochuk, “From Bible Belt to Sunbelt: Plain Folk Religion, Grassroots Politics, and the Southernization of Southern California, 1939–1969” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2005), 367–72; 412–14.
will of the religiously neutral United Nations. Religious conservatives in the South and beyond often invoked the Biblical precept from 2 Corinthians: “Be ye not unevenly yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” At a 1955 anti-United Nations rally, California conservative columnist George Todt picked up this strain of argument in his speech. Todt liked to refer to the United States as “God’s chosen land,” and he argued that the “foreign ideologies” at the United Nations would water down America’s “moral and spiritual strength.”

 Particularly galling to evangelical Christians was the absence of a prayer or a blessing at the United Nations’ inaugural gathering. The Reverend Billy Graham, speaking on his tremendously popular radio program “The Hour of Decision,” gave voice to this common objection. “At the first meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco there was no prayer made to God for guidance and blessing. We were afraid that Godless, atheistic communists would not like it, so we bowed in deference to Russia.”

 Far less influential than Graham but no less appalled by the absence of faith in the corridors of the United Nations, right-wing activist General Pedro del Valle similarly blasted the international organization. Trying to expose the UN as

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91 Speech of George H. Todt, “In My Opinion,” The Truth About the United Nations: The Speeches, Findings, & Resolutions of The Congress of Freedom, Inc. (1955), 60–74, quotations 64, 69. The Congress of Freedom, a right-wing organization that featured anticomunist conservatives and racial conservatives from around the nation, organized the “Truth About the United Nations” meeting, held in San Francisco in April 1955, to ironically mark the ten-year anniversary of the founding conference of the UN. For other examples of southerners using the “Be ye not unevenly yoked” verse, see Daniel, “Segregation’s Archenemy,” and Mary Dawson Cain (also a speaker at the same 1955 rally as Todt), Summit Sun, June 1, 1961, series S37, reel 120, RWC, p. 2.

a threat to American sovereignty and security, the retired U.S. Marine del Valle wrote in 1955, "Our liberties are being attacked by such preposterous devices as the heinous 'Genocide Convention.'" He continued on to contrast the godly United States to the godless United Nations. "The words of George Washington refer to a Union under God. Where is God in the United Nations Charter?" If America persisted in yoking itself to the secular—or, as del Valle would have been more apt to say, atheistic—United Nations, he forewarned, "We shall perish as a nation of God and become slaves of the Godless."93

How, marveled Christian conservatives, could the United Nations purport to work for global peace when the organization had turned its back on "the Prince of Peace," Jesus? And how could liberal Christian groups so enthusiastically support the religiously neutral UN? (Recall, for instance, that the Federal Council of Churches, which merged into the National Council of Churches in 1950, sent consultants to UNCIO in San Francisco, and the group urged lawmakers to ratify the UN Charter and Genocide Convention.)94 Mississippian Mary Dawson Cain regularly posed such questions to the readers of her nationally circulated newspaper, the Summit (Miss.) Sun. Cain's career as an activist, speaker, and editor spanned nearly half a century, and the self-


94 On the FCC's attendance at UNCIO, see Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Charter of the United Nations, 202-05; see pro-UN statement of Dr. Bromley Oxnam, president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ, in ibid., 450-52. Oxnam, despised by many conservative Christians, entered the effusive statement adopted by the FCC's board, which professed that "the churches of Christ in America have long held that nations can better serve God's purpose for the world as they are brought into organic relationship with one another," and pledged to promote "a strong core of world-minded Christians." These types of international visions enraged conservative Christians, who tended to mingle Christianity and American national identity.
described libertarian advocated a ragbag of conservative causes: states’ rights, unregulated capitalism, the repeal of the federal income tax, affirmation that America was a Christian nation, an end to Social Security, stringent limits on immigration, an end to U.S. foreign aid, and so on. She reserved her most acerbic, hate-laced barbs for the African American and white civil rights workers who streamed into Pike County, Mississippi, the place she called home for most of her life. The town of Summit is located only a few miles north of McComb, the railroad town where the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee launched a major black voter-registration drive in 1961 and where civil rights volunteers squared off with Ku Klux Klan vigilantes during the Freedom Summer of 1964.95

Cain despised the United Nations with nearly as much ferocity as she trained on civil rights activists. A virulent racist, Cain surely objected to the multiracial character of the international body, although it was her nationalist-tinged brand of Christianity that primarily fueled her enmity toward the UN. Mystified that “any good American can lend support to this God-less organization...particularly Christians,” Cain berated “misguided national leaders” for believing that world peace might come through an organization that refused “the help of Almighty God.” She also laid blame at the feet of the clergy and religious institutions. Why, she asked in wonderment, was “church literature” replete with United Nations “propaganda,” and why had “church

leaders” fallen in lockstep with the message of “an organization that leaves out Christ”? “When it [the UN] rids itself of Communist nations and turns its face to God for guidance,” wrote Cain in 1957, then “all Americans can in good faith participate.” Until such time arrived, “Christian America” should suspend financial contributions and immediately cease participation in the “God-less (but many-godded) United Nations.”

By portraying the godless United Nations as the antithesis of a faithful United States, del Valle and Cain alluded to a broader conservative conversation about God, rights, liberty, and freedom—an old set of beliefs that came into sharper focus after the secular United Nations issued statements on human rights. The influential conservative Presbyterian L. Nelson Bell offered a succinct statement of a common belief about faith and American democracy. Bell, a fierce opponent of theological liberalism and father-in-law to Billy Graham, wrote in March 1954: “Protestantism has been the fountain head of political democracy and the very basis on which free men have been able to live and to govern...A Protestant constituency is never satisfied with any form of government which is not founded on and continued in the freedoms inherent in Protestant Christianity.” As a determinedly secular institution—and a body that included the godless Communist nations as member-states—the United Nations doubly menaced what Bell saw as a cherished principle of American democracy.

96 “Christian America,” *Summit Sun*, November 8, 1956; *Summit Sun*, October 10, 1957 (“Almighty God,” “misguided”); *Summit Sun*, October 17, 1957 (“any good American,” “rids itself,”), all in series S37, reel 120, RWC.

To explore this line of thought further we turn to Clarence "Pat" Manion, an enormously influential figure on the postwar Right. (Manion, incidentally, knew Mary Cain; in the early 1950s Cain got embroiled in a showdown with the Internal Revenue Service after she refused, on principle, to pay Social Security taxes for her employees. Manion offered his services as legal counsel.) A legal scholar, former dean of the Notre Dame School of Law, and a tireless behind-the-scenes crusader for conservatism—he was the organizational force behind the 1960 "Draft Goldwater" committee, the near-miss attempt to unseat Richard Nixon for the Republican nomination that year—Manion hosted a weekly radio broadcast, which, from its debut in 1954, gave listeners a steady dose of American nationalism suffused with a profound religiosity. Manion’s legions of fans might also subscribe to his regular newsletter, find his speeches and essays reprinted in the pages of conservative publications, or join a group like “For America,” which he co-chaired.98

To Manion, American democracy and religion were inextricable; he believed U.S. law rested on a foundation of faith. Without an affirmation of an omniscient God as the creator of human freedom and human dignity, America’s entire system of individual rights would collapse, or so Manion preached to his sizable conservative audience. “The fact of God’s existence is postulated and built into cornerstone number one of the Republic,” wrote Manion in 1954. “Life and liberty,” to him, were “gifts of God.” (“Gifts of God” also were the precise

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words President George W. Bush used in reference to the U.S. mission to spread democracy in Iraq.) Documents like the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights did not create rights; they merely functioned as a safeguard for those rights. Boiled down, Manion simply espoused a philosophy of natural rights—the idea that humans had intrinsic, inalienable rights, derived not from man-made institutions of state but from a higher force. These views hardly made Manion unique or remarkable; on the contrary, they are an absolute staple of Western and American political thought.

But Manion applied these views in a distinctive way in the postwar world. When the secular United Nations adopted a Declaration of Human Rights, it initiated a change that Manion perceived as a threat to his conception of human rights. Since Manion believed liberty and freedom were “gifts of God,” he failed to grasp how a body that did not formally recognize the existence of God could purport to guarantee the rights of individuals. Only God could create rights; governmental bodies could only protect what God had endowed. Manion insisted that American democracy had flourished precisely because the founders had acknowledged that rights were of “divine origin.” Therefore, for Manion, a secular institution like the United Nations had no ability whatsoever to promote human rights. “Where there is not God, government is God,” wrote Manion. “That’s why Communism is Godless,” and that was why Manion believed the United Nations menaced human freedom. In the postwar period Manion’s


100 Ibid.
interpretations of Christianity and American democracy set him, and other conservatives, apart from the liberal groups that welcomed a universalistic, ecumenical definition of human rights. Manion, like Cain and del Valle, clung to a particularistic ideal of human rights, one rooted in Protestant Christianity and in American exceptionalism.

Concurring heartily with Manion, fundamentalist Christian minister Claude Bunzel hammered an exaggerated version of Manion’s message into his parishioners and fellow crusaders. From his home base in the fertile conservative soils of Pasadena, California, Bunzel directed an organization called Twentieth Century Evangelism, publisher of such sensationally titled tracts as *Communist Tricks for Enslaving the World*. Bunzel also served as executive secretary for the California division of the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), the fundamentalist alternative to the liberal-leaning Federal Council of Churches, or, later, the National Council of Churches. In 1952, speaking before an assembly of ACCC members in California, Bunzel contended that Christian churches had an obligation to rise up and resist the agenda of the United Nations. The Covenant on Human Rights and the Genocide convention, Bunzel told his fundamentalist audience, impinged directly on “the church, the Gospel, and religious freedom.” Like Manion, he argued that the UN’s conception of human rights directly contradicted the Christian vision of human rights, where God instilled individuals with rights at birth. As Bunzel put it in another speech, this one in 1955: “[C]omplete freedom can come only through the Lord Jesus Christ. It can never come through a mere human organization such as the United Nations.” Bunzel thereby repudiated a vision where all
human beings, regardless of their faith or culture, had intrinsic rights; instead, he believed Christian faith had to precede the provision of basic human freedoms.  

The fiery fundamentalist particularly objected to the universalism—in his mind, relativism—of the UN human rights doctrine, which he regarded as a direct affront to his belief in the inviolable superiority of the Christian faith. He asked attendees at the 1952 ACCC meeting:

Do you want to become chargeable with causing ‘mental harm’ to a ‘part’ of some race ... when you go forth to preach the gospel of salvation from sin? Do you want to be taken before an international tribunal to be tried for ‘complicity’ in genocide, if your pastor should engage, for example, in Jewish evangelism? ... We are rapidly reaching the place where true Christian missionaries may no longer go forth among heathen idolaters with a testimony of the true and living God of the Bible; for no distinction is henceforth to be made between national, ethnical, racial, or religious groups.

Sounding a great deal like the segregationists who feared the UN would destroy hierarchical distinction among the world’s races, Bunzel perceived the international organization as a threat to his conviction that Christianity represented the one true faith. When UN documents posited that all humans had equal rights, irrespective of religion, the organization treaded on what conservative Christians considered sacrosanct principles: that the only path to genuine human freedom came through faith in Jesus Christ and that Christians

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101 Statement of Rev. DeLoss M. Scott (who appeared before Congress “on behalf of Rev. Claude Bunzel” and entered Bunzel’s ACCC address into congressional testimony), Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Hearings on S. J. Res. 1, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution Relative to the Making of Treaties and Executive Agreements [Bricker Amendment], 83rd Cong., 1st sess., February 18, 19, 25, March 3, 10, 16, 27, 31, and April 6–11, 1953, 257–69, quotation 263; Bunzel, “Creeping Totalitarianism,” The Truth About the United Nations, 15–20. Clearly Bunzel occupied a far less mainstream place on the political spectrum; although he agreed with Manion in basic principle, he also invoked the prophetic belief that the United Nations was the Beast described in the Book of Revelation. Bunzel, Communist Tricks for Enslaving the World (Pasadena, Calif.: Twentieth Century Evangelism, 1961). On the thriving fundamentalist and evangelical subcultures of Pasadena and other parts of Southern California, see Dochuk, “From Bible Belt to Sunbelt.”

102 Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Hearings on S. J. Res. 1, 264.
must preach their religion as the singular route to salvation. Bunzel and like-minded conservative Christians therefore could not abide an international organization that placed people of all faiths on equal ground, nor could they tolerate the secularization of the concept of human rights.

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ABA president and Bricker Amendment enthusiast Frank Holman summed up what the views of Manion, Cain, and Bunzel implied. "The Bricker Amendment," wrote Holman in 1954, "is a symbol or a line of demarcation dividing those who believe that the American concept of government and individual rights should not be sacrificed to international plans and purposes, and those who believe that such a sacrifice should be made in the interest of so-called international co-operation." That "same line of demarcation," he went on to note, "exists with respect to many other issues before the American people."103

Holman spoke purposefully of an American conception of democratic rights; to him, "Anglo-Americans" were the only individuals who had "any historical understanding of what a true Bill of Rights means." So he thought it absurd that the UN Commission on Human Rights, the body that presided over the drafting of the Universal Declaration, contained only three "representatives of English-speaking peoples." How, he asked in his impassioned plea for the Bricker Amendment, could the United States subject itself to United Nations edicts, when only three representatives on the human rights commission came "from countries that have anything like our concept of basic rights"?104

Manion and Cain (both, incidentally, tireless advocates of the Bricker Amendment), Holman contrasted the distinctively American understanding of rights—rooted in the particular national traditions of the United States—with the emerging international concept of rights, which was unmoored from any single nation-state, culture, or religion.

The establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and its changing scope over the late 1940s and early 1950s elicited a ferocious reaction from racial, religious, and nationalist conservatives. The ideology of these conservatives held that the American nation was unassailably superior to other nations of the world and that Christianity was unassailably superior to other faiths of the world—indeed, they thought America’s constitutional republic stood apart precisely because the founders had embraced faith as the cornerstone of democratic freedom. Southern racial conservatives added another layer: they were convinced that European-origin people were intellectually and culturally superior to people of Asian or African heritage. The multinational, ecumenical, multiracial United Nations appeared to pose a full-fledged assault on each of these ideological tenets.

The United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights offered a new framework for thinking about human equality and basic human freedoms. In the UN ideal, individual rights transcended national boundaries and national laws, and simply being human was the only precondition necessary to claim those rights. Conservatives like Manion, Holman, Cain, and Brady defended a competing, narrower framework. In their eyes, human rights and freedoms could not be unhinged from national contexts and national traditions. If rights were national rather than universal and transnational, as conservative
contended, then individual freedoms could be bounded and delimited by local laws, customs, and practices. The conservative framework contained the possibility of universal equality; Manion, for instance, did claim that God instilled rights in every human from birth. Yet conservatives saw preconditions—religious, cultural, and, for some, racial requirements—to earn fundamental rights and freedoms.

As they desperately tried to re-assert a narrow, more traditional understanding of human rights, conservatives and southern segregationists responded to the global tide of human rights protests and to the new voices in international affairs. Conservative resistance to the United Nations and its emerging ideals confirmed what Humphrey’s famous convention speech had implied: America’s political battles over race and states’ rights were inseparable from the international politics of human rights. In the immediate aftermath of World War II and the early years of the Cold War, it is usually America’s impact on the world that receives historians’ attention. But the anxieties of white racial conservatives indicate that events in the rest of the world were driving political activism and political opinions in the United States as well.
CHAPTER 2: SEGREGATIONISTS AND THE PROBLEM OF COLONIALISM

"The age of imperialism is passing, and the spirit of independence for all men everywhere is predominant."

-- Drew L. Smith, 1957

On the face of it, Drew L. Smith’s pronouncement about the world of 1957 was unremarkable. At the time the mainstream American press teemed with images of an “awakening” East and an inexorable tide of global nationalism. Since at least the early days of the Truman administration, American intelligence officials had been worrying about the mounting pressures for international decolonization and weighing how the United States should respond. Liberal commentators like Chester Bowles repeatedly warned that American policy had to show respect for Asian and African demands for independence. Seen in this light, Smith’s was simply another voice among a loud chorus.¹

The substance of Smith’s remark may not have been striking, but the profile and the political motivations of the speaker were. Louisiana attorney Drew L. Smith was an unapologetic defender of white supremacy, segregation, and restrictive immigration policies. His views on human inequality and racial “integrity” would not have looked out of place in the late nineteenth century, and his perspectives on race qualified him as an extremist even by the standards of the mid-twentieth-century American South. Yet here was Smith, in 1957,

declaring that imperialism and colonialism had grown obsolete and urging American policymakers to align U.S. policies with a world where "the spirit of independence for all men" reigned. Nor was Smith primarily concerned with the problem of British or French colonialism. Instead, his remark about the demise of imperialism appeared in an essay on one of America's imperial territories—namely, Hawaii.

Smith's immediate aim in the 1957 essay was to defeat a congressional measure that promised to grant Hawaii statehood and extend full privileges of U.S. citizenship to the multiracial residents of the Islands. As an open champion of rigid segregation, Smith's distaste for Hawaiian statehood stemmed mostly from his desire to keep the United States as white as possible. But, in his zeal to ensure that an "Asiatic state" did not join the Union, Smith took an unexpected turn of argument. The cornerstone of Smith's hate-filled ideological orientation—that people of Western European descent were intellectually, politically, culturally, and otherwise more advanced than people of Asian or African origins—logically should have translated into enthusiastic support for the colonial system.

Yet Smith ultimately endorsed full independence for the Hawaiian Islands and other U.S. overseas holdings. To make his case that the United States should release control of its Pacific and Caribbean territories, Smith appropriated the language of anticolonialism. He harked back to the anti-imperialists of the turn-of-the-century United States, whom he lauded for having the "wisdom" to oppose the annexation of Cuba, and he called the decision to give self-rule to the Philippines "a brilliant stroke of statesmanship and wise national planning."
Britain's decision to extend "full autonomy" to its South Asian colonies also met Smith's approval.²

To see an avowed white supremacist like Smith writing about colonialism—let alone supporting self-rule for colonial territories—unsettles the stock images of provincial, inward-looking white southern segregationists. Smith's remarks also clash with the conventional understanding of Western anticolonialism as a product of left-liberal activism, at least in the postwar period. The historical context framing Smith's 1957 essay, *The Menace of Hawaiian Statehood*, may help elucidate his support for colonial liberation. Postwar events had cast serious doubt on Western powers' ability to hold colonies in a perpetually unequal state. Britain, the Netherlands, and France had surrendered control of some of their territories in South Asian, Southeast Asia, and North Africa, and at the United Nations these newly independent states were demanding complete liquidation of the colonial system. At the moment Smith wrote, France faced fierce anticolonial insurgencies in Algeria and Indochina, Britain was fighting to quell the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, and revolutionary nationalism was strengthening across sub-Saharan Africa—all while white southerners confronted the stirrings of a formidable, mass-action liberation movement in their own backyard.

Surveying this global scene, Smith and other southern defenders of racial hierarchy reached a conclusion: turning colonies loose was far preferable to granting citizenship rights to colonials or equalizing relations between colonized and colonizer. Different European states arrived at different arrangements in

terms of the relationship between former colony and former colonial ruler, ranging from complete national independence to commonwealth status, which extended some privileges of national citizenship. Under the terms of turn-of-the-century Organic Acts and Supreme Court rulings, residents of America’s imperial territories were not full citizens of the United States but neither were they entirely foreign: for instance, since territorial residents were not fully alien, they were exempted from immigration quota laws. As an incorporated territory, Hawaii had a nonvoting delegate in Congress and the right to elect a territorial legislature. If a territory like Hawaii could not be kept in a subordinate position, then Smith would far sooner see the territory be a self-governing, independent state with no claim to even partial American citizenship.³

Certainly it is tempting to dismiss Smith as little more than a marginal purveyor of unvarnished hate, his views little more than the ravings of a disaffected white supremacist. This characterization would not be entirely off the mark, though Smith’s writings were circulated by several decent-sized conservative organizations in the white South. Still, even if raw racism was Smith’s primary driver, it is significant that his domestic agenda of white supremacy forced him to wrestle with the global issues of colonialism and anticolonialism. His remarks attest to the fact that the opponents of integration linked the international demands for decolonization with black Americans’

demands for equal justice—and that white racial conservatives scrambled to formulate their responses to global movements for decolonization and universal self-determination. Part of the purpose of this chapter is to show that white southern conservatives recognized that the *domestic* problem of American racial inequality and the *international* problem of Western colonialism were deeply entwined.

Smith’s surprising views on the American imperial past and the broader legacy of imperial expansion further demonstrate the complexities, contradictions, and twists within the white South’s reactions to the era of anticolonial nationalism. To examine these complexities and contradictions, this chapter focuses on a specific episode in American politics: the lengthy congressional battles over Hawaii’s transformation from imperial territory to U.S. state. Admittedly, Hawaiian statehood is an imperfect window onto American discussions of colonialism and anticolonialism; Hawaii’s relationship to the U.S. mainland cannot be likened to French rule in Indochina or British rule in Ghana, nor can Hawaii’s admission to the Union fairly be compared with the revolutionary struggles on the African or Asian continents. Nevertheless, Americans who participated in the debates over Hawaiian statehood—elected officials, seasoned political activists, and ordinary citizens alike—placed the Hawaii issue within the context of global decolonization.

Anticolonialism was absolutely foundational to the postwar human rights campaigns, although structural necessities of writing have compelled me to artificially separate the topics. Building on the previous chapter, this chapter opens with a high-level overview of the global pressures for decolonization and the responses of American policymakers and political activists. Then it turns to
Hawaii’s proposed admission to the Union, which brought reinvigorated
discussions about imperialism, civilizing missions, decolonization, and the
relationship of colonial territory to metropole close to home for Americans.
Largely, the chapter focuses on the minority of American citizens, like Drew
Smith, who opposed a Hawaiian state. However, since the logic of statehood
opponents makes more sense in contrast to pro-statehood rationales, the
chapter’s second section sketches the arguments made by statehood proponents.

I. AMERICAN POLITICS & THE COLONIAL QUESTION

Appearing before Congress on July 11, 1945, the ever-trenchant W. E. B.
Du Bois offered a fitting summary of how many African American and
anticolonial leaders felt about the newly drafted United Nations Charter. “I
believe that the proposed Charter of the United Nations is a step and a far step
toward peace and justice,” began the eminent scholar and political organizer.
Yet he hastened to note his misgivings. African Americans were among those
international human rights activists who regretted the UN Charter’s near-silence
on the colonial issue—Howard University professor Rayford Logan called the
document a “tragic joke;” and Du Bois though the Charter’s stance on
colonialism amounted to “a covert defense of the exploiters...against the
exploited.” Du Bois’s testimony reflected his conviction that the April 1945 San
Francisco conference had left work undone. He called it “imperative” for the
U.S. Senate to “insist on certain reservations or proposed amendments,” which
would be inserted into the Charter “at the earliest opportunity.” The stalwart
NAACP activist had text for the proposed amendments prepared and ready for the Senate’s review.\textsuperscript{4}

Fresh from his stint as a consultant at UNCIO, Du Bois entreated the U.S. Senate to do what the San Francisco conference had not done: formally commit the United Nations to an active anticolonial, anti-discrimination agenda. First, he urged the addition of statements averring the equality of all humans, aimed at undermining the racial prejudice that enabled colonial conquest: “The main groups of mankind, commonly called races, are essentially equal…and deserve equality of treatment, opportunity, and respect,” and “in the eyes of both science and religion, all men are brothers.” And second, he insisted that the United Nations recognize in writing that “the colonial system of government…is today undemocratic, socially dangerous and a main cause of wars” and establish a mechanism to end colonial rule “at the earliest practical moment.” For Du Bois, the concept of human rights rang hollow unless it included the right of self-determination, the right of all groups to have an “effective voice in [their] own government.”\textsuperscript{5}

Indeed, both in the United States and in the world, the rise of a human rights ideology coincided with an unprecedented upsurge in anticolonial protests. In the wake of World War II, states like India, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia shook off colonial rule; and at the United Nations, representatives from these states kept steady pressure on the international community to end


colonialism in all parts of the world. Du Bois, certainly one of the most important anticolonial voices in the United States, stood at the forefront of a deep tradition of African American anticolonial activism, and into the early 1950s white liberal organizations joined blacks in lobbying for universal self-governance. These protests, just like the broader human rights movement, exerted a measurable pull on American politics and domestic policymaking.

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Even before diplomats and influential strategists began to give serious attention to the global force of anticolonial nationalism, citizen-activists in the United States began to demand more assertively that America take a leadership role in ending international colonialism. During the years when fascism ascended in Europe, American black leaders waged a far broader, far more international fight against institutionalized white supremacy than did the postwar generation of civil rights activists. Later, leaders of the African American freedom movement would avow their anti-Communism and their patriotism, but in the late 1930s and early 1940s, organizations ranging from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to the leftist Council on African Affairs (CAA) denounced the mutually reinforcing systems of capitalism, colonialism, and racism.

For some black Americans, it was a sense of connection to other communities created by the African diaspora that engendered anticolonial activism; for others, it was a commitment to the ideals of freedom and human equality. Whatever the impetus, a broad cross-section of the organized African American community directly linked their domestic fight for economic, political,
and social freedom to the liberation struggles of people of color around the globe. After Italian dictator Benito Mussolini's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, one of only two self-governing nations on the entire African continent, black Americans mounted protests and vigorously lobbied U.S. foreign policymakers to act in defense of Ethiopia's sovereignty. Leaders of the Council on African Affairs collaborated with members of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress, and they attended international gatherings of anticolonial activists from India, the Caribbean, Kenya, South Africa, and other parts of the colonized world. In 1946 the CAA drew a crowd of nearly twenty thousand to Madison Square Garden to protest South Africa's takeover of the territories of Southwest Africa and the discriminatory pass laws that limited free movement of black and Indian-origin South Africans. Widely circulated black newspapers like the Chicago Defender, black trade unions, and black church organizations all regularly characterized the African American struggle as a global fight, and Walter White, executive director of the mainline NAACP, remarked in 1945, "the struggle of the Negro in the United States is part and parcel of the struggle against imperialism and exploitation in India, China, Burma, Africa, the Philippines, Malaya, the West Indies, and South America."

Networks of personal relationships facilitated transnational anticolonial activism. Du Bois and black leftist leader Paul Robeson each maintained regular correspondence with Indian nationalist leaders Jawaharlal Nehru and Mohandas Gandhi, and the two American men worked hard to promote Indian independence. Du Bois, for instance, covered India's anti-British protests in The

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Crisis. He also participated in a 1942 rally in support of Indian independence, along with Robeson, A. Philip Randolph, Walter White, Channing Tobias, Max Yergan, and white liberals such as Pearl Buck and ACLU founder Roger Baldwin.\footnote{Nicole Sackley, “Passage to Modernity: American Social Scientists, India, and the Pursuit of Development, 1945–1961” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2004), 20–25; Plummer, Rising Wind.}

White liberals did not equate human rights and anticolonialism quite as readily as African American activists did; nevertheless, in the early postwar years an increasing number of left-leaning, predominantly white organizations urged the United States to apply its newfound global might toward colonial liberation.\footnote{Plummer, for instance, downplays white liberals’ anticolonial activism. She correctly points out, for instance, that prominent liberal groups like the Carnegie Foundation’s Commission to Study the Organization of the Peace were largely silent on the issue of colonialism, despite their commitment to human rights. See Plummer, Rising Wind, 138.} Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) spokesman Philip Murray and progressive leader Henry Wallace were among those Americans who publicly condemned the use of U.S. Marshall Plan dollars to finance the Dutch military crackdown against Indonesian nationalists.\footnote{Robert McMahon, Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the Struggle for Indonesian Independence, 1945–49 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 258.} Although colonial liberation did not originally rank as a high priority for the American Association for the United Nations (AAUN), as the 1950s progressed the group issued stronger and stronger statements in support of independence for imperial territories. At their April 1953 conference, AAUN members endorsed a statement that read: “We express our conviction that exploitation of colonial people is intolerable....Consistent with its own historical experience, the United States should energetically support the aspirations of all peoples for freedom...
from foreign domination." Speaking directly to the conflicting pressures of the Cold War and decolonization, the AAUN added, "Allegiance to our NATO partners should not close our eyes to the paramount importance ... of the principle of national independence of their colonial peoples."\(^{10}\)

Ordinary citizen-activists were deeply invested in how the United States would navigate the conflicting demands of the Cold War and decolonization and how the nation would position itself with respect to revolutionary nationalism. From the late 1940s onward domestic political pressures and the seemingly implacable force of anticolonial protest compelled foreign-policy elites in the United States to contend with the colonial question. When the AAUN alluded to the balancing act between America’s NATO allies and the monumental force of anticolonial movements, the group’s leaders hit on the dilemma that preoccupied U.S. diplomats and policymakers.

* * *

As the United States ascended to superpower status, diplomatic elites began to fret about how American power would be perceived in the world beyond Europe, and a good number wrestled with the question of whether—or if—America’s global power would differ from Western European colonial power. At the dawn of the postwar era, nationalist leaders in British, French, and Dutch colonies momentarily had reason to believe that the United States would pursue a different course of power: although President Franklin Roosevelt had not been prepared to categorically endorse an immediate end to colonialism,

\(^{10}\) "What is Our Responsibility for World Leadership?," AAUN Bulletin 3 (April, 1953), 3.
he had oriented American policy toward the principle of universal self-determination. But the start of the Cold War quickly dashed hopes that America would use its newfound world power to promote universal self-determination.\textsuperscript{11}

However, the Cold War did require U.S. engagement with the colonial question. To America's cadre of national security experts, the dangers posed by revolutionary nationalism were both sobering and self-evident. A 1948 Central Intelligence Agency report spelled out the thorny dilemmas that faced U.S. policymakers. "The USSR is effectively exploiting the colonial issue and the economic nationalism of the underdeveloped areas," the memo noted.

Predicting that "the good will of the recently liberated and emergent independent nations" would become "a vital factor" for the long-term security of the United States, the CIA report cautioned:

\begin{quote}
Unless . . . the European colonial powers can be induced to recognize the necessity for satisfying the aspirations of their dependent areas and can devise formulae that will retain their good will as emergent or independent states, both these powers and the US will be placed at a serious disadvantage. . . . Moreover, unless the U.S. itself adopts a more positive and sympathetic attitude toward the national aspirations of these areas and at least partially meets their demands for economic assistance, it will risk their becoming actively antagonistic toward the US.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

While the CIA forecasted the potential consequences of stalling decolonization, the agency also alluded to the fact that the Southeast Asian colonies were vital to Western European economies. Those Truman administration officials who were preoccupied with the military and economic revitalization of Western Europe

\textsuperscript{11} On Roosevelt and anticolonialism, see John Lewis Gaddis, \textit{We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 155.

were loath to deprive France or the Netherlands of the raw materials, markets, and overseas bases that colonial territories supplied. And so U.S. policymakers perceived a vicious circle, or, in the words of the CIA, a "serious dilemma": risk harming our closest allies in Europe, or risk losing the "good will of recently liberated" nations in Asia.\textsuperscript{13}

Events in postwar Indonesia corroborated the CIA's concerns. The Dutch had ruled Indonesia for more than three-and-a-half centuries when World War II began. Although a vibrant anticolonial movement had existed in Indonesia since the beginning of the twentieth century (and anti-Dutch revolts dated back even further), the cause of Indonesian nationalism benefited tremendously from the upheaval that accompanied World War II. In February 1942 a resource-starved Japan invaded and occupied most of the Dutch East Indies. According to historian Robert J. McMahon, the Japanese conquest represented a "watershed" moment for Indonesia's struggle for independence—in part because Japan's swift triumph demonstrated that the Dutch and other Western powers were not invincible. Although Japanese rule quickly proved as exploitative as Dutch, the fact remained that the Netherlands, itself overwhelmed by Hitler's armies, had surrendered physical control of its economically precious colony. On August 17, 1945, Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Mohammed Hatta issued a declaration of independence from Dutch rule and proclaimed the creation of a self-governing republic.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Melvyn P. Leffler, \textit{A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War} (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992), 3, 9, 12, 17–18, 92–97, 161, 171–73.

\textsuperscript{14} McMahon, \textit{Colonialism and Cold War}, 34. See his chapter 1 for a fuller discussion of the history of Dutch rule in Indonesia, anticolonial resistance efforts, and the aftermath of the Japanese invasion.
As the war drew to a close, Sukarno and Hatta looked to the United States with cautious optimism. Encouraged by the ideals of the Atlantic Charter, the Indonesian leaders—much like their fellow Asian nationalist Ho Chi Minh—initially expected the Americans to make good on their vaunted promises of democracy and self-determination. Feelings of amity and hope dissipated as the 1940s wore on, however. Barely two months after V-J Day, Sukarno wired President Truman, pointedly stating that “Asiatic goodwill toward Americans is endangered by the fact that the Dutch continue to wear U.S. army uniforms and canteens marked ‘USA.’” By 1948 a Department of State memorandum reported that “the favorable predisposition of Indonesian nationalists toward the U.S.” had begun “slowly degenerating into suspicion.” Chief among the causes for suspicious was the steady flow of Marshall Plan dollars into the Netherlands, which the Dutch in turn used to finance their attempted re-conquest of the East Indies. “As a consequence,” the State Department report cautioned, “the USSR will have added opportunity to secure emotional and political allegiance that might otherwise accrue to the US.”

The Dutch, meanwhile, were determined to regain military control of their colony and re-secure their access to Indonesia’s natural resources. With one eye to rebuilding Western European economies and another eye to the growing influence of leaders like Sukarno, American policymakers were staring at a legitimate quandary.

Truman, who left office before some of the most violent and protracted anticolonial struggles broke out, believed the United States could deftly negotiate the competing demands of the Cold War and revolutionary nationalism. As

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15 Both quotes in ibid., 102 (Sukarno), 218 (State Department).
historian Melvyn P. Leffler has contended, the Truman White House initially angled to "co-opt nationalist movements" by making "preemptive reforms" and selected concessions to anticolonial leaders. Negotiated settlements, U.S. officials maintained, not only might avert armed clashes but also stood a better chance of preserving some measure of Western power in colonial areas. American policymakers sanguinely pointed to their own grant of independence to the Philippines in 1946 as a template for Western Europe to follow.  

Glossing over the bloody turn-of-the-century struggles between Filipino nationalists and American troops, Truman administration spokesmen hailed the agreement that peacefully ended American colonial rule over the Philippines in exchange for permanent U.S. military installations and special trade arrangements. Truman's team hoped they could nudge Britain, France, and the Netherlands into hammering out similar treaties with their Asian and African colonies. If European rulers acted before revolutionary uprisings escalated, then, in Leffler's words, "strategic requirements could be accommodated; bases obtained; investments and trade safeguarded."  

Indonesia became something of a testing ground for the Truman administration's formula. In a series of meetings American officials, led by veteran US diplomat Coert duBois, pushed the Dutch to hammer out an agreement with the Indonesian republican government. Articulating a position shared by many Asian specialists at the State Department, duBois argued that a "US political prestige in Indonesia will soar" if negotiators could devise a

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16 Leffler, Preponderance of Power, 17 ("co-opt"), 172 ("preemptive reforms").
17 Ibid., 17–18.
“political settlement satisfactory to nationalist sentiment.”

Talks arrived at an impasse, and then, in late December 1948, the Dutch initiated a military crackdown on Indonesian nationalism and attempted to forcibly regain control of the colony—an invasion financed indirectly by the United States and its European Recovery Plan. Rather reluctantly, by March of 1949, Dean Acheson hinted that the Dutch would lose their US Marshall Plan aid unless they reached a settlement. After some starts and stops, Indonesian negotiators agreed to give the Netherlands some important concessions, such as allowing Dutch forces to remain in certain areas of the archipelago, to finally strike a bargain to make Indonesia a self-governing republic. Indonesia formally received independence on Dec. 27, 1949. Robert McMahon concluded that “direct American pressure on the Dutch in the spring of 1949, as much as any other single factor, compelled the Netherlands to grant independence to its rich colony, and so paved the way to the historical ceremony” where power was transferred.

As McMahon points out, U.S. efforts to secure Indonesian independence derived as much from American self-interest as from any idealistic commitment to anticolonialism. Nonetheless, the case of Indonesia revealed how U.S. diplomatic elites were grappling with the intersection of revolutionary nationalism and the Cold War. They evinced growing concern with America’s reputation overseas, especially in parts of the world like Southeast Asia, where sensitivity to discrimination ran high, and some (though certainly not all)

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18 McMahon, Colonialism and Cold War, 219.

19 Ibid., 256, 293–99.
American diplomats, like the Indonesian ambassador duBois, sought out avenues to bolster "US political prestige" in strategic areas of the world.

This avidity to prove America's anticolonial credentials resurfaced in discussions about debates about the status of U.S. territories. Together with the international scrutiny that accompanied U.S. power in the world, these pervasive public discussions about the expiring era of colonialism drew attention to America's overseas territorial holdings. Although it was exceedingly rare for midcentury Americans to refer to Hawaii or Puerto Rico as "colonies," liberal policy elites and grassroots activists nevertheless took heed of the global pressures to end unequal imperial relationships, and these pressures framed the statehood debates.20

II. "THE LIGHTHOUSE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE PACIFIC": RATIONALES FOR HAWAII'S ADMISSION, 1948–1959

When American diplomatic elites looked at places like French Indochina, they detected no easy or straightforward resolution to the competing demands of anticolonial nationalism and U.S. security interests in the Cold War. When they looked to America's own imperial territories, on the other hand, many U.S. officials thought they spotted a bright opportunity.

Assistant Secretary of State Thurston B. Morton, for one, drew a straight line between Hawaiian statehood and America's good relations with the rest of the non-Communist world. Speaking on behalf of the Office of the Secretary of

20 On the American tendency (including the longstanding tendency of American historians) to erase the word "imperialism" or "empire" from discussions of U.S. power, see Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire, 2–12. On the tendency specifically in the Hawaiian statehood debates, see Gretchen Heefner, "'A Symbol of the New Frontier': Hawaiian Statehood, Anti-Colonialism, and Winning the Cold War," Pacific Historical Review 74 (November 2005), 545–574, especially 546.
State in early 1955, Morton told the House of Representatives that the pending bill to make Hawaii and Alaska the forty-ninth and fiftieth states "would serve to support American foreign policy and strengthen the position of the United States in international relations." As he reminded the Congress, the recently created United Nations had pledged to promote self-determination for what it termed "non-self-governing territories," and Morton believed that the rest of the world would be closely monitoring how well the United States upheld that promise.

"Among the more important tests applied to American policy and actions by the nations of Asia, the Near East, Africa, and Latin America is the extent to which we manifest our support for the aspirations of dependent peoples for self-government," Morton continued. In his mind, Hawaii and Alaska's applications for statehood presented the U.S. with a splendid chance to prove that America stood behind the anticolonial aspirations of Asians, Arabs, and Africans. Admitting the outlying U.S. territories to statehood would "redound to our credit among these nations," he concluded. Statehood, in other words, would serve as an unmistakable symbol that American power would be fundamentally unlike British or French imperial power—a message that many in the State Department, like Morton, were keen to deliver.\(^\text{21}\)

Several years earlier another U.S. official had pointed to America's overseas territories as a litmus test for the nation's newfound role as the preeminent Western power. As he prepared to assume the position of High Commissioner of the Philippines in late 1945—just months before the Philippine

Islands were due to receive independence from U.S. rule—Paul V. McNutt proclaimed that nations all over the world were “watching what we do in the Philippines as a test of our sincerity as a world power. We must not let the example of the Philippines be thrown in our face later as an illustration of international hypocrisy.” McNutt was concerned especially with the U.S. obligation to rebuild the war-torn Philippines, site of crucial U.S. military bases, but his words served as a reminder that America’s superpower status brought new scrutiny to the nation. In particular, the end of World War II meant that the United States had no choice but to confront the pressures for international decolonization. And, at least according to McNutt and Assistant Secretary Morton, this meant that the United States would have to address its own history of colonial expansion and the political status of its own separate-and-unequal overseas territories.  

From the vantage point of postwar American policymakers, anticolonial struggles in Dutch Indonesia or French Indochina ensnared the United States in a delicate dilemma. By contrast, statehood for Hawaii—a predominantly Asian imperial territory that had been under the control of white missionaries and white industrialists since the mid-nineteenth century—seemed like a simple, consequence-free way to prove that America was neither a colonialist power nor a racially discriminatory power. To be certain, Morton and McNutt’s statements reflected one of the most enduring themes in U.S. history: the idea that American power was exceptional and thus fundamentally anticolonial. But both men eagerly embraced Hawaiian statehood and Filipino independence as tangible

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signs that postwar American power would be different from colonialist European power. From the White House to grassroots citizens’ organizations, a range of political actors agreed that Hawaiian statehood could enhance the U.S. prestige in the world, especially in the strategically crucial realm of East Asia.

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The United States officially annexed Hawaii in 1898, although American interventions in the island kingdom originated decades earlier. Congregationalist missionaries from New England arrived in what they called the “Sandwich Islands” as early as the 1820s and 1830s. Industrialists soon joined the Christian missionaries—in some cases, such as members of the prominent Dole family, the pious pilgrims and the capitalists were one and the same. By the 1840s, the United States had established a powerful commercial foothold on the archipelago, exercising a virtual monopoly over Hawaii’s lucrative sugar industry.²³

Plantation agriculture dramatically and permanently altered the racial composition of the Hawaiian Islands. Between 1840 and 1930 white plantation owners brought more than 400,000 workers from China, Japan, and later the Philippines, Korea, and Puerto Rico. By the 1880s Native Hawaiians had been surpassed as the Islands’ largest ethnic group, and at the time of annexation they represented just one-quarter of the total population.

Proposals to formally annex Hawaii circulated in Washington, D.C., as early as the 1850s, but these were ultimately rejected due in part to an

unwillingness to swell the numbers of nonwhites under the U.S. flag. Finally, in 1893 a group of influential whites engineered an over throw of the Hawaiian monarchy. The efforts of powerful whites to secure annexation failed in the immediate aftermath of Queen Liliuokalani’s deposition, but five years later, as imperial jingoism gathered momentum during the war with Spain, the United States officially “plucked” the Hawaiian “pear.” The fact that a small minority of white settlers effectively controlled the Hawaiian Islands induced the U.S. Congress to place Hawaii in a category distinct from the nation’s other newly acquired overseas territories. Unlike the Philippines or Puerto Rico, Hawaii was classified as an incorporated territory and placed on the same trajectory toward statehood as lands acquired through continental westward expansion.

Serious congressional consideration of Hawaiian statehood began after the conclusion of World War II. The war, billed as a defense of democracy and freedom, infused fresh energy into the struggle for civil rights within the United States and likewise brought urgency to the Hawaiian statehood issue. In light of


25 John Stevens, U.S. minister to Hawaii, famously remarked in 1893 that the “Hawaiian pear is now fully ripe, and this is the golden hour for the United States to pluck it”; quoted in Bell, Last Among Equals, 28.

the Pearl Harbor attack and the combat service of Japanese American soldiers, some U.S. policymakers grew increasingly uncomfortable with Hawaii's unequal status within the nation. The issue received a further boost from *To Secure These Rights*, the report of Harry Truman's 1947 Presidential Committee on Civil Rights, which included provisions favoring Hawaiian and Alaskan statehood, expanded self-government for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and redress of discriminatory labor practices in the Panama Canal Zone.\(^{27}\)

Over the following decade, statehood legislation intermittently surfaced in Congress until Lyndon Johnson engineered one of his trademark compromises that admitted Alaska in 1958 and Hawaii the following year.\(^{28}\) Rifts between pro-statehood and anti-statehood forces did not mirror divides over party or political ideology; the proposed statehood bills found bipartisan support. Labor unions, liberal Christian groups, and civil rights organizations advocated Hawaii's admission.\(^{29}\) In Congress liberals were far more likely to cast affirmative votes, although some leading conservative figures also favored Hawaii's admission. California conservative senator William F. Knowland


\(^{28}\) For the legislative battles over Hawaiian statehood, see Bell, *Last Among Equals*.

supported statehood legislation, citing the potential benefits of a Hawaiian state in promoting democracy in East Asia, and right-wing icon Barry Goldwater approved the measure in the final 1959 vote. General Douglas MacArthur, whose hero-like status among conservatives skyrocketed in the wake of his defiant stance in the Korean War, contended that Hawaii’s admission would facilitate the democratization of Japan.\(^{30}\)

Instead anti-statehood sentiment overwhelmingly broke down along regional lines. Convinced that new senators from Hawaii would arm the liberal wing of the Democratic Party with sufficient voting power to invoke cloture and break filibusters, the white South’s powerful coalition in the Senate almost single-handedly obstructed passage of statehood bills for more than a decade. The familiar cast of civil rights opponents directed the anti-statehood bloc in the Senate: James Eastland, John Stennis, Richard Russell, Allen Ellender, Strom Thurmond, A. Willis Robertson, Olin Johnston, Herman Talmadge, and others. Negative votes on the 1957 civil rights bills and negative votes on the 1959 statehood bill correlated near perfectly. The legislative battles over Hawaii’s admission testified to the South’s estrangement from the program of Cold War liberalism and, indeed, from the direction of national opinion—polling data indicated that roughly three-quarters of Americans supported statehood.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{31}\) Roger M. Bell, Last Among Equals, 134–137, 241, 252–255 (poll data 339). Support for statehood for both territories actually declined between 1950 and 1958, when the Alaska bill was approved. Sentiment for Alaskan statehood peaked at 81 percent in 1950, according to a poll reprinted by Roger Bell, but never registered lower than 71 percent in 1957. At its highest point in 1950, the prospect of Hawaiian statehood garnered a 76 percent favorable rating and had fallen to 64 percent by 1957. Bell speculates that the decline was due to changing concerns about national security and communism, as well as the efforts of grass-roots campaigns to draw attention to the
Advocates of Hawaii's admission praised the work of American missionaries, educators, and industrialists for their work in preparing the Hawaiians for "enlightened, well administered self-government." Indeed, the idea that the United States would release its colonial possessions once they demonstrated their "readiness" for self-rule powerfully underwrote the image of America as a fundamentally non-imperial power. Hawaiians had proved that they were ready, went a common pro-statehood refrain, and thus, the United States would be remiss to deny them statehood any longer.33

More pertinent to the central questions of this dissertation, pro-statehood forces also pointed to rich opportunities to mend America's battered international image—to demonstrate the authenticity of America's democratic values, to refute charges of American racism, and to display solidarity with anticolonial movements. Rather ironically, statehood's friends and foes fixated on the racial composition of the Hawaiian Islands. To those who endorsed admission, extending full citizenship rights to the predominantly Asian-origin population of Hawaii would silence, or at least dampen, the international criticism of American racism. President Truman articulated this position in a 1950 letter he presented to Congress, urging swift action on the statehood bill. Statehood would demonstrate that the American government "judges people by


33 Statement by Hon. Oscar L. Chapman, April 14, 1948, Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, Committee on Public Lands, Hearings on H.R. 49 and S. 114, Bills to Enable the People of Hawaii to Form a Constitution, 80th Cong., 2nd sess., 1948, 445. On the persistence of ideas of America as a fundamentally non-imperial power, see Kaplan, The Anarchy of Empire.
their deeds and not by their racial or national origins. It would give additional convincing proof to the people of the Far East that this country is still truly dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." With the Soviet Union poised to exploit anything that cast the United States in an unflattering light, Truman was eager to find ways to restore the sheen that had been tarnished by lynching, segregation, black disfranchisement, and the World War II internment of Japanese Americans.\(^{34}\)

Members of Truman's cabinet departments praised Hawaii as a paragon of racial harmony, a potential model for the mainland. In a 1947 House hearing Secretary of the Interior Julius Krug noted that in Hawaii, "there exists...an attitude of mind and heart resulting in the races of men living together with a large degree of harmony and mutual respect—a situation which is not duplicated in many other States of the Union. Race tolerance is a social norm."\(^ {35}\) Representative Robert Hale of Maine chimed in with Krug, saying, "There are many parts of the continental United States which have much to learn from Hawaii in the way of tolerance and interracial harmony."\(^ {36}\)Marveling at Hawaii's widespread instances of racial intermarriage, so shunned on much of the mainland, pro-statehood forces celebrated the harmonious state of race relations on the Islands. As Under Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman remarked, "Mixed racial ancestry is the norm there, rather than the unusual, yet discrimination, prejudice, and conflict, on racial grounds, is virtually unknown."


Students and young children “daily learn to accept their fellow men for their intrinsic worth.”

Statehood proponents voiced these arguments with greater intensity and greater urgency as the 1950s wore on and as civil rights issues shot to the center of American politics. “If there is any one thing the people of the United States need to say to mankind at the moment,” the New York Times editors asserted in mid-March 1959, “it is that we do not stand for any theory of racial superiority.” According to the Times the U.S. Congress had resoundingly delivered the message by approving Hawaii as the fiftieth state. The nation’s newspaper of record called Hawaii a fine “experiment in the mingling of many bloods and races,” and it lauded the newest state as a tribute to the values of “tolerance,” “brotherhood,” and “democracy.”

Explained Mike Masoaka, leader in the Japanese-American Citizens’ League (JACL), “To the millions of dark-skinned people...regardless of our explanations, the only reason they understand to deny statehood is because there are so many persons of Asian and Polynesian ancestry.” Admitting Hawaii and making equal citizens of the Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, Korean, and native Hawaiian inhabitants of the Islands would “reaffirm

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to the world America's belief in the brotherhood of men and the democratic precepts of equality and justice for all.\textsuperscript{39}

Shrewdly, Masaoka also tempted U.S. lawmakers with a Cold War prize: the hearts and minds of the "uncommitted peoples of Asia." In his frequent pro-statehood testimonies before Congress, Masaoka depicted Hawaii as an opening for the U.S. to score a competitive edge in the chessboard showdown against Communism in East and Southeast Asia. Not only would statehood "offset the thousands of words poured out by the Communist hatemongers," Masaoka promised, but Hawaii also might become a "showcase of democracy," a place for Asian populations to "look to see what democracy can do."\textsuperscript{40}

This Cold War rationale recurred throughout the decade-long statehood battle. President Truman—using logic not unlike George W. Bush's contention that a democratic Iraq would sow democratic seeds across the Middle East—called Hawaii and Alaska the "proving-ground of our democratic institutions." The successfully operating democracies in America's noncontiguous territories would exert "tremendous influence on the hearts and minds of the people of Asia and the Pacific Islands."\textsuperscript{41} Calling Hawaii a "bridge of friendship spanning the Pacific," Senate Majority Leader Lyndon B. Johnson predicted that statehood would advance U.S. relations with noncommunist states in Asia.\textsuperscript{42} And in 1955


\textsuperscript{42} Heefner, "A Symbol of the New Frontier," 546.
Elizabeth P. Farrington, Hawaii's nonvoting delegate in Congress, had these impassioned words for the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs:

"Hawaii is the lighthouse of democracy in the Pacific. That lighthouse is being watched day by day by freemen in Asia." It was imperative, she declared, that Congress promptly grant statehood and "tell the freedom-loving peoples of Asia who are engaged in a great struggle against communism that we Americans do practice what we preach." She and others considered it no exaggeration to claim Hawaii as a barricade against Communist expansion.

Just as earnestly as the U.S. wished to dispel charges of racism or hypocrisy, policymakers wanted to decisively prove that America was not a colonialist power, as the Soviet Union alleged. Many regarded Hawaiian statehood as an ideal avenue to burnish the nation's anticolonial credentials. In the spring of 1954 Joseph Farrington, spouse of Elizabeth Farrington, framed the Hawaii question as a simple choice between statehood and perpetual colonialism. "Either we become a State or we enter permanently into a colonial status. That is what continuation of the Territorial status in its present or modified form means...The issue clearly is one of statehood or colonialism."

The demands to transform Hawaii from territory to state probably would have developed even if colonialism had not been crumbling across the globe, but the international upsurge of anticolonial sentiment—which American diplomats felt keenly at the United Nations—did compound the pressure for U.S.

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44 Joseph Farrington, quoted in 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record 100, part 3 (March 16, 1954), p. 3322.
policymakers to act. As W. E. B. Du Bois’s 1945 congressional testimony pointed out, the Charter of the United Nations remained virtually silent on the issue of colonialism—precisely how the Great Powers had wanted it. While the Western Allied powers refused to endorse immediate decolonization plans, the UN Charter’s eleventh chapter did contain language pertaining to colonial ruling powers:

Members of the United Nations which have or assume responsibilities for the administration of territories whose peoples have not yet attained a full measure of self-government recognize the principles that the interests of the inhabitants of these territories are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote...the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories...[and] to develop self-government, to take due account of the political aspirations of the peoples, and to assist them in the progressive development of their free political institutions. . . .

Infuriating many representatives from the colonial and formerly colonized world, the language of the Charter departed only slightly from the ideology that had justified colonialism in the first place; it relied on the idea that certain nations, by virtue of their politically and economically superior state of development, had the responsibility of preparing other nations for self-rule, until the colonized states attained some undefined, arbitrary standard of “readiness.” The UN Charter also established the Trusteeship Council, a retooled version of the League of Nations’ mandate system, which helped oversee the administration of “non-self-governing territories.”

The Trusteeship Council’s jurisdiction authority extended to cover Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Pacific islands won from Japan in World War II, and, until 1946, the Philippines. Accordingly the U.S.

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45 For Charter’s full text, see Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Charter of the United Nations, 3–33.
Department of State had to prepare reports on the non-self-governing territories under American control. 46 Assistant Secretary of State Thurston Morton, quoted earlier on the foreign policy benefits of admitting Hawaii, reminded members of Congress that “under chapter XI of the United Nations Charter the United States and other members of the United Nations have undertaken to develop self-government in non-self-governing territories.” 47 Statehood thus was America’s due diligence, Morton argued, an affirmation of the U.S. commitment to the ideals of the United Nations.

Aside from enhanced stature at the United Nations, statehood proponents began to claim Hawaiian statehood as a Cold War imperative, a meaningful rebuttal to those who accused America of colonialist designs. In March 1954 Utah Republican Senator Wallace F. Bennett told his colleagues that a failure to approve the statehood bill would strike a “disastrous blow” to American standing in the Pacific Rim. The senator conveyed the urgency and the gravity of the moment: in East and Southeast Asia “oriental men and women are just beginning to emerge from colonialism.” Echoing the 1947 CIA conclusions about the dilemmas of decolonization in a Cold War world, Bennett described America’s “delicate role” in the world: the need to “help push back the receding waters of colonialism without enticing the red sea of communism to fill the void.” To leave Hawaii as a territory constituted a “retreat to a new colonialism” in Senator Bennett’s eyes. “In the overall perspective of the worldwide cold war,


statehood for Hawaii now stands as a must. We need the great new propaganda weapon this decision will provide.”  

JACL spokesman Mike Masoaka also pointed to statehood as a potentially valuable “propaganda weapon” in the global battle for the allegiance of Asia’s formerly colonized states. He warned Congress against betraying the “good faith” of the “restless peoples of the Far East, who, stirred by the spirit of nationalism are yearning to break the bonds of colonialism.” Noting that the Communists had “much to say, and more to promise” to Asian anticolonial nationalists, Masoaka urged Congress to give the Hawaiian residents “full-fledged citizenship.” America’s postwar grant of independence to the Philippines had attested to U.S. sympathy for anticolonial aspirations, he contended, and the admission of Hawaii would do the same.  

In their exuberance to admit Hawaii, Bennett and Masoaka may have overstated the symbolic impact of a U.S. state in the Pacific. Nevertheless, their statements reveal what Drew L. Smith’s 1957 essay had already hinted at: the statehood debates were enmeshed within broader public discussions about America’s role in a postcolonial world. Conservative white southerners, who spearheaded the resistance to Hawaii’s admission, also discerned the links between U.S. territories and the revolutionary power shifts on the Asian and African continents. While it may not have been a surprise to see white segregationists opposing the addition of an “Oriental state,” their engagement with the colonial question often produced unexpected results.

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48 Senator W.F. Bennett, 83rd Cong., 2nd sess., Congressional Record 100, part 3 (March 10, 1954), pp. 2984–85.

49 Masoaka, Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Hearings on S. 50, February 25, 1959, pp. 67, 75.
III. THE WHITE SOUTH AND THE COLONIAL QUESTION: THE CASE OF HAWAIIAN STATEHOOD

In late February 1959, just days before the protracted congressional battle over Hawaii’s admission as the fiftieth state reached a resolution, a chagrined Texas minister and his wife expressed their distaste for the statehood bill to their senator, Lyndon B. Johnson. “We feel compelled to protest the admittance of a foreign country into the Union of the U.S.A,” read the letter from the Reverend and Mrs. H. D. Mayrant. If the U.S. Congress would extend equal citizenship rights to a set of islands populated by “Japanese, Philippine, Chinese, Negroes, Puerto Ricans, mixed bloods, and Hawaiians,” the residents of Palestine, Texas, asked incredulously, would it “next reach out for Haiti, the negro country, or for Taiwan?” Already anxious about the growing momentum of black civil rights activism, resolute segregationists like the Mayrants fiercely opposed statehood for any outlying territory.50

As Congress contemplated statehood for one of America’s imperial territories, white southerners confronted the same tangle of questions facing postwar Western European societies: if colonies could not be held in perpetual subordination, what relationship between colonizer and colonized would emerge? What citizenship claims or migration privileges should colonial residents have in the metropolitan nation? Would former imperial territories be redefined as entirely “foreign,” as the Mayrants suggested, and if not, what did that mean for the character of the ruling nation? White southerners like Drew

50 Rev. and Mrs. H. D. Mayrant to Lyndon Johnson, February 26, 1959, folder “1959 Subject Files, Statehood,” box 732, Johnson Library.
Smith or the Reverend and Mrs. Mayrant may not have used this precise language, yet they nevertheless contended with these sorts of questions when they weighed in on the Hawaiian statehood issue.

Arguably, conservative white southerners had much more at stake in these questions than other groups of Americans. Historically the white South had likened their "Negro problem" to colonial civilization missions, relying on many of the same ideas about race, civilization, and readiness for self-rule that had legitimated colonialism. Certainly the white South reacted to the African American freedom struggle in ways comparable to white European settlers in places like Algeria, India, Kenya, or South Africa.

Some segregationists were prepared to countenance U.S. possession of a strategic Pacific territory, so long as it remained clearly outside the legal and imagined bounds of the American nation and so long as a strict hierarchy governed the relationship between the United States and its imperial possession. These individuals contended that Hawaii should be kept in its unequal position as a territory rather than as a state, and they marshaled reasons why Hawaii should remain separate and unequal, ranging from the intermixed population to the threat of communism. But the proposed transformation of a largely nonwhite imperial territory into an equal member of the Union pushed other segregationists toward an anticolonial orientation of their own. Although most statehood opponents stood firm in their conviction that Hawaii's "Asiatic" residents were incapable of orderly self-rule, some nonetheless found independence for Hawaii far preferable to extending the privileges of equal citizenship to nonwhites and absorbing into the nation an overseas territory acquired not by westward settlement but by imperial conquest.
A remarkable range of segregationist organizations commented upon statehood legislation. Drew Smith's *Menace of Hawaiian Statehood* reached a relatively broad southern audience through his association with other groups. Husband-and-wife team Kent and Phoebe Courtney promoted Smith's tract in the *Independent American*, their New Orleans-based right-wing newspaper, where anti-statehood editorials shared space with denunciations of racial integration, the United Nations, UNESCO, foreign aid programs, immigration reform, and all things liberal. Well-connected in national conservative networks, the couple (who later divorced) also distributed promotional materials about the *Menace of Hawaiian Statehood*.51

Another group headquartered in New Orleans, the segregationist Federation for Constitutional Government (FCG), put Smith's writings in the hands of its members. Established in December 1955, the FCG intended to act as an umbrella organization to coordinate local activities of white resistance groups. Its leader, John U. Barr, a Louisiana industrialist and veteran states' rights organizer, assembled an advisory committee that included Senator James O. Eastland, Tom P. Brady, Leander Perez, Robert B. Patterson, Roy V. Harris, and

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dozens of other influential segregationist leaders. The FCG’s actual achievements fell far short of its design, and by the end of the 1950s the better-known White Citizens’ Councils had all but eclipsed the FCG. Despite the FCG’s short-lived status historian Numan Bartley dubbed the group “a landmark in the rise of massive resistance.” Smith authored a number of inflammatory tracts for the FCG, and the organization distributed a four-page version of his *Menace of Hawaiian Statehood* to its members.

A medley of other segregationist organizations joined the FCG in condemning the plan to create an “Asiatic state”: the Association of Citizens’ Councils; the Nashville-based Southern States Industrial Council; “Texans for America,” a state affiliate of the national conservative group “For America,” led by staunch segregationist J. Evetts Haley; and the motley assembly of segregationists and far-right conservatives who launched an ill-fated third-party presidential campaign in 1956. Several prominent segregationist leaders also expressed their disapproval of any U.S. territory becoming a state, including Reverend James P. Dees, president of the North Carolina Defenders of States’

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Rights; Charles Bloch, a member of the Georgia States Rights Council and author of *States Rights: The Law of the Land*; Walter Sillers, lawyer, former Dixiecrat, and speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives during the civil rights era; and Sillers’s sister Florence Sillers Ogden, a conservative newspaper columnist who later helped found “Women for Constitutional Government.” The constituent correspondence files of southern senators such as Lyndon Johnson, Richard Russell, and Sam Ervin contain scores of anti-statehood postcards.

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letters, and telegrams—many from white southerners who also expressed their vigorous objection to desegregation and civil rights legislation.\textsuperscript{55}

The publications, statements, and letters of these individuals and organizations reveal how the white South extended and applied the segregationist ideology to the case of U.S. overseas territories. Often the translation was straightforward, with anti-statehood and anti-integration arguments running parallel. For instance, statehood adversaries repeatedly deployed the specter of miscegenation to justify Hawaii's exclusion from full membership in the nation, just as they appealed to gendered concerns about sex, rape, and intermarriage to legitimate the subordinate status of southern blacks. What statehood supporters interpreted as a virtue—Hawaii's fluid race relations, particularly with respect to intermarriage and sex—was precisely why a multitude of horrified conservative southern whites demanded that the statehood bill be rejected.

Events prior to the statehood debates of the late 1940s and 1950s had already convinced many white Americans that Hawaii represented a dangerous example of what the mainland might become if segregation practices were relaxed. During World War II, many of the millions of servicemen and war industry workers who traveled to Hawaii were aghast to discover the high rates of intermarriage and the absence of a strict racial hierarchy.\textsuperscript{56} A decade before the war, a highly publicized rape trial had thrust the Islands' complex race

\textsuperscript{55} For a small sampling of such letters, see W. R. Simpson to Russell, January 14, 1959, folder 3 "Statehood (Alaska and Hawaii): Correspondence 1959," box 226, Russell Papers, UGA; Frank M. Gossett to Johnson, March 9, 1959, and Mrs. L.E. Allen to Johnson, January 27, 1959, both in folder "1959 Subject Files, Statehood," box 732, Johnson Library.

\textsuperscript{56} Bailey and Farber, \textit{The First Strange Place}, 198–99.
relations into the national spotlight and left a lasting impact on the ways white Americans imagined the Hawaiian Islands. On September 12, 1931, Honolulu resident Thalia Massie, a young white woman from a privileged background, reported that she had been assaulted and repeatedly raped by a group of men. Within hours, based on dubious evidence, police had five suspects in custody—two Native Hawaiians, two of Japanese descent, and one of mixed Chinese and Hawaiian origin. The five men were tried two months later before a multiracial panel of jurors. Despite prosecutors’ attempts to manufacture evidence and depict the defendants as “lust-sodden beasts,” the trial resulted in a hung jury. Shortly after the mistrial, Thalia’s husband, Navy Lt. Tommie Massie, her mother, Washington, D.C., socialite Grace Fortescue, and two other Navy men kidnapped and fatally shot one of the defendants, twenty-year-old Joseph Kahahawai. The four lynchers stood trial for second-degree murder and were found guilty of manslaughter. Although the judge sentenced them to ten years hard labor, the territorial governor, Lawrence Judd, under tremendous public pressure from an outraged white press and white politicians, immediately commuted the sentence to one hour. The “honor slaying” of Kahahawai garnered extensive newspaper coverage across the United States; mainlanders imbibed images of Hawaii as a place where “bands of degenerate natives or half-castes lie in wait for white women.”

When Congress began to consider statehood, a 1948

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U.S. government report concluded that the Massie case had “put Hawaii on the map” for many “appalled” mainland Americans.⁵⁸

To many conservative white southerners, Hawaii served as proof that an integrated society encouraged the lust of nonwhite men for white women and invariably resulted in “race mixing.” Relying on a common segregationist refrain that “God would have made us all one race if He had meant for us to mix,” a Georgia woman told Methodist Bishop John O. Smith that integration in the United States would “lead to the amalgamation of the races, just as it has in Hawaii where there is no color line.”⁵⁹ Some saw the simple fact that racial intermixing had occurred in Hawaii as ample reason for the defeat of statehood proposals. The sharp-tongued editor of the Texas-based Southern Conservative newspaper, Ida M. Darden, implored her readers to inform their congressional representatives that they were “unalterably opposed” to statehood for a “polyglot race.”⁶⁰ North Carolina attorney John Kerr Jr., referred scornfully to Hawaii’s population as a “polyglot, mongrel crowd representing many admixtures of races,” as did his acquaintance W. N. Jeffries, an active member of the pro-segregationist groups The Patriots of North Carolina and the North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights.⁶¹ Others believed Hawaii’s admission

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⁵⁹ Mrs W. T. Brightwell to John Owen Smith, August 31, 1961, box 1, John Owen Smith Papers, Pitts Theological Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.


would encourage “the evil of miscelenation” on the mainland, as Edward D. Patterson of Richmond, Virginia, warned. Another Richmond resident, Mary Hill, put the matter even more pointedly: “Why should we object to school integration and the commingling of the white and African races and at the same time make possible the influx of a horde of Asiatics....Defeat the Hawaii Statehood Bill or there will be no more ‘blue eyes and golden hair.’” To these segregation sympathizers a multiracial Hawaiian territory was only acceptable if the Asian- or mixed-race residents were excluded from citizenship or full membership in the nation.

Racial stereotypes that Asians were predisposed toward despotism, anti-individualism, and communist manipulation also stoked southern anti-statehood activism. Statehood foes claimed that Hawaii’s “conglomerate population,” comprised of “Japanese,” “a general mixture of orientals of the lowest order,”

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63 For examples of anti-communist groups that circulated anti-statehood material, see Mrs. L. E. Allen to Johnson, January 27, 1959, folder “1959 Subject Files, Statehood,” box 732, Johnson Library; attached to her letter was pamphlet by Billy James Hargis, “Should Hawai be the 50th State?” printed by the Christian Crusade of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Senator Eastland also submitted Hargis's anti-statehood tract into the congressional hearings: Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Statehood for Hawaii, February 25, 1959, 94-95. See letter from W. P. Strube, Jr., to Dies, May 24, 1957, and three-page statement of Christian Anti-Communist Crusade leader Fred Schwartz to House Subcommittee on Territories, April 16, 1957 attached to Strube’s letter, both in file 11, box 107, Dies Papers, SHRL.
and "left-wing whites," made the Islands a "perfect set up" for a communist takeover, a "fertile field for the Communist propagandists and agitators." A member of the Virginia Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, Elizabeth Osth, claimed it was "common knowledge" that labor leader Harry Bridges of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) ruled Hawaii "just as if he were dictator."  

Leftist influences in Hawaii, southerners feared, would virtually guarantee that elected representatives from the fiftieth state would join the liberal wing of the Democratic Party—a fear of considerable import to southern conservatives desperate to safeguard their filibuster power in the Senate. As Mississippi's indomitably segregationist senator James O. Eastland remarked with characteristic bluster in March 1954, Hawaiian statehood would mean "two votes in the Senate to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act" (which limited the power of labor unions), two votes to "socialize the medical profession," two votes to "destroy our immigration laws," and would give "Moscow" a "voice in deciding the foreign policy of the Untied States." And although Eastland's speech, given

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before *Brown*, did not explicitly mention two votes for civil rights legislation, undoubtedly he had this in mind as well.⁶⁶

Partisan politics, fears of communist subversion, and simple bigotry all played prominent roles in the conservative white South’s zeal to defeat the statehood measure. But more startling and more germane to this dissertation’s central themes, white racial conservatives also used Hawaii’s proposed statehood as a point of entry into broader discussions about race, colonialism, and the national character of postcolonial societies.

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From the multiple facets of southern anti-statehood activism, something of a segregationist consensus emerged: If the United States were to retain the Hawaiian territory, its unequal status within the nation must be preserved and its residents must continue to be classified as incontrovertibly alien. But as white southerners witnessed bloody, prolonged wars for national independence drain European resources, many began to question whether control over foreign peoples was worth the potential costs—and to racially conservative southerners, the threat that imperial populations would eventually demand equal political rights was a grave cost indeed. The global context framing the statehood debates led many pro-segregationist southerners to reevaluate the nature of colonial civilizing missions and reassess the objectives of imperial expansion.⁶⁷

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⁶⁷ For instance, Florence Sillers Ogden took note of the “position Britain and France are in with their colonies,” one example of a southerner worrying about the detrimental impact of colonial expansions. See Ogden to Stennis, February 24, 1960, folder 37, box 4, Ogden Papers, DSU.
As they did so, white southerners returned to a set of debates that had surrounded turn-of-the-century American expansionism. Southern defenders of white supremacy had long eyed the imperial project with suspicion, imbued as they were with biological conceptions of race that undercut the premise of civilizing missions. Following the 1898 war with Spain, southern congressmen such as Senator Benjamin Tillman had supplied some of the most forceful objections to U.S. annexation of the Philippines. The demagogic Tillman flatly rejected suggestions that the United States could transmit the blessings of American civilization to the Philippines or offer Filipinos democratic tutelage, and he despised the idea of giving Filipinos even a limited claim to American national identity. Calling the Filipinos “aliens in blood, aliens in language, aliens in thought and feeling,” Tillman thought American-style democracy could never take root in an Asian culture, regardless of the duration of imperial rule, and thus he saw zero utility in an American mission to uplift the people of the Philippines.  

Tillman’s basic perspective still carried weight in the midcentury white South. As Congress debated the statehood measures, many white southerners rekindled the argument that mechanisms of imperial rule could never adequately prepare Hawaii for self-governance nor create civilized Americans out of Asian-origin populations. Their doubts arose in part from the common southern perception of the democratic “heritage.” In the hands of southern defenders of

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white supremacy, the "heritage" of American democracy was not merely a
tradition of political ideology, open to any individual willing to subscribe to the
principles of free elections and free enterprise. Rather, the idea of heritage was
imbued with notions of blood lineage. If, as racial conservatives frequently
averred, people of a Protestant Christian, Anglo-European background had
created, nourished, and sustained the American traditions of democratic self-
government, then all people of a white Christian background shared an intrinsic
heritage of democracy. By extension, people of other cultural or religious
backgrounds fundamentally lacked an aptitude for self-governance, and no
program of civilizing or tutelage could implant the "heritage" that white
Americans had at birth.69

Emphatically rejecting the idea that "Americanism" had a universal
character, segregationists worried that an extraterritorial state—a state not
acquired by the westward movement of white settlers—would dilute the
character of the American nation and pollute the qualities that made the United
States blessed among nations. During the Cold War, it was commonplace for
white Americans across the political spectrum to believe that the United States
was exceptional. For some, American ideals and political institutions were both
unique and universal; they believed that the United States had developed an
unparalleled system of government and way of life but also that these models
could be exported around the world. White racial conservatives certainly

69 For illustrations of this type of anti-statehood argument, see Esther Lee Hoss to Richard
226, Russell Papers, UGA; and statement of James M. Thomson (a member of the segregationist
FCG), House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Statehood for Hawaii: Hearings on H.R. 50
and H.R. 888, 92. On Thomson's membership in the Federation for Constitutional Government,
see FCG letter, October 1955, folder 17, box 3, George Papers, UNC.
subscribed to the proposition that America and its democracy were uniquely blessed. They also believed, however, that this exceptionalism was rooted in the Western European, Protestant origin of the nation’s founders—in other words, decidedly *un-*universal. A civilizing mission to transmit American values overseas therefore amounted to a fool’s errand.

Unlike the settler-based westward expansion of the nineteenth century, enlarging the American nation through imperial annexation was inimical to racial conservatives, for unless national identity was grounded in racial, linguistic, or cultural characteristics, what was to stop any territory from trying to become American? “[W]here can we draw the line in the future?” queried Austin E. Burges of Dallas, an officer of the Associated Citizens’ Councils of Texas and author of the 1956 book, *What Price Integration?* “Not on distance; not on race; not on language; not on cultural or political background. What if Cuba applies for admittance, or Puerto Rico, or Greenland, or some European, Asian, or African country?” Burges considered Hawaiian statehood a dangerous precedent, a perilous step toward decoupling race from the category of “American.”

Statehood foes regularly invoked such reasoning to rebut claims that a half-century of American rule had made the Hawaiian Islands ready for equal participation in U.S. democratic institutions. According to the staunchly segregationist *Charleston (S.C.) News and Courier*, “very few” individuals in Hawaii were able to “understand and believe in the kind of government our

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forefathers created." Mrs. A. Russell Durham of Belton, Texas, wrote to Senator
Johnson to complain that the nation's founding fathers, the men "who bought
our liberty with blood and sacrifice," were likely "turning over in their graves at
the thought of admitting territory thousands of miles removed from our shores
and with a predominantly Oriental population that cannot possibly appreciate
our heritage!" Moreover, racial conservatives doubted that American rule might ever
prepare Asian-origin Hawaiians for self-rule and democratic citizenship.
Chicago-area lawyer and active American Legion member Edward R. Lewis
dismissed outright the proposition that imperialism had made Hawaii "ready."
"The Japanese, Chinese, Filipinos, and Hawaiian people have had none of that
long training in self-government which people of old American stock have had
for centuries," wrote Lewis. "[T]he history of France, Britain, and the United
States, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark proves that self-government can only be
learned through long practice and experience," and Lewis pointed to the
"alternate examples of revolutions and dictatorships" in Latin America as
evidence of the "folly" of attempting to implement democracy in lands inhabited

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71 “Not Our Kind,” originally printed in Charleston News and Courier, reprinted in Independent
American, August 1958, series 15, reel 62, RWC; see similar in Ida Darden, “Harry Bridges and
Jack Hall May Be New United States Senators,” Southern Conservative, March 1959, series S18, reel
114, in ibid. The idea that the Anglo-Saxon races were, in the words of historian Paul Kramer,
"the possessors and progenitors of unique, 'free' political values and institutions" had a long
lineage in Britain and the United States, although its explicit application in the post-World War II
period has rarely been analyzed. Paul Kramer, “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race
and Rule between the British and United States, 1880 – 1910,” Journal of American History, 88
(2002), 1315–53.

72 Mrs. (Bessie Johnson) A. Russell Durham to Johnson, March 5, 1959, folder “1959 Subject Files,
Statehood,” box 732, Johnson Library.
by “conglomerate populations.” Democracy, Lewis implied, could not be learned; it depended upon a particular racial and cultural lineage. Over sixty years had elapsed since the United States formalized its political control over Hawaii, but, to segregationist statehood opponents like Lewis, no duration of time as a U.S. colony and no degree of assimilation could prepare the “Asiatic” peoples of Hawaii for self-determination.

To segregationists colonial expansionism only became dangerous when the ruling nation implied that imperial populations, after reaching some hazily defined benchmark of “readiness,” might eventually earn self-governance or equal rights with their erstwhile rulers. This view did not translate into a purely isolationist stance; white southerners accepted the need for U.S. control over outlying territories for military bases, trade, and access to vital resources. They cautioned, however, that the accumulation of international power for purposes of national security or economic strength should not be muddied by attempts to civilize, uplift, or instruct foreign people in democracy.

Indeed, racial conservatives differentiated between strategic control over a foreign land and expansionism with the intent of absorbing colonized peoples into the national polity. To their way of thinking, only the latter qualified as empire building. The anti-statehood congressional testimonies of Willis Carto and Hamilton A. Long—neither a southern himself, but both segregationist sympathizers—illuminate such a perspective. The U.S. acquisition of an overseas

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territory like Hawaii—with no voting representatives in Congress, no voice in
the selection of American leaders, and no direct influence over U.S. law-
making—did not constitute empire in the minds of Carto or Long. On the other
hand, transforming that territory into a state and its residents into citizens
represented, in Long's words, the "essence of imperialism."

Carto was best known as the founder of the stridently conservative group
known as the Liberty Lobby. He and Liberty Lobby officers subscribed to a
range of ultra-rightist, racist, and anti-Semitic ideologies; the organization often
muted its extremist message, however, allowing the group to earn a substantial
membership and relatively wide circulation for its publications. In his
appearance before Congress, Carto warned that admitting a territory beyond the
natural continental boundaries of the United States would convert America from
a "Republic with clearly defined boundaries" into a "meaningless
conglomeration, an empire." New York attorney and conservative author
Hamilton Long echoed Carto's conceptualization of empire. Less extreme in his
racial views than Carto, Long's central preoccupation was the post-New Deal
expansion of federal power, not the preservation of segregation. Nonetheless,
his response to the 1957 Little Rock schools crisis—he dubbed President Dwight
Eisenhower "Bayonet Ike," called the use of federal troops a "glaringly anti-
Constitution" decision, and defended Virginia's right to nullify Supreme Court
rulings on school desegregation—indicated his sympathy for the white South's

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75 Carto, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, *Hearings on H.R. 50 and H.R. 888*, 93–94.
cause.\textsuperscript{76} Long worried that the admission of noncontiguous territories would leave the nation with “no fundamental line of demarcation” from other nations. He argued that history had shown that empire building, particularly the incorporation of territories into “the homeland’s political structure,” had “been the route to doom of great countries and peoples.”\textsuperscript{77}

Long was not the only statehood opponent to look to historical and contemporary examples of imperial expansion. As southerners fought against Hawaiian statehood, they assessed the broader history of colonial expansionism, and, in their interpretation of historical events, bringing colonial people into the nation invariably led to a decaying civilization. Hugh W. Holt of Warrenton, North Carolina, wrote to his senator, Clyde R. Hoey, in 1953: “I feel we could take a lesson from the Romans who made the mistake of granting citizenship to undeserving people far out on the fringe of their empire.” The Roman example similarly fueled the anti-statehood sentiment of John Cascione, president of a New York accounting firm. He ominously proclaimed that the United States would “never know peace again if the Territory of Hawaii is admitted as a State. When Rome made it possible for the natives of its foreign territories to call themselves Roman citizens, it sealed its own doom.”\textsuperscript{78}


\textsuperscript{77} Testimony of Hamilton Long, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, \textit{Hearings on H.R. 50 and H.R. 888}, 163, and Senate Subcommittee on Territories and Insular Affairs, \textit{Hearings on S. 50, Statehood for Hawaii}, 112, where Long advanced a similar argument.

Many conservative whites thought the French colonial model furnished compelling evidence against transforming U.S. imperial territories into fully American states—a powerful example, since France’s wars first with Indochina and then with Algeria coincided with congressional consideration of statehood legislation. In a March 1955 article that appeared in Collier’s magazine, Senator Mike Monroney of Oklahoma criticized the French for attempting to make “off-shore possessions with widely differing peoples and interests an integral part of the government of continental France.” This decision had contributed to “the instability and the inconsistency of the French parliamentary system,” and, Monroney implied, the extension of citizenship to Asian-origin Hawaiians would similarly weaken the United States.79 Senator George Malone, a conservative Republican from Nevada, authored the minority report against Hawaiian statehood. Nodding to those conservatives hostile to a “one-world” movement (described in chapter 1), Malone accused pro-Hawaiian forces of trying to create “a United States of the World” and subordinate national sovereignty to “a world organization.” Like his colleague from Oklahoma, Senator Malone was strongly adverse to the French policy of “admitting their colonial areas’ representatives to their Assembly.” As he maintained, “the resulting instability of that body [the French Assembly] should make other countries wary of the practice.”80

Many others agreed, insisting that Hawaiians—or, for that matter, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, residents of the Panama Canal Zone, or any American imperial

79 Mike Monroney, “Let’s Keep it 48,” Collier’s, March 4, 1955; copy in folder “Hawaiian Statehood, box 237, Stennis Papers, MSU.

population—should never be awarded a voice in the government of the mainland. Drew Smith also vehemently warned against allowing "far-flung peoples in our home councils," a move that would "weaken us just as in the case of France." His Menace of Hawaiian Statehood condemned French imperial policymakers for being lured into the "mistaken and foolhardy belief that French colonials were native Frenchmen" and choosing to grant colonials a place in the governing councils. On the other hand, he lauded English imperial policies that forbade "Canadians, Australians, South Africans, New Zealanders, and Indians" from sitting in Parliament.\(^{81}\) Mississippi Senator John Stennis, an inveterate foe of civil rights legislation, condemned the plan to "take in what is essentially a foreign area" and "invest these peoples with power to pass laws regulating the daily affairs of the 155 million people of our great nation."\(^{82}\) Stennis's perspective had also taken root among grassroots southern conservatives; a conservative Texan wrote to Lyndon Johnson, for instance, explaining the dangers he saw in permitting "a polyglot population, with ideologies completely alien to the philosophies of our American heritage, an equal vote in the enactment of the laws under which we must live here on the mainland."\(^{83}\) In short, non-settlement, noncontiguous territories were only acceptable if the residents were denied equal rights of citizenship.

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\(^{81}\) Smith, The Menace of Hawaiian Statehood, 7–8.

\(^{82}\) Special Memorandum, May 25, 1953, in folder "Interior and Insular Affairs: Statehood for Hawaii, 85\(^{th}\) Cong., 1957," box 237, Stennis Papers, MSU.

\(^{83}\) F.O. Oberwetter to Johnson, January 29, 1959, folder "1959 Subject Files, Statehood," box 732, Johnson Library. See similar in Margaret Hill to Johnson, March 3, 1959, in ibid.
Yet in the postwar decades anticolonial and anti-racist protests had grown so strong that even the most obdurate of white southerners had to wonder if perpetual inequality, whether for African Americans or colonial populations, could last. Observing the apparent instability of white rule over nonwhite populations, some southern segregationists turned instead to a racially motivated anticolonialism. If Hawaii, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories resisted their subordinate status, then some segregationists saw the appeal of cutting all territories loose from American control. Segregationists’ advocacy of Hawaii’s independence had no basis in sympathy for oppressed colonial peoples; rather, it more closely resembled the strain of anti-imperialism associated with southern racial demagogues around the turn of the twentieth century.

Segregationist organizations realized that the “empires of the world [were] crumbling,” as the FCG’s Drew Smith put it, and they seized anticolonial language to promote their own racially conservative agenda. Smith and other white southerners proffered an alternative to statehood for the Hawaiian Islands: The United States should abandon its policy of “imperial madness,” follow the precedent established with the Philippines, and grant all U.S. territories, including Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, their full independence. Several of Dixie’s segregationist senators supported Hawaii’s independence. To North Carolina Democrat Clyde Roark Hoey, creating a state with “only a small percentage of white people” was “inconceivable.” He suggested instead that the United States pursue the same policy as it had with the Cuba and the Philippines: “grant [Hawaiians] their independence and let them run their own

84 For the phrases “empires of the world,” see Smith, The Menace of Hawaiian Statehood, 4; for “imperial madness,” ibid., 6–7.
affairs.” In a 1953 radio interview, Mississippi’s John Stennis pledged to “join in any movement to give Hawaii her independence, either in full or upon a limited basis.”

Grassroots segregationists were similarly convinced of the wisdom of independence for U.S. territories. In his *Menace of Hawaiian Statehood* Smith referred witheringly to the “expansionists” of the 1890s and urged the U.S. Congress to follow the precedent it set with the Philippines by “the granting of full and complete sovereignty to Hawaii with absolute autonomy and final independence.”

Eugene A. Hood of Greensboro, North Carolina, whose name appeared on a 1956 list of members of the pro-segregationist Patriots of North Carolina, informed his senator, Sam Ervin, that he saw little point in incorporating a “bunch of Orientals” into the Union and instead “would prefer letting them have their own little country to themselves.” Mississippi’s Florence Sillers Ogden, who like many others worried that Hawaii’s admission would open the door for the admission of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, or the Marshall Islands, deemed it “[b]etter by far to release all claims to these outlying territories than to make them states with equal representation.” W. L. Totten of Durham felt the best course of action was to “give HAWAII her FREEDOM.” J. H. Adams concurred, writing to Senator Hoey on behalf of the Wilmington, North Carolina, American Legion post to apprise him of the organization’s unanimous resolution against statehood for Hawaii. Citing

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concerns over the multitude of "racial strains" in the Islands, Adams argued that "it would be best for us to free the Hawaiian Islands." An incensed statehood opponent from Texas, Malcolm Weaver, similarly requested that "all of the outlying provinces" be "given back to the peoples of these various lands."^{87}

Independence for Puerto Rico and Hawaii earned the support of white racial conservatives for one primary reason: It severed any claims to U.S. citizenship that residents of these colonial territories might make. With independence, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and other territories would be formally reclassified as entirely foreign countries, subject to all regulations governing immigration to the United States, and their residents would be designated as aliens, with absolutely no right to a voice in American government. At a historical moment when the traditional Western powers were beset by violent anticolonial uprisings and persistent demands for human rights, some white southerners may have felt that Benjamin Tillman's views were vindicated.

Southerners' support for Hawaiian independence represented something of an ideological contortion: How could segregationists at once call for self-rule for the Asian-origin populations of Hawaii while vigorously denying that right

to black citizens in their own states? The answer, it seems, was that the prospect of converting an imperial territory into a fully equal state—a path that had no clear endpoint, given the ever-widening global influence of the United States—so alarmed conservative whites that they were willing to forego their normal objections to withdrawing white control over people of color. For segregationists, the problem of maintaining the color line went beyond preventing the integration of public schools and facilities. Although this undoubtedly represented their highest priority, the Hawaiian statehood question demonstrated that massive resistance encompassed much more. To uphold the ideology that legitimated Jim Crow, the white South had to engage globally significant questions about the colonial project.

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Coda to Part I

The politics of race and civil rights profoundly influenced the conclusions that the white South drew about the colonial project, the viability of civilizing missions, and the ability of territorial residents to become American. Overwhelmingly, the South’s opposition to Hawaiian statehood left the region isolated, cloistered by its obsession with race. Even within conservative circles the Hawaii question separated the South from other parts of the nation. Both the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)—usually reliable sources of conservative positions—endorsed statehood for Hawaii.88

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88 Although the DAR initially voted down a statehood resolution, citing concerns about “the Japanese element” in Hawaii, the admirable World War II record of Japanese American combat soldiers changed their minds, and the organization passed a resolution favoring statehood in
Yet the Hawaiian statehood issue, like the creation of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, compelled even the most inward-looking white southerners to engage with sweeping global changes and international political questions. This wider perspective ultimately helped white southern conservatives overcome their regional isolation. As the 1950s came to a close, the South’s strategy of openly defying the Supreme Court ruling in Brown began to falter, and a handful of influential southern opinion-makers began to call for a national rather than a regional strategy of resistance—resistance both to the African American freedom struggle and the analogous anticolonial revolutions abroad. As Part II seeks to demonstrate, U.S. foreign policy in the decolonizing world was one place they looked to forge a new, more national alliance of political conservatism.

1948. See statement of Mrs. W. J. Hull, representing the Daughters of the American Revolution, Senate Committee on Public Lands, Statehood for Hawaii: Hearings on H.R. 49 and S. 114, 44–47. On the American Legion, see resolutions of the National Executive Committee of the American Legion, House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Hawaii-Alaska Statehood, January–February 1955, 409. See also Mao, “Asia First: China and American Conservatism.” She notes that many “Asia-First” anticommunist conservatives in the Senate and House were also eager to admit Hawaii, in the hope that the Pacific state might positively influence the spread of democracy and the rollback of Communism in China and North Korea.

"...I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny and I say segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."
-- Governor George Wallace, January 14, 1963, Montgomery, Alabama

So began the tenure of Alabama Governor George Wallace. Wallace’s inaugural promise to the white voters in his Deep South state achieved instant notoriety, as his “segregation forever” sound clip played and replayed, the words a ringing symbol of southern defiance and hate. Today, as in 1963, the six-word phrase “segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever” remains seared in the public memory, and Wallace himself serves as a tidy capsule to characterize white resistance to racial equality—and not without good reason. Wallace understood better than most the power of race in southern society and southern politics (and, for that matter, in national politics), yet Wallace also knew that he could play to the white South’s racial fears and seething discontent with topics others than segregated schools, buses, and lunch counters.¹

Wallace in fact devoted only a fraction of his inaugural address that January afternoon to the topic of Alabama race relations. Minutes after

¹ Governor George C. Wallace, inaugural address, January 14, 1963, Montgomery, Alabama, transcript available on the website of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (hereafter cited as ADAH), http://www.archives.state.al.us/govs_list/inauguralspeech.html. Thanks to historian George Lewis for suggesting that I take a look at the full text of Wallace’s address. The author of the now-notorious address was not George Wallace himself but former Ku Klux Klansmen Asa (“Ace”) Carter. See Dan T. Carter, The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995). Dan Carter in fact reprints Wallace’s references to the Congo and Portugal in his preface, see page 11, although he does not comment on their significance. On Asa Carter, see Dan Carter, 106–09, and passim.
delivering the infamous “segregation forever” line, Wallace turned his signature scorn toward liberal foreign polices. His words dripping contempt, he mocked the imagery of a “changing world” that so often flecked the speeches and writings of Kennedy-era liberals. Calling the international system “rotted,” “degenerate and decadent,” the newly inaugurated governor shot back at liberal tales of a world progressing steadily toward more democracy, more prosperity, more freedom. In Wallace’s account of the postwar world, an insidious doctrine had seeped around the globe, skewering the rights of men everywhere, razing the freedoms once enjoyed by the “Belgian survivors of the Congo,” the “Portuguese of Angola,” and probably most stirring for the crowd assembled at Wallace’s swearing-in, the “citizens of Oxford, Mississippi.”

What did white Oxford residents, their wounds still fresh and their rage still potent after the October 1962 integration showdown at the University of Mississippi, have in common with Portuguese settlers in Angola or Belgians in the Congo? They were all victims of the same set of liberal philosophies, all unfairly targeted by the same “pseudo-liberal spokesmen,” Governor Wallace informed his audience. He equated the battles raging in Angola with those in Alabama: “As the national racism of Hitler’s Germany persecuted a national minority to the whim of a national majority, so the international racism of the liberals seek to persecute the international white minority to the whim of the international colored majority.” Moving fluidly between events in the United States and events in other parts of the world, Wallace aligned the white South with an embattled “international white minority,” suggesting that white people

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2 Wallace inaugural address, ADAH.
everywhere had suffered at the hands of liberals who had replaced the concept of "individual rights" with a code of "human rights."  

In 1960, the same year John F. Kennedy eked out a victory over Richard Nixon, seventeen African nations broke free from colonial rule. Until World War II most white Americans had been comfortable believing that an unbroken line ran between a fixed, material entity known as "Western civilization" and the ability for responsible self-governance. Certainly the global swell of postwar human rights activism had destabilized such notions. But the whirlwind decolonization of black Africa shook these assumptions to the core. Places that most Americans had long imagined as primitive, benighted outposts claimed their places at the United Nations and in the international diplomatic community. Dispatching emissaries to meet leaders of new African states, the newly elected President Kennedy warned that the United States had to adjust to a world where the great powers of Europe no longer held sway over vast portions of the African continent—all at precisely the same moment when a fresh phase of African American mass-action protests were putting America's long-standing institutions of racial hierarchy in real jeopardy. Events in 1960, the "Year of Africa," hardened the white South's resolve to resist new ideas about human rights and anticolonialism. The dramatic power shift on the African continental also gave white southerners—and, indeed, conservatives from around the nation—a clarified sense of the failings of Cold War liberalism.

As Wallace's reference to an "international racism" trampling the rights of an "international white minority" attests, some conservative southerners had

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3 Ibid. Original quotation reads "seek," not "seeks."
begun to think and talk about themselves as part of a *global* class of white rulers, all facing similar threats to their status as civilizers who had brought law and order, economic progress, and cultural uplift to the populations they governed. For the same reasons white southerners resented federal interference with their "rights" to determine their children's classmates or police their ballot boxes, they also begrudged outside attempts to strip white European settlers of their "rights" to own land or operate businesses in colonial Africa. This imagined kinship prompted an increasing number of southern white conservatives, like Wallace, to turn their eyes toward Africa and Kennedy's policies toward the continent.

Displaying his characteristic political dexterity, Wallace neatly wrapped together southern racial politics and southern displeasure with liberals' conduct of the Cold War. The larger-than-life Alabama governor saw foreign affairs primarily through the prism of race, yet his speech also lobbed pointed criticisms at the national security strategies of anticommunist liberals. As Wallace pointed out, Kennedy initiated "a full offensive of twenty-five thousand troops against a university" in Mississippi while the United States had "only six thousand troops in the beleaguered city of Berlin." Here Wallace hit two targets with a single jab: he stoked white anger about federal intervention at Ole Miss while he pounced on the common conservative belief that liberals were insufficiently aggressive, even timid, in the fight against Communism in Eastern Europe.

The governor's inaugural address offered a folksy rendering of another oft-voiced conservative gripe. In the international arena, he argued, "we are footballed about according to the favor of the Afro-Asian bloc." Never more so than after Kennedy insisted that the U.S. forge friendships with African nationalists, conservatives deeply resented the influence of neutral nations—
who, together, could easily muster the votes needed to place resolutions before
the U.N. Security Council, forcing the United States to confront issues it would
rather have ignored—on American foreign policy, claiming that the liberal
"hearts and minds" strategy compromised American security interests. Wallace
almost certainly knew that his white southern audience would warmly receive
the claim that liberals prostrated themselves before the unaligned nations of
Southeast Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa, given
that the white South liked to portray itself as the victim of liberal pandering to
northern African American voters. His inaugural address thus revealed the
blurry line between southern anger over liberal foreign policies and liberal
domestic polices

U.S. policy in the decolonizing world—especially Africa—imbricated the
politics of race and the politics of the Cold War. Here southern segregationists
like Wallace found a space to make common cause with those conservative
activists who were more concerned with bold stands against Soviet Communists
than with bold stands in schoolhouse doors. With a few fleeting references to
Angola, the Congo, and the “Afro-Asian bloc,” Wallace tapped into a raft of
interrelated grievances that smoldered on the American Right in the early 1960s.

As white and black liberals called for the United States to adopt foreign
and domestic policies better suited to a rapidly evolving international context,
self-identified conservatives found themselves at odds with the intellectual
currents in American policymaking and the direction of American dialogues on
colonialism. Seeing peril, not promise, in the changes that swirled on the African
continent, between 1960 and 1964 conservative leaders constructed an alternate
dialogue about anticolonial nationalism and the universalism of individual rights.

Their vision emphasized the need for order and stability to precede the right of self-rule. If conservatives accepted an ideological framework where all people, regardless of race, color, or creed, were entitled to basic human rights—and not all did—they quarreled with the readiness of certain groups to responsibly exercise these rights, dwelled on the need for people to earn rights, and spoke of the ancillary responsibilities that accompanied the privilege of individual liberties. The conservative vision further maintained that self-government was untenable in the absence of certain cultural values, including the sanctity of private property rights and Judeo-Christian ethics. Like white liberals, postwar conservatives saw American democracy as exceptional, but they insisted that America’s political institutions were not universally replicable, not accessible to all people. These critiques built on the South’s dissent from the values contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the Cold War’s arrival in Africa brought them into sharper focus.

These perspectives on anticolonialism readily appealed to a range of constituencies that each—sometimes independently of one another—called themselves “conservative.” Around 1960 the label “conservative” had neither a unanimously accepted definition nor a clearly outlined constituency, although this was beginning to change as the decade turned. The Kennedy years were a transformative period for both southern conservatism and the incipient nationwide conservative movement. Nationally, in the first years of the new decade conservatives grew more disciplined, honed their philosophies, and gained a stronghold within the Republican Party. Southern conservatives also
faced a crossroads around 1960; segregationist organizations watched as their membership numbers dwindled, their no-surrender tactics fell out of favor, and some of their once-defiant leaders made strategic concessions—leaving the conservative white South in search of new points of alliances with conservatives in other parts of the nation. As Part II suggests, the topic of U.S. policy in the "emerging world," Africa in particular, proved to be a fruitful way for various subsets of postwar conservatism to smooth over some of their differences. With the seismic changes after the Year of Africa as a backdrop, a nascent but vibrant American conservative movement sharpened its vision for U.S. power in the postcolonial world.
CHAPTER 3: CONSERVATISM AT A CROSSROADS—THE STATE OF THE RIGHT IN THE KENNEDY YEARS.

In the summer and fall of 1960 self-described conservatives in the United States stewed over their choices in the November presidential election. The Democratic Party establishment might have questioned John Kennedy’s liberal bona fides, but American conservatives had no doubt that the young Democratic nominee was a liberal through and through, and, thus, he was unacceptable. The Republican Party offered little better as far as conservatives were concerned. Many Americans on the political right loathed Richard Nixon (as many had come to loathe the top half of the Eisenhower-Nixon ticket). Conservatives felt that Nixon had strayed from his promising start as an anticommunist hawk, buckled to political pressures, and accepted far too many centrist New Deal tenets. In the months before the election, conservative publications ranging from segregationist screeds to William F. Buckley’s rarefied National Review could be found lamenting the lack of real choice in the presidential contest and longing for a candidate who gave voice to truly conservative principles. Yet in spite of the rampant grumbling, conservatives were unable to translate their dissatisfaction into any measurable political outcomes in 1960.¹

A mere four years later, thousands of moderate, East Coast Republicans watched in astonishment as the conservative wing of their party—Californians, Texans, suburbanites from the South and Southwest, all pioneering a bolder, brasher brand of anti-statism—seized the reins of the party infrastructure and chose Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater as the 1964 Republican nominee for President of the United States. Goldwater went on to spectacular defeat against Lyndon Johnson, but not before collecting countless loyal supporters and renewing hope among a small army of conservative grassroots activists. These same conservative warriors helped put one of Goldwater’s staunchest champions, Ronald Reagan, into the California governor’s mansion two years later. Clearly something significant had occurred on the American Right between 1960 and 1964, a stunning metamorphosis that took conservatism from a jumble of disparate constituencies into a coalition with enough efficacy to secure the party’s nomination for Goldwater.

What explains the transformation? During the same four-year period, the African American civil rights movement staged sit-ins and demonstrations, freedom rides and a March on Washington. Facing white vigilantism, swaggering governors, and bombed churches, tenacious black protestors staked out the moral high ground in the battles over legalized racial inequality. In July 1964 President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act into law. Five months later, the Republican Goldwater took a whopping 87 percent of the eligible (i.e., white) votes in the deepest of Deep South states, Mississippi. Early historical narratives of the Right’s evolution drew a neat line between civil rights and a resurgent Republican Party: white southerners, their defiance cowed by a liberal consensus on the immorality of segregation, fled in droves from the Democratic Party that
had betrayed them. Thanks to a torrent of new studies, historians now have a far richer, more nuanced picture of how the civil rights era gave birth to a new brand of white southern conservatism. Racism never evaporated from the equation, but southern conservatism represented more than a reactionary backlash. Acting on an organic conservative impulse, white southerners repackaged anti-integration sentiment into a “color-blind” political philosophy that emphasized individual choice, the rights of homeowners, freedom from federal taxes and federal meddling. Ideologically reborn, the once defiant white South slipped effortlessly into the national conservative fold.²

The international political landscape also underwent dramatic changes in the same four years that witnessed the peak of the civil rights movement, 1960–1964, a fact that our current narratives of modern conservatism curiously underemphasize. By the time Goldwater accepted the nomination, nearly all territories on the African continent had achieved independence from white European rule, save the settler states in South Africa and Portugal’s colonies in Angola and Mozambique, opening up new fronts in the global Cold War. Fidel Castro had invited Soviet missiles into Cuba. A wall had gone up in Berlin. France ended its bitter eight-year struggle with Algerian nationalists in 1962, although the shards of France’s other war against anticolonial nationalism, the one in Indochina, were claiming more and more of the attention of U.S.

policymakers. Every bit as much as the civil rights movement, these global events supplied the backdrop for the formation of a new conservative coalition in American politics. For all that we now know about how white conservatives responded to the American civil rights revolution, we know far less about how conservatives reacted to the revolutions that happened abroad—and even less about how these two processes might have worked in tandem.

Before we can analyze the issues that propelled the conservative rise to national prominence, we must first consider the state of right-wing activism in the Kennedy era. At this moment in American history, conservatism was a less a cohesive movement than a rather nebulous cluster of anti-liberal sentiments. Conservatism correlated only loosely with party identification; in Congress, Republicans and Democrats both had conservative factions, although in neither party was the conservative wing powerful enough to steer the lawmakers agenda. While conservatism as a national movement had yet to carve out a clear path, several identifiable loci of conservative activity had emerged. First, more and more whites in the South were declaring themselves “conservatives,” though only a minority had renounced their Democratic Party affiliation at this stage. Second, the 1955 debut of the National Review had brought religious traditionalists, free-market adherents, and anti-Communists into dialogue, creating an orbit of intellectual conservatism centered in the Northeast. Finally,

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3 Historians of intellectual conservatism have done an effective job of explaining how the desire for a more muscular anti-Communist foreign policy fueled conservative organizing in the late 1950s and early 1960s. See George H. Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945 (Wilmington, Del: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1996); Gregory L. Schneider, Cadres for Conservatism: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of the Contemporary Right (New York: New York University Press, 1999); and John A. Andrew III, The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997). However, these works tend to ignore racial politics altogether and have little to say about the interplay of domestic and foreign policy topics.
half a decade after the ignominious downfall of Senator Joseph McCarthy, anticommunism and anti-statism continued to animate grassroots political organizing, particularly in the burgeoning metropolitan areas of the Sunbelt West and Southwest. Dividing postwar conservatism into these three categories is somewhat artificial, and it risks obscuring the points of intersection and significant overlap among these three segments of the movement. Still, much early conservative organizing was intensely local, so these categories provide a useful, if flawed, sketch of the state of conservatism around 1960.

As the Kennedy era proceeded, the boundary lines separating the various factions of conservatism grew decidedly more porous. Southern segregationists were experimenting with political tactics that deemphasized overt racism, while influential conservative leaders were casting about for an electoral strategy to supplant the moderates’ hold on the Republican Party. The topic of U.S. foreign policy in the decolonizing world helped facilitate both transitions, as the later chapters of Part II shall argue. This chapter sets the stage by charting the surging energy of the Right in the Kennedy years and introducing some of the key figures and organizations that drove the conservative counterrevolution.

I. **National Conservative Organizing in the Early 1960s**

As the 1960 election approached, conservatives were frustrated. They remained unswervingly committed to the movement’s principles, but voices from the Right expressed a sense of political impotence, an anxious impatience with the slow pace of change and the absence of real political results. A Houston businessman and a theologically conservative Methodist, Paul E. Wise, articulated a representative state of mind in one of his frequent letter exchanges
with Mississippi right-wing leader Mary Dawson Cain. "We are still on the fighting line," Wise assured Cain, but "I admit it is very discouraging at times, and if I was not so convinced that we are fighting for God's Cause of Righteousness and His Blessings to sustain our Constitutional Republic, I would get more faint at heart."4 Conservatives also fretted that their countless grassroots organizations were too uncoordinated, too ineffectual in winning new converts. "The patriots are not organized, not disciplined," lamented Major Edgar C. Bundy, a retired U.S. Air Force intelligence officer who, after retiring from the military, became executive director of the Christian fundamentalist Church League of America. "I have come to the definite conclusion after years of experience and meeting with groups all over the country that the fatal weakness is that there are too many so-called right-wing organizations with the same people belonging to all of them, duplicating effort and wasting energy talking to one another."5

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4 Paul E. Wise to Mary Dawson Cain, February 26, 1959, box 52, Mary Dawson Cain Papers, unprocessed collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson (hereafter MDAH). The Cain Papers are not subdivided into folders, nor do the boxes in this unprocessed collection follow any particular chronological or topical order. Wise was also a member of the Houston-based Committee for the Preservation of Methodism, publisher of such documents as "Is There a Pink Fringe in the Methodist Church?," copy in folder 3, box 7, Ralph O'Leary Papers, Houston Metropolitan Research Collection, Houston Public Library (hereafter cited as HMRC). The CFPM, which promoted unregulated free enterprise capitalism and anti-New Deal positions, formed in protest to the Methodist Federation for Social Action, a liberal group which promoted civil rights reform, immigration reform, pacifism, and diplomatic negotiation with the Soviet Union. For background on conservative Christian organizations in Houston, see Don E. Carleton, Red Scare! Right-Wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism, and Their Legacy in Texas (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985), 108-10.

5 Edgar Bundy to Mary Cain, November 22, 1956, box 26, Cain Papers, MDAH. Donald Janson and Bernard Eismann, The Far Right (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 141, describe Bundy as an "ally and protégé" of fundamentalist minister Carl McIntire. The right-wing Church League of America had more than six thousand conservative clergymen and fifty thousand laypersons as members, and it boasted more than $200,000 in annual contributions by 1962. See Arnold Foster and Benjamin R. Epstein, Danger on the Right (New York: Random House, 1964), 144-50, membership statistics 145, fundraising statistics 149. (Foster and Epstein investigated what they called the "Radical Right" or "Extreme Right" for the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith.) For other examples of a frustrated conservative, see Tom Anderson to Sherwood Ide, July 21,
Surveying the state of the American Right around 1960, these conservatives' frustrations appear quite warranted. Ideological fissures and different points of emphasis inhibited intellectual conservatives, southern racial conservatives, and grassroots anticommmunist conservatives from smoothly coalescing into a unified front. Even within these smaller subsets of conservatism, a variety of philosophies and strategic visions competed for dominance. Combined with the personal rivalries that plagued each sub-movement, perfectly orchestrated, unified action was unattainable—precisely what Bundy meant when he complained about the lack of discipline among "the patriots."

Magnifying the rather chaotic state, the broader political Right got mired in internecine battles over precisely who should be able to lay claim to the moniker "conservative." With vital-center liberals painting conservatives as dangerous extremists, the problem of "respectability" and the fear of marginalization preoccupied intellectual conservatives, white southerners, and anticommmunist leaders alike. Conservative academics, National Review editors, and free-market libertarians worried that the fervent crusaders on the grassroots Right—the John Birchers, the conspiracy theorists, the rabid segregationists in the South—might discredit conservatism and destroy its prospects of electoral success. Keen to parry stereotypes that portrayed conservatives as unstable,

1959, folder 7, box 9, Anderson Papers, ORE, and Anderson to Bard A. Logan, President, Constitution Party of Texas, July 18, 1960, folder 4, box 13, Anderson Papers, ORE; Mal Rumph to Ernest Anthony Jr., November 10, 1955, Box 18, Cain Papers, MDAH. Rumph and Anthony were both tireless activists in Fort Worth, both active in the conservative American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, a group committed to fighting federalized health care programs. After complaining about the long succession of conservative organizations, Rumph asked Anthony: "What can we do to UNIFY our forces?"
bigoted kooks, men like William F. Buckley were eager to purge the "fringe" from their nascent campaigns.⁶

Ironically, the very groups that Buckley and company considered too extreme harbored their own fears about radical elements undermining their respectability; they merely applied different parameters to gauge respectability. Segregationists also worried about being smeared as simple-minded racists.⁷ When Association of Citizens' Councils officer and purveyor of bilious hatred William J. Simmons wrote to hire anticommunist J. B. Matthews to research "subversive" influences among civil rights groups, Simmons went to great lengths to assure Matthews that he spoke for "responsible citizens of respected standing." Matthews, best known for coauthoring How Red is the American Council of Churches?, assured Simmons that he did not consider the Citizens' Councils part of "the so-called crackpot fringe."⁸

The Right's intramural sparring was far from resolved in 1960, but in that year, the embryonic conservative movement showed signs of maturing. New organizations sprouted, new books appeared, new leaders emerged, and the

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⁷ On segregationist obsession with "respectability," see Chappell, A Stone of Hope, 156–178. Crespino, In Search of Another Country, 26, also notes the desire of some segregationists to present a "respectable" front. He rightly argues, however, that even as so-called respectable groups claimed to eschew violence, they quietly tolerated groups like the Ku Klux Klan and looked the other way as vigilantes carried out acts of terror against civil rights protestors.

⁸ W. J. Simmons to Dr. J.B. Matthews, Sept. 6, 1955, folder "Simmons, W.J.,” box 680, Research Correspondence Series, J.B. Matthews Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University; Matthews to Simmons, Sept. 12, 1955, in ibid. On Matthews see William Martin, With God on Their Side: The Rise of the Religious Right in America (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 37. See also J. B. Matthews, "Reds and Our Churches," reprinted from American Mercury, copy in box 7, O'Leary Papers, HMRC. For another illustration, see Tom Anderson to A. G. Heinsohn Jr., December 30, 1959, folder 4, box 12, Anderson Papers, ORE.
movement seemed to pulse with vitality during the campaign season of 1960. Most significantly, conservatives began to clarify their fundamental ideological principles and articulate those ideas to a broad public audience. Some of the momentum sputtered after the centrist platform of Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller carried the day at the Republican National Convention, but the dispirited Right nonetheless had seen glimmers of hope in the summer of 1960.

The brightest of those glimmers radiated from Arizona. Senator Barry Goldwater, long-time darling of far-right activists, burst onto the national scene in 1960. In April, Goldwater debuted a syndicated column in the Los Angeles Times, a feature soon carried by well over one hundred newspapers, and in the early summer, he published The Conscience of a Conservative. One of a handful of books that made an inestimable impact on the movement, Goldwater's slim treatise articulated a specific set of conservative ideas and, perhaps more importantly, gave those ideas a far wider traction than they had previously enjoyed. The cover of the wildly popular volume might have borne the Arizona senator's name, but it was L. Brent Bozell, Yale graduate, Catholic traditionalist, and close friend and brother-in-law of William F. Buckley, who authored most of the text. The Conscience of a Conservative also owed no small debt to the organizational scaffolding built by former Notre Dame School of Law Dean Clarence Manion—hardly a household name today, but an immediately recognizable figure on the postwar Right. The book rocketed up best-seller lists.

For the week of June 26, 1960, Conscience of a Conservative was the fourteenth best-selling book in the country, and less than six months after it first appeared, when Kennedy scraped together a victory in the election, more than five hundred thousand copies were in circulation. By the year of the conservative coup at the
GOP convention, 1964, sales figures had topped 3.5 million. Goldwater and his
ghostwriter Bozell, it seemed, had satiated a popular craving for an alternative to
liberal philosophy.⁹

Close on the heels of *The Conscience of a Conservative*'s release and in
advance of the 1960 Republican National Convention, Goldwater barnstormed
the nation, delivering dozens of speeches including several in the Deep South.
His book had opened with a grous familiar to conservatives: the two major
American parties had converged to the point where voters had no real choice. At
the 1960 G.O.P. gathering in Chicago, a small but scrappy coterie of right-wing
Republicans loudly signaled their intent to recapture the party from moderates
like Nelson Rockefeller and Nixon and re-establish what they described as a
genuine two-party system. To the delight of conservative delegates in Chicago—
and to the chagrin of Nixon's campaign handlers—Goldwater held a press
conference two days before the 1960 convention was slated to open. The fiery
Arizonan intoned: "I think the Republican Party would be breaking faith with
itself and shirking its duty to the nation should we fail to identify ourselves with
the conservative point of view in both domestic and foreign affairs." Goldwater
publicly lashed out at the 1960 Republican platform, a document that the
moderate Rockefeller had played no small part in crafting. Goldwater likened the
centrists' document, filled, as he put it, with "overtures and concessions to the
liberals," to the Allies' appeasement of Hitler in Munich in 1938.

⁹ According to Gregory Schneider, a year after it debuted Goldwater's column appeared in 140
newspapers. See Schneider, *Cadres for Conservatism*, 25. On Bozell, see Patrick Allitt, *Catholic
Each time Goldwater took the stage at the 1960 convention, the applause was so resounding that conference organizers had a difficult time regaining control of the audience. Once, it took a full eight minutes for the roaring adulation to cease. More than one state (his own, Arizona, and South Carolina) had hinted at their intent to throw their electors behind a Goldwater nomination, sending a charge of suspense through the convention. When Goldwater finally announced to the delegates that he wished his name removed from consideration, he peppered his speech with a message to his supporters. "[T]he conservatives of the Republican Party do not intend by any act of theirs to turn this country over, by default, to a party which has lost its belief in the dignity of man, a party which has no faith in our economic system, a party which has come to the belief that the United States is a second-rate power." After he asked conservatives to support Nixon, he concluded: "If we want to take this Party back, and I think we can someday, let's get to work." Disappointed though they may have been with Goldwater's deferral to Nixon, the legions of electrified conservatives in the audience—including a young Phyllis Schlafly, who, four years later, sold multiple millions of copies of A Choice Not an Echo, a book that reiterated the need to recapture the Republican Party from the Rockefeller wing—heeded the Arizona senator's words, and got to work.¹⁰

II. "Segregation is Just One facet": The Southern Conservative Metamorphosis in the Early 1960s

The South contributed heartily to the first stirrings of Goldwater mania in the summer of 1960. Goldwater himself steered clear of open bigotry, but

¹⁰Perlstein, Before the Storm, 85; 91 (applause); 95 ("take party back"). See also Schneider, Cadres for Conservatism, 29.
readers of *The Conscience of a Conservative* only had to get as far as Chapters 3 and 4 to find vigorous support for the sanctity of states' rights in the areas of health, welfare, and education and discover a strongly worded denunciation of "abuses of power by the [Supreme] Court." One of the charter members of Clarence Manion's "Draft Goldwater Committee" was J. Evetts Haley. Historian Donald Critchlow merely describes Haley as a "Texas activist and historian," though Haley was also a dedicated segregationist who had run unsuccessfully for state office on a states' rights ticket. June 1960 found Goldwater delivering the keynote speech at the Mississippi Republican Party's convention; that summer he also garnered pledges from the Louisiana and South Carolina Republican organizations that their delegations would commit to Goldwater at the 1960 national convention in Chicago. Nelson Rockefeller inadvertently contributed to the surging "Draft Goldwater" ranks, surely the last thing he desired, when he strong-armed Nixon into beefing up the G.O.P.'s civil rights platform and when he appeared alongside NAACP officer Roy Wilkins in a July 24, 1960, speech at a black church. Pro-Goldwater enthusiasm emanated from more than a white supremacist impulse—although traces of subtle racism pervaded the movement—yet it heralded the cooperative ventures to come between the segregationist South and the anticomunist Right.11

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11 On Rockefeller's speech, see Perlestein, *Before the Storm*, 88; Donald T. Critchlow, *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 128, 345 n. 8. J. Evetts Haley was a member of the executive committee of the Federation for Constitutional Government; see "News Release: For Morning and Afternoon Papers of October 24, 1955," Federation for Constitutional Government Ephemera, Wesley Critz George Papers (Collection #3822), Southern Historical Collection, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, (hereafter cited as UNC). For further evidence of Haley's profound commitment to segregation, see J. Evetts Haley to Thomas J. Anderson, Feb. 16, 1960, folder 9, box 12, Anderson Papers, ORE, where he describes how he had been "working for years" to promote interposition, the idea that the South could legally defy Supreme Court decision.
Like the conservative movement more broadly, the South’s peculiar species of conservatism found itself in a state of transition around 1960, the year when decolonization swept across most of sub-Saharan Africa. Southern white opposition to integration faced a crossroads around 1960; the region’s most ardent racial conservatives were anxious about the future direction of their campaigns to preserve white supremacy as the 1950s drew to a close. Strategic unanimity eluded segregationists from the start; for the briefest moment after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision (1954), a moment of calm prevailed as southerners contemplated their course. Quickly, however, pleas for reason and rationality were drowned out by calls for total, uncompromising, unfettered defiance to racial integration in any form. By 1956, nineteen of the South’s twenty-two senators and nearly three-quarters of its House representatives placed their signatures on the Declaration of Constitutional Principles, better known as the “Southern Manifesto,” issued on March 12, 1956. The most concerted thrust of white political resistance to integration, the manifesto called the *Brown* decision a “clear abuse of judicial power” and promised to “use all lawful means to bring about a reversal of this decision.” More symbol than substance, the document nevertheless signaled that southern congressmen were ready to bitterly contest *Brown’s* enforcement—the spirit captured in the historical term “massive resistance.”12

Open defiance cooled, however, as moderate white parents, clergymen, and business leaders pleaded for law and order to prevail and as a critical mass

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of southern segregationists came to realize that bald appeals to white supremacy simply could not offer a formula for long-term electoral success, nationally or locally. By the time Kennedy eked out a victory over Nixon, well-known southern spokesmen as well as regular southerners sensed that national tolerance for the region’s brand of brazen race hatred was wearing thin. They sought new directions for their revolt against liberalism, new avenues for partnerships, new ways to re-package their ideals. In places like Jackson, Mississippi, and Richmond, Virginia, leaders of anti-integration crusades began to encourage southern whites to think in broader terms, to look beyond the segregation issue and appreciate how tax codes, Social Security, and federal aid grants contributed to the problem of ballooning federal power. Although the first generation of scholarship on “massive resistance” concluded that white segregationist activity had withered in the Kennedy years, historians now have conclusively shown that it merely assumed new forms.13

Even when massive resistance was at its peak, white southerners had always insisted that their revolt was about something more than racism, and they regularly selected the term “conservative” to characterize their movement. National leaders on the Right might not have considered anti-civil rights protesters to be true conservatives, but segregationists absolutely thought of themselves as a central constituency of conservatism, if not the central constituency. In 1955 William J. Simmons called the Citizens’ Council part of “a grass roots conservative revolt that has been slowly brewing for years,” and Tom Brady, author of Black Monday, a hate-drenched invective against the Brown

13 See especially Kruse, White Flight, and Crespino, In Search of Another Country, on the transformation of massive resistance.
decision, remarked in the text of a widely reprinted 1957 speech: “The South is the citadel of conservatism. It is a bastion for constitutional government.” White southerners, according to Brady, were “waiting for that day, and believe it is not far distant, when conservative Americans will unite and all constitutional, liberty loving citizens in this country will rise up in our defense and join hands with us in waging our lonely fight to protect and preserve America from Godless communism.”

While Brady waited for the rest of the nation to come around to his way of thinking about race relations, other segregationists were actively courting supporters by stripping racist language from their conservative appeals. John U. Barr, leader of the segregationist Federation for Constitutional Government, counseled 1956 third-party presidential candidates T. Coleman Andrews and Thomas Werdel to “eliminate any reference to segregation” and instead rely only on a “states’ rights clause” to appeal to the white South. Southerners were attuned to the evolution of the national conservative movement in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and they were eager to contribute to the groundswell of conservative thinking. For instance, the Virginia Defenders News and Views, publication of the small but strident Virginia Defenders of State Sovereignty and Individual Liberties, recommended that its readers also subscribe to Russell

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15 John U. Barr to Thomas H. Werdel, September 5, 1956, folder 6, box 17, T. Coleman Andrews Papers, ORE.
Kirk's *Modern Age, A Conservative Review*, and the pro-segregation broadside regularly reprinted articles from the *National Review*. William Simmons, officer and driving force behind the Mississippi-based Citizens' Councils, indicated an eagerness to cooperate with William F. Buckley to bolster circulation of the *National Review*, offering to grant Buckley access to the Citizens' Councils mailing list of 65,000 conservative southerners.17

By 1960 southerners had redoubled such efforts. The leaders of another third-party movement, the Texas-based "Constitution Party," sent their followers a nearly identical message: "The one thing we feel most important is that we do not have a campaign based on the racial issue." The membership rosters and printed publications of the "Constitution Party" left absolutely no doubt of their hostility to integration and of their appeal to civil rights opponents. Yet even this fledgling third-party campaign appreciated the South's need to transcend its regional isolation, speak in a relatively race-neutral language, and form partnerships with like-minded constituencies in other parts of the country.18

Tennessee's Tom Anderson, a staple of right-wing lecture circuits, avowed his commitment to "preventing forced integration in any legal way" in 1960; nonetheless, he conceded that a third-party movement based exclusively on the race issue "wouldn't have a chance of success." Instead, he called upon

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16 *Defenders' News and Views* 3 (August 1957) on Kirk's *Modern Age*; example of a reprinted article from the *National Review*, see *Defenders' News and Views* 3 (September-October 1957).

17 James J. Kilpatrick wrote to William Buckley summarizing a meeting he had with William Simmons. In his letter he describes Simmons's offer of the mailing list and Simmons's intent to promote the National Review in the pages of the Citizens' Council newspapers. See Kilpatrick to Bill Buckley, July 10, 1958, folder "B-1958," box 22, collection 6626-b, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.

18 Bard A. Logan to J. Edgar Hoover [inviting him to be the presidential candidate of the Constitution Party], April 11, 1960, folder 1, box 13, Anderson papers, ORE.
southerners to use the issues “Constitutional government, states rights, and individual freedom” to attract a wider audience. In a speech before the Forest, Mississippi, chamber of commerce, Anderson insisted: “I’m a segregationist. But segregation is just one facet of this issue. If we had no Negroes in America, we’d still be facing Socialism, insolvency, and surrender. The issue is freedom.”19

It is impossible for historians to conclusively determine if southerners like Anderson were authentic in their insistence that race merely constituted “one facet” of their anti-liberal activism—his assertion that southerners would be just as conservative even without any “Negroes in America” seems highly questionable in light of the region’s obsession with race. What the historical evidence does indicate is that southerners were keenly aware that white supremacy was untenable as the basis for effective political mobilization.

The evolution of Richmond, Virginia, news editor James J. (“Jack”) Kilpatrick exemplified the changing public face of southern conservatism in the late 1950s and early 1960s. David L. Chappell calls Kilpatrick the “most influential voice among segregationist writers,” and indeed, the Richmond News Leader editor was unique for his close relationship both with the National Review editorial board and leading white supremacists William Simmons, Robert Patterson, and Thomas Waring (or, as they were known to Kilpatrick, Bill, Bob, and Tom). Immediately after the Brown decision, Kilpatrick’s defiance could not

19 Quotations “preventing,” “wouldn’t have a chance,” see Tom Anderson to Mrs. B.E. Miller, January 7, 1960, folder 6, box 12, Anderson papers, ORE. In this letter Anderson describes himself as an “ardent segregationist.” Final quotation, see Anderson, speech before the Forest, Mississippi, Chamber of Commerce, November 30, 1961, copy in folder 3, box 80, Anderson Papers, ORE. For another illustration, see letter of Thomas Waring to “Dear Friends,” June 30, 1959, folder “1959–1962, Waring, Tom,” box 7, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA, where Waring talks about the need to “promote our cause on a nationwide basis,” with a “broad” appeal that is “low key on racial matters.”
have been more absolute. From 1955 until 1958 his newspaper lent unflagging support to the doctrine of "interposition," the idea that the South might legally evade the Supreme Court rulings on integration, and Kilpatrick further promoted interposition in his 1957 book, *The Sovereign States.*

As the 1950s wore on, however, Kilpatrick conceded that the South's strategy of uncompromising defiance yielded more political liabilities than benefits. To be clear, Kilpatrick never abandoned his conviction that black Americans were inferior to white, nor did he relinquish his belief that segregated schools were both lawful and desirable. Nonetheless, he gradually replaced his calls for southern interposition with suggestions of how the South might contribute to a broader conservative revolution, one that might restore principles of states' rights federalism and judicial conservatism.

Kilpatrick wanted to see the South reverse the perception of regional backwardness and establish meaningful political relationships with voters in other parts of nation. "We can never win this thing on votes from Southern representatives alone," wrote Kilpatrick in 1957. "If we are to win, and I am confident that in the end we will win, it must be with help from other areas of the country." Kilpatrick recommended tactics that historian Joseph Crespino had termed "strategic accommodation": small, carefully selected concessions to

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21 For evidence that Kilpatrick's views on race had not changed as much as his public face would have indicated, see Kilpatrick to Robert B Patterson, November 7, 1960, folder "Personal Correspondence P (1 of 2),” box 5, collection 6626-j-k-n, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.

create the appearance of compromise, while at the same time shoring up the political and economic structures that undergirded racial inequality. Responding to an irate reader who complained about Kilpatrick’s softened stance on integration, he explained in 1962: “Times change....I still think the School Segregation Cases were wrongly decided in 1954.” The Brown decision had become established law and the South had to live with that reality. However, Kilpatrick continued, “[w]ith coolness and perseverance and calm heads, we can hold desegregation to a not intolerable minimum for a long time to come.” Or, as he informed his friend and segregationist collaborator Robert Patterson in late 1960: “a Maginot Line stubbornness in the end will be defeated.” If the South put forth “an appearance of gracefully yielding now and then,” Kilpatrick told Patterson, white privilege might be largely maintained.23

Such transformations proceeded especially smoothly in border-South states such as Virginia and Texas, where political conservatism already had made deeper inroads beyond the race issue. Yet as historian Joseph Crespino has shown, even in Mississippi, unrivaled for the intensity and excesses of its campaigns to preserve white supremacy, politicians and leading segregationist activists shifted tactics and ventured into new alliances in the early part of the 1960s. Crespino certainly does not imply that white Mississippians stopped caring about racial politics or abandoned their longstanding views on racial difference—but he does document a decided shift in political tactics among

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23 First quotation (“times change”), Kilpatrick to Mrs. [J. S.] Gibbs, September 10, 1962, folder “Personal Correspondence: G (1 of 2),” box 3, collection 6626-j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA; second quotation (“Maginot Line”), Kilpatrick to Robert B Patterson, November 7, 1960, folder “Personal Correspondence P (1 of 2),” box 5, in ibid. See similar sentiment where Kilpatrick calls radical schemes to close all Virginia schools a “self-defeating, South-defeating policy” while strongly endorsing desire for segregated schools, Kilpatrick to William J. Simmons, July 23, 1959, folder “S-correspondence-1959,” box 28, collection 6626-b, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
elected officials. White leaders who muted their open appeals to white supremacy ultimately displaced those who favored unapologetic, un-tempered defense of racial inequality. As he argues, the re-imagined strategies of white Mississippians allowed the state to go from remarkable regional isolation to being a crucial part of the national governing coalition.24

III. Grassroots Conservative Organizing in the Kennedy Era

Elites, intellectuals, and wealthy power-brokers supplied the visible leadership, but the postwar conservative movement owed an equal debt to its foot soldiers: the ordinary men and women who attended meetings, circulated pamphlets, wrote letters to congressional representatives, and devoted untold hours to the cause of recapturing the nation from liberalism.25 Well before the conservative wing of the Republican Party established a foothold in national electoral politics, grassroots anticommunism flourished in middle-class neighborhoods in places like Southern California, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and Tulsa.

Historians are still busy debating whether modern American conservatism owes more to elites and high-profile leaders or to the citizen-activists who built elaborate networks in local communities. Most early scholarship on conservative politics emphasized the critical role of well-known intellectuals and well-connected organizations, although some works, like Leo

24 Crespin, In Search of Another Country.

Ribuffo's *The Old Christian Right: The Protestant Far Right from the Great Depression to the Cold War*, profiled the complex symbiosis between charismatic leaders and grassroots followers. In some cases, historians of intellectual conservatism deliberately ignored grassroots activists, disavowing radical anticommunists or white supremacists as legitimate conservatives.²⁶

Then came books like Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right*, Kevin Kruse's *White Flight*, and Donald T. Critchlow's *Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism*. These studies and others like them honed in on particular places—southern California, the sprawling suburbs of Atlanta, and the heartland of St. Louis—to offer rich detail about individual people and their political views, thereby enriching overly flat or wooden notions of a backlash or a top-down "southern strategy." Still other historians, notably Matthew Lassiter, give credit not to strident conservatives but to the so-called silent majority—white moderates—for tipping the political scales in a rightward direction.²⁷

With historical scholarship on conservatism still in its adolescence, disagreements about the relative contributions of elites and grassroots activists


are unlikely to be settled anytime soon. The best answer (as with most scholarly debates that become artificially polarized) probably lies somewhere in the middle: intellectuals, Washington, D.C., powerbrokers, everyday grassroots warriors, and the leaders of local chapters of the American Legion, Daughters of the American Revolution, the Birch Society, and dozens of similar groups all made indispensable contributions to the new Right's growth.

One aspect of postwar conservatism that remains poorly understood is the movement of ideas. We know that some individuals had greater access than others to public platforms like newspapers, magazines, or radio programs; as such, certain individuals simply were better able to spread the gospel of conservatism and shape the direction of the movement. But we also know that ideas do not flow only in a downward direction. Individuals might hear or read things in a national media source that reinforced views that they already held—views they had formed in their local church, community organization, or social networks. Moreover, individuals could take an idea they heard or read and transform it into something new, something that served a different cause than the one the original speaker or writer intended. And, as Michelle Nickerson has brilliantly illustrated, sometimes networks of conservative activists succeeded in bringing attention to issues that the mainstream media had ignored altogether. She uncovers examples, such as an obscure bill about mental health in Alaska that small groups of local women transformed into a major political controversy, to prove that conservative ideas sometimes percolated in an upward direction.28

Nickerson and others remind us that without an electoral base, the conservative counterrevolution might never have taken hold. This final section considers the state of citizen-organizing on the Right in the Kennedy years, focusing especially on anticommunist grassroots activism.

As figures like Alger Hiss receded from public memory, after the American Communist Party had been all but obliterated at the hands of HUAC and its allies, and as time allayed the sting of 1949, the year when China fell and the Soviets detonated their first atomic weapon, the domestic threat of communism no longer seemed as imminent as it had in the heyday of McCarthyism. Nevertheless, if fears about domestic subversion had diminished from their peak in the late 1940s and 1950s, they had not dissipated. Anticommunism had, however, become far more closely associated with the political Right.

Liberals in Kennedy administration were dismayed and alarmed at the shrill persistence of anti-Communist crusading. The slew of books, essays, and feature articles bearing titles like *Danger on the Right* attested to liberal unease with “extremist” anti-Communism. Liberals may have been quite justified in their anxiety that an organized minority of Americans might obstruct their domestic and international reform agendas: for a wide swath of the grassroots Right, those self-anointed guardians against “creeping socialism,” the very concept of a *liberal* anti-Communist was oxymoronic, an absurd contradiction in terms. Indeed, many community-level conservatives considered liberalism, rather than socialism or communism, the prime target of their discontent.

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Right-wing enthusiasts might imbibe a steady stream of anticommunist material from radio programs like “The Manion Report,” “Life Lines,” “The Dan Smoot Report” (the latter two both funded by Texas oil tycoon H. L. Hunt) and books like John Stormer’s None Dare Call it Treason, Rosalie Gordon’s What’s Happened to Our Schools and Nine Men Against America, and countless others. Creating imagined communities among geographically diffuse groups of conservatives, these media sources convinced many Americans that communism continued to pose a genuine threat to the institutions they held dear: Christian churches, the nuclear family, private ownership of home, businesses, and property.

Some anticommunist groups gained notoriety—the John Birch Society chief among them—while others toiled in obscurity. John Birch Society (JBS) leader Robert Welch did himself considerable harm in the public image department by issuing statements that many Americans, conservatives included, found outlandish, such as his infamous accusation that Dwight Eisenhower was a Communist. Yet if men like William Buckley thought Welch a dangerous extremist, the financial ledgers of the JBS told a different story: from 1960 to 1964, the organization’s annual contributions went from approximately $600,000 to $3.2 million. Founded in 1958, the Society’s namesake, John Birch, was a Baptist missionary who died at the hands of the Chinese Communists as World War II ended and the civil war in China ramped up. The JBS had a loose national structure, sustained through its monthly John Birch Society Bulletin and magazine American Opinion, but the group’s lifeblood was its local chapters, its community-based activists. The Birch Society declined to release statistics about its membership, although historian Jonathan M. Schoenwald estimates that in the
early 1960s somewhere between 40,000 and 100,000 Americans were dues-paying members of the anticommunist organization. Schoenwald credits the Birch Society with acting as a crucial “conduit to reach local activists,” a vehicle that successfully “translated ideology into action.” The group’s influence peaked in the Kennedy years; after Goldwater’s crushing defeat in the 1964 presidential race, intellectuals and establishment conservatives decided that the taint of extremism from the JBS was costing the movement too much, and they more aggressively moved to sever ties with grassroots conservative anticomunism. But in the pivotal early 1960s, a transformative moment for the conservative movement as a whole, the John Birch Society was influential indeed.30

Often invoking their role as mothers and protectors of the family, middle- and upper-middle-class white women made particularly notable contributions to the formation of a vibrant grassroots network of conservatism. Women often undertook the day-to-day management tasks that kept groups like the Birch Society alive—staffing the local conservative bookstores, gathering reading materials, recruiting members, coordinating public lectures and events—and, as historian Michelle Nickerson has shown, women did real intellectual work for the conservative movement. From their neat homes in the suburbs of cities like Los Angeles, California, or Dallas, Texas, housewives pored over conservative books and other published materials, discussing the ideas with great seriousness of purpose; they wrote letters to congressional representatives brimming with exacting descriptions of particular pieces of legislation and data culled from

dense congressional reports, a testimony to the earnestness women brought to their anticommmunist work. Many of these women expressed frustration with those individuals unwilling to invest time for reading and learning. Elsie Daniel, a politically active Houston woman and member of the right-wing Minute Women of the U.S.A., insisted that conservatives “need to get people alerted all over the country,” but she complained that “many fine people are a little lazy mentally—they simply will not read books in order to find valuable material necessary for an understanding of current problems.” With few exceptions history never enshrined the names of these women, but their contributions to conservatism far outran their public recognition.31

Evangelical Christians, women and men, were also among the most important torchbearers for grassroots anticommmunism in the postwar years, and their anti-Red fervor burned brightly long after McCarthyism had flickered. Standing at the vanguard of the evangelical charge against Communism, the Reverend Billy Graham exhorted the hundreds of thousands of Americans that thronged to his revivals and switched on his *Hour of Decision* radio program that the United States was locked in a “battle to the death,” where “either communism must die, or Christianity must die.” Graham rendered the challenge facing American Christians in stark hues: either the nation would slide leftward toward socialism and “plunge into the dark abyss of totalitarian despair and gloom, and ultimate annihilation,” or America could move “to the right," toward “the way of the cross.” Diplomats and military men, laying strategic plans to

outmaneuver the enemy, might conceive of the Cold War as a geopolitical showdown, but for Graham, the confrontation with Soviet Communism represented nothing less than a titanic face-off with evil, a crusade to save Christian morality.\footnote{Graham quoted in Martin, \textit{With God on Their Side}, 34–35.}

With the uncontested leader of postwar evangelicalism sounding the clarion call, it is little wonder that Christian anticomunist activism thrived in the postwar decades. Two of the most influential groups shared strikingly similar names, Billy James Hargis’s Christian Crusade and the Australian minister Fred C. Schwarz’s Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, although Hargis’s organization tilted further toward the extreme right side of the political spectrum than Schwarz’s. In contrast to Billy Graham, who by and large targeted the ideology of Communism itself rather than any particular American politician, men like Hargis took more direct aim at John Kennedy and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. Mincing few words, Hargis issued one anti-liberal diatribe in 1962: “The nation today is in the hands of a group of Harvard radicals who have long ago been ‘hooked’ by the insidious dope of socialism….and they are so deeply entrenched in power that they can be removed only by a nationwide upsurge of conservatism—which, please God, will come in the elections of next November.” And while the liberal establishment recoiled from what they considered pernicious expressions of extremism, in the four years between 1960 and Goldwater’s triumph at the 1964 GOP national convention, Billy James Hargis’s publication, the \textit{Christian Crusade}, nearly doubled circulation rates from 58,000 to 98,600, and fundamentalist minister Carl McIntire’s fiery
right-wing *Christian Beacon* more than tripled its subscriber base, from 20,000 to 66,500.\(^{33}\)

Organizing often began locally, centered on issues like school board elections or textbook adoption. But community-based activists met like-minded conservatives at the national conferences of umbrella organizations such as the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the Women’s Patriotic Defense Council, or the Congress of Freedom (which staged events like a 1955 rally in San Francisco to mark the anniversary of what the Congress regarded as a dark moment for the United States, the creation of the United Nations). Radio and print media, moreover, supplied a common anticommmunist language and a common set of issue-campaigns. Slowly, as more national organizations sprung up in the first years of the 1960s, conservatism slowly stated to look like more of a hard-hitting *national* movement.

Drawing on the excitement that swirled around Goldwater at the Chicago nominating convention, conservatives created several important new grassroots organizations in 1960—further evidence that the Right was growing more sophisticated, more disciplined, and more ideologically focused. That year, with an idealistic fervor every bit as robust as their liberal counterparts, a group of conservative college students announced the formation of “Young Americans for Freedom” (YAF). A direct outgrowth of the “Youth for Goldwater” movement, the Young Americans for Freedom profited considerably from the close supervision of prominent intellectuals like Brent Bozell and William Buckley. Indeed, it was at Buckley’s plush Connecticut estate that the YAF and its

\(^{33}\) Ibid, 76.
founding principles were conceived. Yale student and YAF board member Richard Cowan called the group's establishment "a declaration of war against the forces of campus collectivism."  

The Americans for Constitutional Action (ACA) came into existence around the same time Kennedy campaigned for the presidency. Under the leadership of retired U.S. Navy Admiral Ben Moreell, the ACA styled itself as a conservative lobby. Its name a deliberate swipe at the better-known Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the ACA intended to act as a counterweight to the considerable influence that Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s ADA wielded among policymakers. Moreell, president and chairman of the board for a large steel corporation, deployed his personal wealth and connections to advance the electoral fortunes of conservative candidates; with generous contributions from figures such as Mr. and Mrs. DeWitt Wallace, publishers of Readers' Digest, and J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil, in 1960 the ACA had almost $200,000 in its accounts, which they used to provide professional political operatives for conservative congressional hopefuls.  

Moreell's group also left an imprint on the development of a cohesive conservative movement with their annual publication, the widely cited ACA Index. Here the ACA took a page from the liberal playbook; the ADA put out a similar annual report. The ACA's indexes were massive, dense documents that furnished the voting record of every member of Congress and a rating of how effectively each senator or representative upheld the core values of the ACA.

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34 John A. Andrew, The Other Side of the Sixties, 55, 59 (Cowan quotation).

35 Foster and Epstein, Danger on the Right, 189–91.
Theses values, summarized at the front of the index, included respect for "private, competitive market," "individual liberties, rights and responsibilities," and "strengthening our National Sovereignty," and opposition to "central government intervention in local government and private affairs" and "surrendering control of our foreign or domestic affairs to any International Organization." For every vote a senator cast in accord with the ACA's principles, his score on the index increased, so that a rating of "100" indicated perfect conformity with conservative ideas. With conservatives striving to define themselves and their constituencies, the ACA Index supplied a handy measure.

The ACA gave sufficient emphasis to ideals of "constitutional government" and "states' rights" to attract attention from civil rights opponents. Even a cursory reviewer of an "ACA Index" could hardly miss the strikingly high scores of the South's elected officials. South Carolina's Senator Strom Thurmond, for instance, notched a 95 percent positive rating one year. South Carolina's leading segregationist news organ, the Charleston News and Courier, happily announced the formation of the ACA in late 1959 and exuberantly recommended the organization to its readers. The ACA will "speak for real American principles," wrote the News and Courier, and "counteract the influence of the leftwing propaganda club that goes under the misleading title of Americans for Democratic Action."36

Similarly, John J. Synon, a Virginia segregationist who later became one of the leading promoters of George Wallace's 1968 third-party presidential candidacy, urged like-minded southerners to consider the ACA's data before

casting their ballots. In July 1960 Synon penned an article under the title “You Bet I am a Republican,” published in the conservative weekly Human Events, a publication that worked collaboratively with the ACA board. “For six weeks now I have been pouring over the ACA Index, an extraordinarily illuminating work,” the Virginian wrote. “An honest appraisal of the book will convince any fair-minded person the Republican party has held true to constitutional principles.” He concluded with a call for southerners to vote Republican: “The answer lies in supporting the Republican party; do so and you will strengthen the constitutional principles upon which our liberty is based....If your spirit remains conservative, make your label Republican.”

Synon provides a perfect example of a southerner who ventured into broader alliances with national conservative organizations and urged others in his region to do the same. A professional public relations consultant, Synon shrewdly understood the when to tone down his racist language—and when openly racist images were permissible. Just a month after his race-free discussion of “constitutional principles” in Human Events, Synon sent James Kilpatrick a letter containing anti-black slurs and offensive asides (mockingly writing in black dialect, for instance). The formation of grassroots organizations like the ACA

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38 John Synon to James Kilpatrick (written on Human Events letterhead), August 15, 1960, folder “1959–1962, Personal Correspondence: S (3 of 3),” box 6, collection 6626-m; Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
harkened the evolving shape of postwar conservatism and the stirrings of southern conservatism’s attempt to forge contacts beyond the region.

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Conservatives readily conceded their position as an upstart force in American politics in the early 1960s. They did not suffer for confidence in the righteousness of their ideas nor for faith that their movement would triumph in the end, yet at the start of the new decade conservatism languished in a state of self-definition. As with most political movements trying to move from the margins to the mainstream, the first step—and the simplest—was to pin down the enemy. Postwar conservatives invested substantial energy into cataloging the faults of liberalism: its failures in national security, its enlargement of federal power, its misguided spending programs, its flawed uses of the judiciary, and so on. Individual leaders on the Right incubated specific policy recommendations, but collectively, what Kennedy-era conservatives knew best was what they detested about liberalism.

The story of how liberal foreign policy aided the progress of the conservative counterrevolution must therefore begin with the “enemy”: Kennedy-era liberalism. It is to that story that chapter 4 turns.
CHAPTER 4:  
"SOME REASONABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NON-WHITE WORLD": LIBERALISM & THE POLITICS OF U.S. POLICY IN AFRICA  

Events that heralded change punctuated the year 1960, the sort of dramatic snapshot moments perfectly suited to the recently inaugurated age of television. In February four black students at Greensboro, North Carolina, settled themselves behind a lunch counter. Weeks later, sit-ins were underway across the South. In April a small assembly of black and white leaders emerged from a conference at Shaw University in North Carolina to announce the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Thereafter, the direct action phase of the African American freedom movement accelerated markedly. And in November, American voters awarded a narrow victory to the poised, telegenic John F. Kennedy. His election augured a renaissance for liberal reformism, a departure from the cautious moderation of President Eisenhower’s tenure.  

Developments in other parts of world only intensified the perception that momentous change would accompany the start of the new decade. After an initial burst in the late 1940s, the process of decolonization had slowed to a trickle until 1960, appropriately hailed as the “Year of Africa,” when seventeen nations south of the Sahara were liberated from colonial rule. In 1960 finely choreographed independence ceremonies—new flags unfurled as familiar European banners came down, symbolic handovers of power from white Europeans to black Africans—seemed to be near-daily news fare. The induction of sixteen new African delegations during the fall 1960 session of the United
Nations offered thoroughgoing proof that the ubiquitous references to “winds of change” represented something more than mere rhetorical flourish.¹

With each of these movements for change came hopeful new visions of a more democratic world. Heartened by the stunning collapse of European rule in Africa, leaders of the African American freedom struggle saw in the “Year of Africa” proof that radical visions of human equality could take hold.² Kennedy’s campaign had proffered soaring narratives of America’s exceptional political institutions and the potentially redemptive effects of American power in the world. Flush with confidence and armed with a heady faith that academic expertise could improve the human condition, the freshly minted Kennedy team prepared to confront the changing international landscape head-on.

In part by choice and in part due to circumstance, the Kennedy administration presided over what Secretary of State Dean Rusk called “the historical problem of coming into some reasonable relationship with [the] non-

¹ British Prime Minister Harold MacMillan referred to the global “winds of change” in a February 3, 1960, speech before the South African parliament in Pretoria. Others had used “wind” as a metaphor long before MacMillan; in 1945, NAACP Secretary Walter White remarked: “A wind is rising—a wind of determination by the have-nots of the world to share the benefits of freedom and prosperity which they have to keep exclusively for themselves,” and images of anticolonial nationalism as a “wind,” a “wave,” or other force of nature swiftly took hold in the U.S and Europe. Many historians continue to use a wind or wave metaphor to describe the swift progress of anticolonial nationalism, especially in Africa. Postcolonial scholars have criticized such terminology, arguing that nature terms diminish the significance of the protracted, bitter struggles to win national independence and instead reduce nationalism to an intractable, inevitable outcome divorced from human agency.

white world." Certainly there was no shortage of foreign policy flare-ups in Africa commanding the president's attention: in Angola, in the Union of South Africa, and in the Congo John F. Kennedy confronted the colliding agendas of the Cold War and anticolonial nationalism in the Third World. After winning the White House in 1960 with a campaign that drew an unprecedented degree of attention to the African continent, liberal members of the Kennedy administration set out to re-imagine America's relationship with the developing world. The African continent became a central focus of their initiatives.

Decolonization, of course, already had progressed through much of South and Southeast Asia before arriving in sub-Saharan Africa; still, the emergence of self-governing African nations reverberated through the U.S. political landscape in a way that an independent India or Philippines had not. The dizzying number of new nations partially accounted for the difference, but so too did the manifest parallels with the U.S. battles over civil rights and the typical American image of African peoples, cultures, and societies. Beginning in the mid-1950s and especially after 1960, policymakers were not the only ones puzzling over how the United States should engage with the decolonizing world. U.S. policy in Africa became fodder for grass-roots activists and lobby groups across the political

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spectrum. More and more, the proper U.S. response to the decline of European colonial rule in Africa worked its way into mainstream political debates.

As the last major holdout of European rule, Africa became an important site for political battles over the legacy of colonialism and the aims of U.S. power in a postcolonial world. Questions about American foreign policy, the Cold War, and the "emerging world," as contemporaries often referred to newly decolonized nations, had been percolating through policymaking circles since the end of the Second World War. How would the United States engage with independent African or Asian territories and nationalist leaders? What role, if any, were Soviet Russia and Communist China playing in fomenting nationalist insurgencies? Was the allegiance of new nations worth potential damage to U.S. relations with NATO allies? The "Year of Africa" moved these sorts of questions rapidly to the forefront of American political dialogues. Liberal organizations promoted one set of answers, conservatives another, and in both cases, the politics of U.S. policy in Africa were typically embedded within larger political debates about the need for civil rights reform, or the appropriate role of international opinion in U.S. foreign policymaking, or the proper degree of belligerency in the U.S. confrontation with Communism. Public disagreements about Africa, in other words, were rarely only about Africa, yet few observers could dispute that by the second half of the 1950s, American interest in the land still commonly referred to as the "Dark Continent" was bubbling.

I. SHIFTING PUBLIC DIALOGUES ON AFRICA

Prior to World War II few white Americans, liberal or conservative, gave much consideration to the African continent or the desires of its people. As
historian Thomas Noer aptly quipped, for the first half of the twentieth century white Americans had been more inclined to view the continent as "a land of jungles and animals" than as a realm for international diplomacy. Even among the few U.S. officials who entertained the possibility of self-determination for African territories, the end of European rule on the continent seemed remote, a transition that was years—maybe decades—away. While dim views on black Africans' readiness for independence persisted, by the end of the 1950s the illusion that Western powers could retain their African colonies indefinitely had evaporated. Pressures for decolonization built, and with them grew American interest in the African continent.

It was African Americans, not white liberals, who first pressured U.S. officials to forge a new relationship with the African continent, and it was African Americans who did the most to place the topic of U.S. policy in Africa on the mainstream political agenda. Drawing on a rich intellectual tradition born in books like W.E.B. Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and C. L. R. James's *The Black Jacobins* (1938), African Americans joined a transatlantic community of activists in an anticolonial organizing tradition that dated back to the 1930s.

Vibrant though it was in the interwar and war years, black anticolonial activism was forced to retreat in the postwar period. After Pearl Harbor and especially after the postwar arrival of loyalty oaths, red hunts, and HUAC, the already-slim space for criticizing U.S. institutions and U.S. allies narrowed even further. The Cold War, aided tremendously by the U.S. government and its surveillance agencies, crippled black Americans' calls to dismantle European colonialism, just as it shackled other forms of radical protest. Relentless campaigns of intimidation effectively destroyed leftist anticolonial organizations
like the Council on African Affairs (CAA) and drove black internationalism into a period of dormancy.\textsuperscript{5}

Beginning in Eisenhower's second term, as African nationalism intensified, African Americans' international activism surged once more. In March 1957 Ghana became the first nation of sub-Saharan Africa—black Africa—to win national independence. At the ceremony where Britain formally ceded control over its Gold Coast colony, Kwame Nkrumah, the face of African nationalism, pledged that Ghana's independence would have significance beyond West Africa. "We are going to create our own African personality and identity," the new prime minister proclaimed, speaking from a dais before a red, green, yellow, and black Ghanaian flag that had just been hoisted in place of the Union Jack. "We again dedicate ourselves in the struggle to emancipate other countries in Africa, for our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent." Nkrumah did not say so explicitly, but the dozens of African American intellectuals, activists, labor organizers, educators, ministers, and journalists that attended Ghana's independence ceremony might had added the liberation of American blacks to Nkrumah's calls for African self-determination. Historian Kevin Gaines has

\textsuperscript{5}Nikhil Singh, \textit{Black is a Country}; Gaines \textit{American Africans in Ghana}; Anderson, \textit{Eyes off the Prize}; and von Eschen, \textit{Race Against Empire}. Yergan was a unique case; in the late 1940s he made a political about-face and became an active conservative, a staunch anti-Communist, and a defender of European rule in Africa. He worked closely with men like William F. Buckley and William Rusher. David Henry Anthony III, \textit{Max Yergan: Race Man, Internationalist, Cold Warrior} (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 275, suggests that FBI surveillance forced Yergan's hand; other historians, like Carol Anderson, as well as several of Yergan's contemporaries argue that he was merely a self-serving individual who renounced his ties with the left for his own personal reasons.
shown that Ghana’s liberation was an event of singular importance for black Americans, particularly writers and intellectuals based in the urban North.\(^6\)

Immediately images of a free Ghana began to surface in the speeches and sermons of American black leaders. At the Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York City’s Harlem neighborhood, minister David Liorish preached: “this new nation in Africa will serve as a symbol to all colored peoples everywhere that freedom is possible for all...it means that a people though downtrodden and held down by the shackles of servitude can rise and throw off the yoke of bondage.” Upon his return from Ghana’s independence ceremony Martin Luther King Jr. told an audience in Alabama that the freed West African nation would “give impetus to oppressed peoples all over the world.” In July 1958 Nkrumah appeared before euphoric crowds in Chicago, Washington D.C., and Harlem, where thousands flocked to receptions held in the Ghanaian Prime Minister’s honor.\(^7\)

The independence of Ghana did more than embolden Americans blacks in their own fight for equality; the visits of black African statesmen and dignitaries combated the entrenched “jungle savage” image that many Americans—white and black—had long associated with Africa. James Farmer, national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), explained that with African decolonization, “American Negroes began to take a fresh look at Africa through


\(^7\) Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans*, 163 (first quotation), 165 (second quotation); Nkrumah’s visit, 173-75.
more hopeful eyes; they saw and were impressed by the proud black people who represented those nations."

As African decolonization swelled ancestral pride among American blacks and rekindled black interest in international affairs, the U.S. relationship with the "emerging continent" became a litmus test of the attitudes of white powerbrokers toward people of color. By the time the 1950s drew to a close, many black Americans were closely monitoring how U.S. policymakers treated newly independent African nations and how the U.S. treated European nations clinging to African colonies. African Americans labored to ensure that political candidates and elected officials in the United States could not turn a blind eye to the international facets of white supremacy or the African continent as a whole.

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In the middle part of the 1950s, labor leaders, politicians, and liberal white Christians, many of whom had ties to the African continent through missionary work or international bodies like the World Council of Churches, began organizing to end white rule in Africa. White-led liberal advocacy for African self-determination never approached the comprehensive, transnational reformism that had been the hallmark of interwar black organizations; where the CAA and NAACP had issued unvarnished denunciations of European rule in Africa, postwar liberals tethered anticolonialism to anti-Communism, setting up an omnipresent balancing act where U.S. calls for African independence also had to account for the needs and desires of Western European allies. Vital Center

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8 Ibid., 200-207; quotation 201.
white liberals arrived at the problem of African colonialism far later than African activists, and they wielded the far blunter sword of anti-Communist anticolonialism. Still, they arrived.

In 1953 a small group of white ministers formed the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), the first white liberal group devoted solely to the problems of colonialism and institutionalized white supremacy in Africa. The ACOA has received scant attention from historians, and most of that has been unfavorable. Writing in 1956, W.E.B. Du Bois said of the ACOA: “The American Committee on Africa is a right-wing organization with Christianity and some big money behind it. Naturally, it is doing some good work and publishing some facts about the present situation, but fundamentally, it is reactionary. You cannot depend on it to tell the whole African story.” Following the tone of Du Bois’s judgment, historians Penny von Eschen and Brenda Gayle Plummer have criticized the ACOA for its moderation, its overzealous anti-Communism, its heedless faith in the righteousness of American power, and its role in displacing the more revolutionary anticolonial work of the black-led Council on African Affairs. Although the ACOA was interracial, with well-known African Americans such as A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, and Martin Luther King Jr. assuming leadership roles, most of the ACOA’s decision-making power lay in the hands of white liberals, and the liberal Africa lobby patently refused to cooperate with the left-leaning CAA, despite the two groups’ similar objectives.9

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9 W.E.B. Du Bois quoted in von Eschen, Race Against Empire, 143–44. Historians Brenda Plummer and Penny von Eschen both write critically of the ACOA and its activism. The ACOA, they charge, derailed the work of groups like the CAA that were working for more authentic, broad-based, radical change in the world system, and the ACOA tended to support only those African nationalists who were solidly pro-western, anti-Communist, and amenable to cooperation with the United States. See von Eschen, Race Against Empire, 143–44; Plummer, Rising Wind, 233.
Undoubtedly the ACOA pursued more modest change than the CAA; it was a decidedly liberal, not leftist, organization. Most often, white liberal anticolonial activists acted out of faith that America’s universal ideals would vanquish Communism and that properly applied American power might be a force for good in the world. African American leftists like Paul Robeson or W. E. B. Du Bois understood intimately the United States’s relationship to colonialism and were not afraid to criticize U.S. complicity with European colonial rule as well as America’s own history of imperial expansion in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The anticolonialism of postwar white liberalism, by contrast, embraced the language of American exceptionalism, a language where U.S. power in the world was redemptive, benevolent, fundamentally unlike the crass avarice of Old World colonialism. The ACOA was no exception. A staunch anti-Communism confined the group’s goals, tactics, and scope, just as it limited the reach of other liberal reform impulses. While the ACOA regarded racial apartheid and colonialism as moral wrongs, the organization hoped to secure African national independence through nonviolent negotiations, not armed revolution. The group wanted to nudge America’s Cold War allies into giving up their African colonies, yet it rarely criticized Western European nations and certainly issued no wholesale denunciation of the colonial system. And ACOA leaders simply evaded engagement with Africa’s thorniest problems and the continent’s more controversial nationalist leaders, preferring to focus on places like South Africa, where good and evil, morally justified and morally repugnant, seemed clearly delineated.10

10 For evidence of the ACOA ducking direct engagement with complex and morally ambiguous situations, see for instance George Houser’s comments on the Congo. Houser, “Preliminary
Nevertheless, the fact that vital-center liberals had joined African Americans in calling for an end to minority rule in Africa, in denouncing colonialism as a baleful relic, indicated that the parameters of American political dialogues on Africa were shifting. For this reason the 1953 formation of the ACOA was momentous. Where white Americans had once reflexively denied the readiness of black Africans for self-rule, the ACOA introduced a new axiom, laced with the moral tones of liberal, ecumenical Christianity: the United States supported the sinful system of European colonialism at the peril of sacrificing its claim to righteousness in the world.

The ACOA stocked its national advisory committee with prominent white liberals, including ACLU founder Roger Baldwin, Eleanor Roosevelt, Senator Hubert Humphrey, theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, and Harvard historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. Many of these individuals probably did little more than consent to having their name printed on the organization's letterhead. Yet even such a token contribution achieved the effect ACOA leaders desired—the impression of a liberal consensus on the need for change in Africa. The ACOA may have been small, it may have been overly ensconced within the insular world of New York City intellectual-activists, but the creation of a mainstream liberal lobby on U.S. policy in Africa marked a significant new departure in postwar American politics.

and, as the next two chapters shall show, they gave conservatives space to differentiate themselves from liberals. ¹¹

The American Committee on Africa grew out of a smaller, more focused organization: the Americans for South Africa Resistance (AFSAR). In 1952, as South Africa’s ruling Nationalist Party hardened the laws of apartheid, a coalition of African National Congress and South African Indian Congress leaders launched what became known as the “Defiance Campaign” to protest pass laws, residential restrictions, and other discriminatory edicts. William Sutherland, a black American who had lived in South Africa, contacted his friend George Houser, a liberal white Methodist based in New York, to think about how sympathetic Americans could support the anti-apartheid Defiance Campaign. Along with two other American ministers, Houser hastily founded AFSAR and set to work soliciting funds, distributing information, and encouraging U.S. solidarity with South African anti-apartheid movements.

According to George Houser, AFSAR raised “several thousand dollars” to aid jailed South African protestors; the group’s other major accomplishments included a 1952 public rally in Harlem and a demonstration outside the South African embassy in New York. ¹²

The crushing force of South Africa’s police state assured that the Defiance Campaign was tragically short-lived, so less than a year after its creation AFSAR found itself bereft of an organizational focal point. Rather than fold, the trio of

¹¹ ACOA letterhead listed the names of national committee members. See, for instance, George Houser to Executive Board, Jan. 17, 1958, frame 63, reel 1, ACOA. On Pike, see Houser to Dear Friend, n.d., [1958], frame 137, reel 1, ibid.

¹² Plummer, Rising Wind; Meriwether, Proudly We Can Be Africans; George M. Houser, “Meeting Africa’s Challenge: The Story of the ACOA,” Issue: A Quarterly Journal of Africanist Opinion VI (Summer/Fall 1976), 16–26, quotation p. 18.
AFSAR founders—Houser, the Unitarian Reverend Donald Harrington, and Harlem Methodist minister Charles Y. Trigg—opted to broaden their scope. In 1953 they established the American Committee on Africa. Liberal clergy, white and black, dominated the ACOA leadership ranks. Before taking over as ACOA Executive Director in 1955, George Houser had worked for the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and co-founded, with James Farmer, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Several veteran CORE activists joined the ACOA, including Bayard Rustin and Unitarian peace activist Homer Jack, who left the ACOA in 1960 to become the national director of SANE, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, another organization with a membership roster that overlapped with ACOA's. Other notable clergymen on the ACOA executive committee were the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., the Reverend Harry Emerson Fosdick, and the Very Reverend James A. Pike, a white Episcopalian best remembered today for questioning the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and standing trial for heresy in 1966. With seasoned Christian activists leading the American Committee on Africa, it is no surprise that the organization prized Mahatma Gandhi's philosophies of nonviolence and the ideals of peaceful civil disobedience.¹³

For the first years of its existence, the ACOA struggled to stay afloat with limited financial resources and a tiny operational staff. Even its founder, George Houser, admitted that the ACOA remained “marginal” until the second half of the 1950s. The group's prospects, to say nothing of its fundraising prowess,

¹³ Homer Jack, for instance, was the author of one book on Gandhi's thought and he edited a reader of Gandhi's writings. Most of the key ACOA leaders had traveled to Africa, including Homer Jack, George Shepherd Jr., George Houser, and others. Houser regularly visited Africa, especially South Africa.
brightened considerably as anticolonial activity in Africa triggered unprecedented American interest in the continent’s political affairs. With independence for parts of French North Africa and British West Africa suddenly on the horizon, the ACOA’s work took on fresh relevance, and executive director George Houser capitalized on the fluid moment. “The aim of the American Committee on Africa,” he explained in 1955, “should be to point out to the American people the growing importance of Africa, and to do everything possible to change American foreign policy in relation to the democratic struggle for self-government in Africa.” Houser pledged that the ACOA would invest “a major amount of time” toward “the task of influencing the course of American foreign policy.”

As sturdy anti-Communist liberals, the ACOA directors accepted that American foreign policy could not digress from the tracks laid by the Cold War, and they allowed the boundaries of Cold War politics to hem in their reform impulses. Fluent in the language of the Vital Center, the ACOA argued that anti-colonialism offered the United States the straightest path to anti-Communism on the African continent. Grassroots political organizations formulated competing ideas about how the United States might best wage the global Cold War, and after driving the Council on African Affairs into retreat, the ACOA stood at the forefront of grassroots campaigns to persuade the American public that U.S. support for African self-determination offered the surest way to keep Soviet expansion at bay.

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14 First quotation, ("marginal,"), see Houser, “Meeting Africa’s Challenge,” 18; second quotation, see Houser, “Outline of Prospectus for American Committee on Africa,” April 22, 1955, frame 17, reel 1, ACOA. In 1959, organization records show that the ACOA had an annual budget of over $70,000; by the early 1960s, the figure topped $100,000 and the organization had a full-time staff of seven people. See George Shepherd, “Memo on Africa Today,” frame 151, reel 1, ACOA.
With its insistence that anticolonialism might strengthen the U.S. Cold War position, the ACOA sounded a refrain out of sync with the Eisenhower White House, where anti-Communism demanded dogged, unconditional loyalty to Western Europe. Still, the ACOA held fast to their view that America had to secure the loyalty of decolonized nations and to do so, the United States had to coax Britain, France, and other NATO allies into surrendering their holdings in Africa. In August 1954, with the Supreme Court ruling on the Brown case still fresh and the image of the French defeat at the Vietnamese village of Dien Bien Phu still searing, the ACOA’s George Shepherd Jr. seized the opportunity to argue for American solidarity with African desires for independence. Shepherd, the ACOA director from 1953 to 1955, wrote on the editorial page of the New York Times: “An increasing number of the [African] nationalist leaders have become puzzled by our support of the colonial powers on every important issue.” By siding with Europeans, the United States had chosen a potentially disastrous policy that threatened to drive African leaders into the arms of the Soviets and Chinese, Shepherd implied, and he turned to the tender example of Vietnam to make his case. “Indochina has proven beyond a doubt the fallacy of trying to strengthen colonialism in the struggle against communism. The time has come for a new departure in American policy if the people of Africa are to gain freedom from both colonialism and communism.”

commitment to the ideals of freedom and self-determination and preserve the redemptive force of American power on the African continent.

The American Committee on Africa issued warnings about the consequences that might follow if the U.S. stubbornly ignored African independence movements, but the group also touted the benefits of anticolonialism. Another ACOA member, African American economist Robert S. Browne, published a *New York Times* editorial piece not long after Shepherd. Later an adherent to black power philosophies and a scathing critic of the U.S. war in Vietnam, Robert Browne argued in 1955 that the U.S. could establish positive relations with the decolonizing world if the nation reversed its “myopic” policy of opposing African independence. “A determined anti-colonial policy in the State Department could win undying gratitude from the peoples of Morocco and Tunisia, of Algeria and Kenya, of Madagascar and Mozambique. The first step in winning adherents to the free world is to make it free.”

ACOA statements regarding France’s war with Algeria offer an instructive glimpse into the workings of the group’s philosophies as well as the ambivalence that often bedeviled liberal anticolonialism. The organization maintained that Communists would be the direct beneficiaries of prolonged violence in Algeria, and for that reason, they urged a speedy settlement. “The United States should seek a solution which will be based upon the principles of self-determination for Algeria and at the same time will protect legitimate French interests and minority rights in North Africa.” The longer the war dragged on,

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the more likely it was that the "Soviet-Egyptian leadership" might "attain significant leadership" in the region, ACOA leaders feared. With the oblique reference to Egyptian leader and pan-Arabism advocate Gamal Abdel Nasser, the American Committee revealed their profound discomfort with some expressions of anticolonial nationalism and hinted that their eagerness for an American-negotiated truce stemmed from something more than a high-minded concern for Algerian rights. If America used "moral force" to pressure France into ending the violence, the United States might avert the ascent of anti-American, anti-Western nationalists and ensure a measure of influence in the region.\(^{17}\)

When describing Algeria, Portuguese Angola, South Africa, and other trouble spots on the African continent, the American Committee on Africa applied a logic that civil rights advocated often deployed: the need to restore America's international reputation. "The perpetuation of fighting in North Africa seriously affects the standing of the United States in the eyes of the people of Asia and Africa because of the close alignment of the United States with France." Not all Americans might be convinced that Algerians or Angolans deserved self-determination, yet the ACOA banked that more might be convinced of the need for an unblemished image of the Untied States abroad.\(^{18}\)

The ACOA relied on a variety of methods to disseminate their gospel of anticolonial anti-Communism. Sensing that Americans were "awakening" to the

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\(^{17}\) First three quotations, see memorandum, George Houser to Executive Board, March 13, 1958, and attachment "A New U.S. Policy toward North Africa," frames 77-79, reel 1, ACOA; "moral force," see minutes of Executive Board meeting, November 9, 1959, frame 770, reel 4, ACOA.

\(^{18}\) Memorandum, George Houser to Executive Board, March 13, 1958, and attachment "A New U.S. Policy toward North Africa," frames 77-79, reel 1, ACOA.
topic of Africa, the ACOA published a monthly circular, *Africa Today*, designed
to provide the public with “a good liberal interpretation of events in Africa,” as
officer George Shepherd explained. “The absence of any adequate information is
appalling,” Shepherd claimed in 1959. “There is, however, a basic humanitarian
disposition that needs content and direction. If we do not provide it, then the
conservative special interests in this country will have the field to themselves.”
Other ACOA salvos into this battle for public opinion included frequent
conferences and public events, such as a U.S. celebration of Ghana’s
independence, an annual “Africa Freedom Day” rally, and an anti-apartheid
“Day of Protest” held on December 10, Human Rights Day. To generate
publicity and foster an image of broad backing from the liberal establishment,
events like these often featured high-profile leaders as honorary chairs. Martin
Luther King Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt, and Bishop James A. Pike co-chaired their
1957 “Day of Protest” against South Africa; for the 1960 Africa Freedom Day
rally, King and Roosevelt were joined by AFL-CIO chief George Meany, UAW
head Walter Reuther, and baseball pioneer Jackie Robinson, among others.

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19 George Shepherd, “Memorandum on *Africa Today*,” n.d. [1959], frame 151, reel 1, ACOA. *Africa
Today*’s subscription numbers were never high, although they doubled after 1960 to about 3500,
and the executive board occasionally thought about cutting the publication or scaling it back. On
subscription numbers, see Composite Staff Report, March 13, 1961, frame 855, reel 4, ACOA, and

20 On one of the ACOA’s first conferences on the topic “Africa, the United Nations, and U.S.
Policy,” see memo to ACOA U.N. Committee, August 3, 1956, frame 38, reel 1, ACOA; see also
Memorandum, Donald Harrington and Roger Baldwin, Conference of the American Committee
on Africa, frame 13–14, reel 1, ibid. On annual Africa Freedom Day rallies, see Gilbert Jonas to
Donald Harrington, October 9, 1958, frame 99, reel 1, ACOA. On the South Africa Day of Protest,
see George Edmund Haynes, “Draft of Finance Letter,” September 24, 1957, frame 51, reel 1,
ACOA; *New York Times*, October 15, 1957, p. 25; see sample of invitation letter, Pike and King to

Along with these carefully orchestrated, publicity-seeking gatherings, the American Committee on Africa engaged in intense behind-the-scenes lobbying in Washington, D.C., and at the New York City headquarters of the United Nations. In January 1959, several months after their return from the All African People's Conference, Houser and a group of ACOA delegates traveled to Washington D.C. to meet with members of Congress and State Department officials. The delegation met with Minnesota Democratic Senators Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy and liberal New York Republican Jacob Javits; in the State Department, they secured an appointment with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Joseph Satterwhite. Humphrey and Javits both agreed to make speeches in the Senate about the treason trials and U.S. policy in South Africa.²²

These activities only intensified after the Year of Africa, the election year 1960, as ACOA members appeared before Congressional hearings and attended the meeting where Democrats drafted their party platform.²³ From the earliest days of its existence, the ACOA made U.N. work a staple of their political activity. The liberal lobby organization worked to steer the direction of the U.S. delegation at the international body, and they provided direct aid to African nations petitioning the United Nations to secure their independence. As one of the ACOA's founding documents declared: "Most of the Colonial World lies in Africa. It is, therefore, highly fitting that an American organization should take as its primary responsibility the objective of seeing that our American delegation to the United Nations takes a deep interest in Colonial matters and throw the

²² Houser to Executive Board, February 2, 1959, frames 139–40, reel 1, ACOA; later meetings in Washington, see Houser to Executive Board, February 7, 1963, frames 116–17, reel 5, ibid.

²³ Annual Report, 1960, frames 864–70, reel 4, ACOA.
weight of its influence more often behind the Colonial peoples rather than the Colonial Powers.”

In short, the ACOA called for American policymakers to reverse their instinctive tendency to always back European allies.

Rightfully sensitive to the charge that white liberals had displaced black Americans’ leadership on African decolonization, George Houser and the ACOA belatedly worked to vest more power in the hands of African American members. Under pressure from Harlem black leaders, the Executive Board of the organization resolved to “make the ACOA more truly interracial.” They invited long-time board member A. Philip Randolph to assume the title of ACOA co-chairman, which he accepted, and worked to recruit more African American individual memberships. The Board’s rather sheepish effort to hitch the ACOA to the moral and organizational coattails of the African American freedom struggle suggested that U.S. anticolonial activism shifted in the early 1960s, as the mass protests of the civil rights movements gained traction. While the ACOA’s changes may have been more cosmetic than structural, they lent financial and organizational support to the creation of an “American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa.”

In late 1962, the heads of half a dozen major civil rights groups, including Randolph, James Farmer of CORE, Dorothy Height

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24 On ACOA activities through the United Nations, see for instance minutes of Executive Committee Meeting, May 7, 1954, frame 607, reel 4, ACOA, where the ACOA leaders resolved to “engage in activities to influence delegations to the United Nations concerning any colonial problems in Africa”; Report of Executive Committee Meeting, June 1, 1954, frame 609, reel 4, ibid., and, minutes of Executive Board Meeting, January 7, 1957, frames 652–53, reel 4, ibid., and for a later example, see “The Program and Purposes of the American Committee on Africa,” n.d. [1962], frame 375, reel 1, ibid. Quotation, see Memorandum, “Aims and Structures,” n.d. [1954], frame 009, reel 1, ibid.

25 For quotation “truly interracial,” see Minutes of Executive Board meeting, January 6, 1960, frame 788, reel 4. See also memorandum, Houser to Steering Committee, February 7, 1961, frame 278–79, reel 1, ACOA; participation in planning the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa,” see Minutes of Executive Board Meeting, September 17, 1962, frame 75, reel 5 and frame 84, reel 5, ibid.
of the National Council of Negro Women, Martin Luther King Jr. of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and Whitney Young of the National Urban League, gathered for a meeting at Columbia University to make plans for formal congressional lobbying. The American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa called for a “Marshall Plan for Africa,” expanded opportunities for black Americans to serve as ambassadors to Africa, and sanctions against South Africa. Although a majority of the African continent had achieved self-governance by the time these African American luminaries came together, the conference signaled once more that U.S. policy in the “Dark Continent” had come out of the shadows it once occupied.

Activities of the American Committee on Africa were only the crest of a larger wave of interest in Africa’s liberation from colonial rule. The chorus of liberal voices urging U.S. policymakers to prove America’s commitment to anticolonial ideals grew stronger and more in unison as the 1950s faded.

Connecticut Democrat Chester B. Bowles, a former U.S. ambassador and an itinerant liberal lecturer, emerged as a leading voice on the subject of Africa with his 1957 book *Africa’s Challenge to America*, a portion of which appeared in serialized form in the *New York Times* magazine just three months before the 1960 election. In both works Bowles accused American diplomats and missionaries of living in a “colonial dream world.” Trapped in an outmoded mindset, Americans in Africa continued to deal exclusively with European emissaries even as actual western power eroded, Bowles argued, and he foretold the entire African continent and its precious natural resources slipping into the Communist orbit.

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unless the United States acted immediately and decisively to forge alliances with African nationalists.27 Another icon of postwar liberalism, the twice-failed Democratic presidential candidate Adlai Stevenson also had embraced the cause of African decolonization. Stevenson laced his words with a moralism absent from Bowles’ policy-driven analysis; in May 1960, for instance, Stevenson maintained that America’s response to the colonial problem posed a test of “the moral capacities of our society.”28

White liberals were not entirely comfortable with the pace of African decolonization, but through the late Eisenhower era they buoyantly predicted that support for African self-determination served Cold War security interests. Bowles’s Africa’s Challenge to America presumed that with U.S. support for decolonization, African nations would readily fall into the U.S. camp, pliant and eager to permit America access to bases and resources. “Wise policies,” he wrote, “may enable us to influence developments in ways that will advance the aspirations of Africans, and protest not only our legitimate interests, but also those of our NATO allies.”29 Though often ill at ease with the nationalist regimes that replaced European colonial governance, liberals initially interpreted the crumbling colonial order not as a devastating blow to America’s European allies, but rather as a window of opportunity for the United States to assume a position of positive leadership on the African continent.


However, when white liberals spoke of Africa during the early Cold War, they did so in a language that bore the residual marks of more than a century’s worth of Western discourse about modernity and civilization. They understood Africa as thoroughly isolated, mired in poverty, and beset by intertribal factionalism—a place that the march of history and progress had missed altogether. This metaphor cloaked even the most impassioned liberal pleas for U.S. policymakers to take African nationalism seriously. Men like Bowles spoke of Africa “stretching its limbs,” “awakening,” “opening its eyes to the first faint prospect of freedom.” They evoked an image of a latecomer to a race toeing the starting line of history. Freshly awakened to modernity, the African continent naturally would aspire to the principles of democracy and economic growth that the United States had pioneered with its own revolution for independence, or so argued mid-century liberals, supremely confident that America provided the world with a singular model for progress. White liberal discussions of Africa, in sum, claimed that the ideals of America’s 1776 revolutions were universally valid, but they had not shed the hierarchical, linear images of progress that had underwritten colonialism in the first place.30

* * *

Events on the southern rim of the continent also hastened the emergence of Africa as an issue in American politics. Three years before the dogs and fire hoses of the Birmingham police department turned the tide of public support for the American civil rights movement, a police crackdown in Sharpeville, South

Africa, similarly showcased to the world the brutality of white supremacist regimes. Roughly fifty miles from Johannesburg, the industrial city of Sharpeville and its steel mills had been a leading site of Pan-African Congress (PAC) organizing efforts. On the afternoon of March 21, 1960, a crowd of several thousand anti-apartheid activists, unarmed, assembled near a town police station. A disturbance arose, and amidst the din, a police guard was knocked down. The jittery white security forces responded with a barrage of bullets from their automatic weapons that killed sixty-nine black demonstrators and wounded nearly two hundred others. While international observers were aghast to learn that most bullets struck the backs of the fleeing demonstrators, South African Prime Minister Hendrick Verwoerd praised the white police forces for their “remarkable restraint,” saying they should be “congratulated for being so firm and only using force when they had no choice.”

The massacre, which in fact merely exposed the sort of raw violence that was integral to the day-to-day maintenance of apartheid, elicited shock and horror in the United States and stoked the moral outrage that fueled organizations like the ACOA. African American leaders and black newspapers roundly denounced the Sharpeville violence and demanded a forceful response from the Eisenhower administration. The Chicago Defender wrote: “The wanton slaughtering of men, women, and children in Sharpeville has shocked the conscience of the world,” a sentiment echoed in the Pittsburg Courier, the Baltimore Afro-American, and elsewhere in the black press. NAACP secretary Roy Wilkins argued that the actions of white South African police forces

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31 On Sharpeville, see Robert Kinloch Massie, Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South Africa in the Apartheid Years (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 61–69.
"warrants a re-examination of the relations of the United States of America with that nation."32 Such a reexamination was likely to stall so long as the white supremacist government of the Union of South Africa avowed its commitment to anti-Communism and kept a steady outflow from its mineral and diamond mines to western powers, but nevertheless, the grisly images of Sharpeville helped African American activists move the U.S.–South African partnership out of the shadows and into the spotlight of public scrutiny.

White liberal organizations tended to step a bit more gingerly, focusing on emergency aid to Sharpeville victims rather than demanding international sanctions against the apartheid regime, yet they joined African Americans in publicly questioning the cozy U.S. relations with South Africa and calling for a revised dialogue about white rule in Africa. The National Council of Churches, an organization that grew more uniformly liberal in the postwar period as conservative Protestants defected for the National Association of Evangelicals (formed in 1942), issued a mildly worded denunciation of the Sharpeville shootings. Mindful of America's own sins of racism, the NCC asked South African leaders to respect the universal right to peaceably demonstrate against "laws and customs which deny human dignity."33 Three giants of postwar liberalism, Reinhold Niebuhr, A. Philip Randolph, and Walter Reuther, authored a single letter to the editor of the New York Times that urged Americans to give generously to the ACOA and its subsidiary, the African Defense and Aid Fund. The interracial trio expressed hope that the slain protesters at Sharpeville might

32 Meriwether, Proudly We Can Be Africans, 189–93.

“help mobilize American public opinion regarding the grave situation which exists in South Africa.” “It is up to all of us who believe in democracy and justice to help exert that pressure,” they exhorted sympathetic Times readers.34

Optimistic that Sharpeville would beckon new supporters into their fold, ACOA leaders issued a bolder reaction. Days after the massacre, George Houser’s organization sponsored a half-page advertisement in the New York Times with the headline “The Shame of South Africa” splashed under a photograph of Sharpeville’s carnage. The ad described a skittish South African government responding with force utterly out of proportion to the threat: as “unarmed Africans” gathered for peaceful demonstrations, “jet planes flew overhead,” police rolled out “armored cars and Sten guns,” and in the ensuing crackdown the government “caned, whipped, and jailed hundreds of Africans.” Reminding readers that the American Committee on Africa was the only U.S. organization equipped to help Sharpeville’s victims, the advertisement finished by entreat ing Americans to contribute to their Africa Defense and Aid Fund to assist “the widows and orphans of those slain,” to speed “the healing of the hundreds of wounded,” and to fund legal defense teams for those protestors imprisoned or awaiting trial.35 The ACOA staged marches and picket demonstrations, and they supported boycotts on South African products. Along with the NAACP, the Americans for Democratic Action, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union, the ninth region of the United Automobile Workers,


and several other labor unions, the ACOA coordinated an “Emergency Action Conference on South Africa.” The event itself attracted only a few hundred participants, but its greater significance lay in the image of a bloc of powerful, prominent American liberal organizations aligned and organized against South African apartheid.  

Although the most effective and best-remembered American campaigns against South African apartheid would not develop until the latter half of the 1960s and the 1970s, white and black liberals worked to redirect American dialogues on South Africa in the 1940s, 1950s, and especially in the wake of the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. They were determined to recast South Africa as an ally America could ill afford to keep in the global Cold War, an ally whose oppressive domestic practices threatened to pull the United States down from its vaunted place as defender of the free world. Anticommunist white liberals may have hedged from support for punitive measures against South Africa, but grassroots activists increasingly agreed that the costs of friendship with an apartheid government—a potentially fatal blow to U.S. relations with other black African nations—were too high.

As decolonization approached in the late 1950s, American interest in the African continent grew, as did fears that Soviet and Chinese communists were lurking, waiting to move in as European powers moved out. Anticommunist liberals arrived at something of a consensus as the November presidential election drew nearer: U.S. Cold War aims would be hurt, not helped, by prolonging European colonialism and white rule on the African continent.

36 Annual Report, 1960, frames 864–70, reel 4, ACOA.
Neither their logic nor their recommendations would go uncontested, as the subsequent chapters in Part II suggest. Still, it had become clear by 1960 that U.S. policy in Africa had emerged as an issue in grassroots American politics, one inextricably connected both to the politics of civil rights and to the politics of the Cold War.

II. THE WHITE HOUSE & U.S. POLICY IN AFRICA

Thanks in part to organized lobbies like the ACOA, by the time the 1960s dawned a growing number of elected officials had awakened to the ugly realities of Africa’s white regimes. Well into the 1950s, Africa scarcely registered on the radar screen of the U.S. policymaking establishment, and when U.S. officials did encounter Africa, they most likely treated it as a subset of European affairs.

Indeed, Africa did not even constitute an independent bureau within the State Department until the summer of 1958.37

Eisenhower’s White House had done little to reverse the ingrained Washington perception of Africa as a minor appendage of Europe. By and large the administration persisted in seeing Africa as diplomatically irrelevant and shrugged off any suggestion that the United States alter its traditional orientation toward Europe. John Foster Dulles refused to view independence struggles as anything other than Communist machinations; Assistant Secretary of State

George Allen simply informed anticolonial nationalist sympathizers: "all of the so-called colonial powers are our friends in the worldwide contest between the Free and the Communist world," an observation that, in his mind, settled the question of how the United States should deal with global tide of nationalism. Occasionally Eisenhower and Dulles voiced nominal support for African self-determination. Yet they hastened to add that "premature independence" in Africa offered a gateway to Communist infiltration, and they studiously avoided any interventions or even public statements that might incense a NATO ally engaged in armed conflict with North or sub-Saharan African colonies. Preferring to defer to Western Europe on all matters pertaining to Africa, Eisenhower and his aides snubbed requests for U.S. aid to new African states unless the erstwhile colonial ruler had granted express permission.

Still, in the waning months of his administration, Eisenhower had to struggle to keep a lid on the mounting international and domestic pressures for U.S. leadership on the problem of African colonialism. The slain black protestors at Sharpeville in 1960 compelled some reaction from the international community. U.N. Security Council member nations ultimately settled on a weakly worded resolution that "deplored" the bloodshed but refused to sanction or formally censure Verwoerd’s South African ruling party, a tepid response that few white or black liberals found adequate. Eisenhower’s Secretary of State Christian Herter gave U.S. ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge the go-ahead to

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39 Mahoney, JFK: Ordeal in Africa, 35.
support the measure, but only after it was re-written in a milder form. Britain and France both elected to abstain from the vote.40

Nor did Eisenhower win any allies with his reaction to another measure placed before the U.N. Security Council in 1960. During the run-up to the presidential election, Nikita Khrushchev, in a move designed to curry favor with the new delegations from recently liberated African nations, had declared that the United Nations should issue a resolution favoring immediate independence for all of the world’s remaining colonial territories. The resolution languished for several months until it came before the General Assembly in the final month of Eisenhower’s presidency, December 1960. Capitulating to pleas from British Prime Minister Harold McMillian, the outgoing U.S. president ordered the American representatives to dodge confrontation and abstain from voting on the U.N. resolution, which nonetheless passed handily. The fact that the self-proclaimed leader of the free world had eschewed a vote on universal self-determination deepened anti-American skepticism among some African and Asian leaders. Angling for his own presidential run, even Eisenhower’s vice president Richard Nixon worked to distance himself from the administration’s cool response to African nationalism.

More importantly for U.S. political contests, Eisenhower’s steadfast “Europe-first” philosophy opened up a space for John F. Kennedy and the liberals. Painting Eisenhower and Nixon’s moderate Republicanism as staid and out of sync with the realities of a rapidly evolving international system, candidate Kennedy warned that the “emerging world” would be lost to

Communism unless the United States radically recast its policy toward nations in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Kennedy alleged that the Eisenhower administration had guided American policy into a complacent lull, resulting in a Communist beachhead ninety miles off the coast of Florida and an apparent missile gap with the Soviets, and the Democratic nominee pledged to jump-start U.S. foreign policy with fresh perspectives and new approaches. As he contemplated a presidential run, Kennedy reportedly informed his confidante and advisor Harris Wofford that he wished to guide the United States into a "new relationship" with the developing world. Once he declared his candidacy, Kennedy's camp moved swiftly to depict the Massachusetts senator as uniquely suited to do just that.\textsuperscript{41} To an unprecedented extent, white liberals and black activists transformed U.S. relations with Africa and the decolonized world into a major campaign issue in the summer and fall of 1960.

Kennedy's sympathy for anticolonial nationalism must not be overstated—one need only look to Cuba or Southeast Asia to see its clear limits—but for a midcentury white American politician, his anticolonial credentials were unusually robust. More than a decade before his administration sank the U.S. deeper into the Vietnam morass, Kennedy traveled to Indochina to observe the French war with Ho Chi Minh's nationalist forces. The Massachusetts senator returned from his 1951 trip describing Southeast Asia "ablaze" with nationalism and characterizing the French-Indochina war as a standoff between "civilizations striving to be born and those desperately trying to retain what they have held for so long." "Here," concluded Kennedy, "colonialism is not a topic for tea-talk

\textsuperscript{41} Kennedy quoted in Elizabeth A. Cobbs, "Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Foreign Policy of the Peace Corps," \textit{Diplomatic History} 20 (Winter 1996), 79.
discussion; it is the daily fare of millions of men.” The following year, 1952, in a statement that appears deeply ironic in retrospect, Kennedy informed his Senate colleagues that only a promise of independence could placate the Vietnamese insurgents and suggested that France secure an anti-Communist pledge from Vietnam in exchange for a preemptive grant of independence.42

Several years later, inciting a firestorm of controversy, Kennedy again publicly criticized French obduracy with regard to its colonies. In a much-publicized 1957 speech, he called upon U.S. policymakers to realize that nationalism was an “irresistible” force and to cease support for France’s war with Algeria. Invoking the 1954 French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, Kennedy asked: “Did that tragic episode not teach us whether France likes it or not, admits it or not, has our support or not, that their overseas territories are sooner or later, one by one, going to break free and look with suspicion on the Western nations who impeded their steps to independence?” Kennedy’s speech precipitated a flood of criticism. His remarks yielded more negative mail in his Senate office than any other stance during his congressional career. Yet it earned Kennedy a grudging respect from leading liberals who had been skeptical of the junior Massachusetts senator; among those voicing support for Kennedy’s Algeria speech were United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther, Michigan governor G. Mennen Williams, Minnesota senator Hubert Humphrey, New Republic editor Gilbert Harrison, and theologian Reinhold Niebuhr.43 Whereas these liberals were more

42 Kennedy quoted in Massie, Loosing the Bonds, 101; Mahoney, Ordeal in Africa, 16.

likely to express idealistic support for national self-determination, the self-styled pragmatist Kennedy simply argued that the fall of colonialism was inevitable and that the United States had better concede that fact in time to salvage some influence in the regions of Africa and Southeast Asia.

Equally alluring to the cool-headed strategist within Kennedy were the ways that the topic of U.S. – Africa policy seemed to point a smooth path through the thorny realities of Democratic Party politics. The Kennedy team desperately needed some creative maneuvers to keep the tenuous New Deal coalition intact through the 1960 election; as civil rights boycotts, marches, and lawsuits achieved important victories in the late 1950s, the absurdity of African Americans and southern white supremacists sharing a single party label grew even more pronounced. How was the Democratic nominee to court black voters in major urban centers without provoking another Dixiecrat-style southern defection? Embracing Africa as a campaign issue appeared to present a partial solution. With Africa reborn as an issue for African American leaders, Kennedy might present himself as racially progressive and entice black votes without wholesale support for a domestic package of civil rights legislation. Yet events on the faraway African continent were unlikely to agitate the congressional stalwarts of white supremacy or tap into the deep-rooted racial fears of white Americans—or so Kennedy calculated.44

Whether out of genuine ideological commitment or pure political shrewdness, in the months between the Democratic convention and the November 1960 election, references to Africa surfaced nearly five hundred times

in Kennedy's stump speeches. Kennedy delivered thirteen campaign-trail addresses devoted exclusively to the topic of Africa (Harris Wofford, the Kennedy aide with the unenviable task of convincing dubious liberals and black leaders that the young senator was indeed a friend to the civil rights movement, authored most of the Africa speeches.) Simply put, Kennedy's message was that the world was changing and that U.S. policy had to change with it. Kennedy spoke favorably about the "revolution" sweeping Africa and he voiced sympathy for the desires of African people to improve their living conditions. He endorsed the creation of an African Educational Development Fund, scholarships for African leaders to study in the United States, and vast increases in American aid to African nations. While ensuring that no one in the media had forgotten his own early commitment to independence for Algeria, Kennedy also relentlessly hammered Nixon for serving in a Republican administration that remained conspicuously neutral in the French struggle against Algerian nationalism.

Although the strategy later would founder, during the 1960 campaign Kennedy successfully portrayed U.S. support for decolonization as a Cold War imperative. "We have lost ground in Africa," proclaimed the Democratic nominee with characteristic aplomb, "because we have neglected and ignored the needs and aspirations of the African people." In one of the televised Kennedy-Nixon debates, the Democratic nominee said: "I have seen us ignore Africa. When Guinea became independent, the Soviet ambassador showed up that very day.... The American ambassador did not show up for nearly eight months." With proper sympathy for African desires for self-determination, Kennedy assured voters, the United States could protect its vital interests on the
continent. Part of his broader attempt to court the white liberal establishment Kennedy had once held at arm’s length, on matters of U.S.–Africa policy Kennedy edged closer to the arguments of well-known liberals such as Chester Bowles; indeed, shortly after launching his presidential bid, Kennedy named Bowles his chief foreign policy advisor.

The U.S. might also preserve influence in Africa, Kennedy’s elite cadre of advisors suggested, by stimulating development in Africa’s emerging economies and governments. President Kennedy surrounded himself with prominent scholars and intellectuals convinced that they could harness academic expertise to real-world applications, and these advisors pledged to build modern, economically vital African states from the ashes of colonialism. The new White House may have equivocated on domestic civil rights legislation, yet it moved swiftly to address revolutionary unrest abroad with economic development programs based on an assumption that the American democratic experience was universal. Liberal intellectuals insisted that with financial support and close oversight from the United States, the decolonized world might progress along precisely the same path that had brought America to the pinnacle of economic and political modernity.

Liberal modernization plans rested uneasily alongside the goals and desires of most African heads of state—nationalist leaders wanted unmitigated self-determination, not a blueprint for modernity engineered and carefully monitored by the United States—but at the outset of Kennedy’s term, his administration remained optimistic that American aid programs could shepherd

newly independent states in a direction favorable to U.S. Cold War interests. To sum up with a quip from historian Odd Arne Westad: whereas earlier U.S. officials "had thought of Africans as children," John Kennedy's White House "began seeing Africans as adolescents, in the process of growing up."46

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It took little time for Kennedy to realize that the reality of American policy in Africa was far more nettlesome than glib campaign-trail promises had indicated. The problem of African colonialism immediately began to strain Kennedy's rather Janus-faced strategy, where the Democratic nominee at once emphasized his support for African independence from European nations and tried to present himself as an even more ardent anti-Communist than Nixon, who had cut his political teeth in the heyday of HUAC and red-hunts.47 Even before he assumed the presidency, Kennedy's simultaneous calls for a more aggressive anti-Communist posture and a more sympathetic relationship with the "emerging world" were threatening to collapse under the weight of their inherent tensions. Then, in January 1960, as the final arrangements for the inauguration took shape, Nikita Khrushchev delivered an address before a Moscow audience that left the young Kennedy team reeling. The Soviet premier openly declared Communist support for the "just" wars of "national liberation"


underway in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean and he vowed
Communist support for “sacred” uprisings of colonized peoples. Suddenly, the
liberal suggestion that anti-colonialism and anti-Communism could work in
harmony appeared far less tenable than it had on the pages of Bowles’s book or
in Kennedy’s lofty speeches.

Kennedy nevertheless hoped the sheer force of his charisma might help
him straddle the widening gulf between the demands of the Cold War and the
demands of anticolonial nationalists in Africa. In contrast to Eisenhower,
Kennedy entertained more than two dozens African heads of state in the White
House, practicing a brand of personal diplomacy that earned him accolades
though the meetings produced little material change. The president also
frequently dispatched his liberal, idealistic Undersecretary of State for African
Affairs, G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams, to Africa for long tours. While these
widely publicized visits were largely symbolic—Kennedy hoped Williams’s
presence would persuade African leaders that the new administration had the
continent high on its list of priorities—they did mark a departure from the
Eisenhower-era tendency to deal with Africa only through European emissaries.
Before his inauguration Kennedy also established a “Task Force on Africa,”
which indicated that his policy team would accept neutralism in a way that
Dulles and Eisenhower never had.\(^{49}\)

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\(^{48}\) Latham, *Modernization as Ideology*, 3.

\(^{49}\) Noer, “New Frontiers and Old Priorities in Africa,” 260; Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*, 124; Thomas
2006), 227. On Kennedy’s personal meetings with African diplomats, see also Schlesinger, *A
Thousand Days*, 558–559. Schlesinger commends how Kennedy’s “instinctive charm” put African
visitors “instantly at ease.”
Yet even Kennedy’s considerable personal charms could not paper over the dilemmas created as decolonization unfolded in a Cold War world. Within the president’s own State Department, rifts emerged between the liberal “Africanists”—Bowles, Williams, and Williams’s deputy Wayne Fredericks, plucked from the Ford Foundation—and the traditionally minded “Europeanists” who typically disdained the suggestion that America alter its policy to suit the demands of African nationalists. Williams proved particularly polarizing within the ranks of the foreign policy establishment; Arthur Schlesinger Jr., for one, plainly considered the idealistic, “old-fashioned New Deal liberal” Soapy Williams ill-suited to the shrewd, realistic, hard-headed style Kennedy wanted to fashion for his administration. The liberal icon Adlai Stevenson, JFK’s ambassador to the United Nations, likewise became the target of criticism. Quite early on Williams was shunted to the margins of the Kennedy administration and Bowles was quietly dismissed as the more hawkish Cold Warriors moved toward the center of the White House decision-making hub, facts utterly lost on Kennedy’s conservative critics.\(^{50}\)

Perhaps the greatest test of Kennedy’s commitment to African desires for self-determination occurred in the Congo, the first true indicator that an African front had opened in the Cold War. The events collectively known as the “Congo crisis” stretched over a period of more than three years, beginning in July 1960 during the closing months of the Eisenhower presidency and escalating after Kennedy assumed office.\(^{51}\) Even as nationalists in other parts of Africa were

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\(^{51}\) The narrative of the Congo crisis that follows is drawn from several sources, including: David N. Gibbs, *The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: Mines, Money and U.S. Policy in the*
winning concessions, Belgium appeared disinclined to end or even loosen colonial control of the Congo. In 1954, when a Belgian scholar proposed Congolese independence within a period of thirty years, white settlers and colonial officials summarily rejected the plan as radical—evidence of Belgium’s state of mind just a few years prior to independence. Belgian intransigence faltered after January 1959, however, following a series of riots in Leopoldville, the capital of the vast Central African territory.

Even as anti-Belgian rioting occurred, the Congolese nationalist movement was relatively young and nebulous, although it had been emboldened by the recent independence ceremonies elsewhere in Africa. In the mid-1950s Joseph Kasavubu, later to become the Congo’s first president, founded and led the first pro-independence political party. Concentrated near Leopoldville, Kasabuvu’s ABAKO nationalist party consisted largely of members the Bakongo ethnic group. A severe economic downturn and declining living standards in the late 1950s aided the nationalist cause, as discontent mounted in rural and urban areas, and by the close of 1958 demonstrations and protest crowds had become a common sight in Congolese cities. By the fall of 1959 the organization headed by Patrice Lumumba eclipsed ABAKO as the dominant voice of Congolese nationalism; unlike the regionally and ethnically focused ABAKO,

Lumumba’s Mouvement National Congolais (MNC) took a more centralized, broad-based approach. In January 1959, after Belgian police forces stepped up efforts to root out ABAKO party activity, the generalized unrest erupted into a series of riots in Leopoldville that left several Belgians injured. Officials in Brussels responded aggressively; the ensuing crackdown left at least forty-nine Congolese dead and hundreds of nationalist activists imprisoned.

At the same time, the jarred Belgians moved to implement limited reforms in their colonial state. In the fall of 1959 Brussels officials entertained the possibility of Congolese independence for the first time, although they envisaged a gradual power changeover, a process to unfold over a minimum of five years. But buoyed Congolese nationalists sought immediate self-rule, and their forceful demands proved Belgium’s transition plans overly sanguine. Resisting any compromises that would preserve Belgian influence, nationalist parties engineered a boycott of the December 1959 elections Belgium had proposed. With this concession rejected and riots persisting, the tiny ruling nation that only five years earlier had regarded a thirty-year independence plan as hasty opted to withdraw. In late 1959 Belgium began what historian Piero Gleijeses called a “headlong retreat” from its once iron-clad rule over the Congo and abruptly announced its intent to relinquish control of its colony. In the Congolese delegates were invited to a conference in Brussels in February 1960; they emerged from the negotiations with a speedy timetable for decolonization, a new constitution, and elections slated for May 1960. Belgium formally transferred
power on the last day of June in 1960 and the Congo received independence for which, Gleijeses notes, it was “utterly unprepared.”

Evidence quickly emerged, however, to indicate that Belgium had no intention of severing all stakes in its erstwhile colony. The Congolese army remained in the hands of white Belgian officers, and Belgian companies retained control of the lucrative mining operations. Less than a week after Independence Day, Congolese soldiers mutinied against the Belgian commanders and sparked a rash of attacks against white Belgians. New Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba hoped to contain the uprising by ousting the Belgian officers and promoting Congolese soldiers into leadership positions. Fearing an escalation of violence, on July 10 Belgium ordered troops back into the Congo to protect European life and property. The presence of Belgian paratroopers, who, as a U.S. ambassador reported, had become “completely irrational” in their crackdown against the Congolese, took the situation from bad to worse. Belgium’s forceful response left hundreds of Congolese dead, and the African nationalists began to rightfully sense that Belgium’s grant of independence might have been a hollow promise. Patrice Lumumba demanded that Belgium withdraw its forces and severed diplomatic relations when the European power refused to do so.

The post-independence crises worsened when Moise Tshombe announced on July 11 that the province of Katanga, the center of western mining operations in the Congo, would secede from control of the Central Congolese government (described more fully in chapter 6). Even before he declared Katanga’s separatist

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52 Gleijeses, Conflicting Missions, 5, 6.

53 “completely irrational,” quoted in Gibbs, Political Economy of Third World Intervention, 82.
intentions, the provincial leader Tshombe himself was the source of tensions in the region. Tshombe drew his political support from Katanga’s Lunda people but his leadership was strongly opposed by the Baluba group. These two ethnic groups had clashed for years over land claims in Katanga; with the most valuable lands reserved for whites, disputes over the distribution of the remaining areas aggravated inter-ethnic rivalries. In 1959 an official in Katanga noted the tense state of affairs and observed that “very little was needed to ignite the smoldering tinder” in the southeastern province of the Congo. Tshombe’s secessionist scheme undoubtedly constituted such a spark.\(^{54}\)

Indeed, the U.S. and the United Nations quickly elevated the post-independence turmoil and the Katanga secession episode to the status of international crisis. From the beginning, the battle lines were clearly drawn. In the U.N. General Assembly, many of the unaligned, formerly colonized nations of Africa and Asia demanded Belgium’s unqualified expulsion from the Congo, while the United States and European powers hedged about the wisdom of unrestricted independence.

Although the Congo decolonization quickly emerged as an international problem, neither the United States nor the United Nations immediately settled upon a course of action, especially with regard to the prickly Katanga question. Determined to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the young Congolese republic, in early July 1960 Prime Minister Lumumba looked first to the United States to apply pressure on Belgium to remove its military forces. The Eisenhower administration declined. Overwhelmingly, members of the

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 72.
Eisenhower administration demonstrated a profound distrust of Lumumba's leadership, and the president refused to endanger U.S. relations with its NATO ally Belgium in order to win the approval of a nationalist leader he considered "radical" and "unstable." After receiving a cool response from the Eisenhower administration, Lumumba and Joseph Kasavubu sought the assistance of the United Nations. There Congolese nationalists found a more supportive ally. On July 14, 1960 the Security Council passed a resolution endorsing a complete withdrawal of Belgian troops. Shortly thereafter, UN troops arrived to enforce this resolution and secure a semblance of order in the new African republic. At this point, however, the U.N. assiduously avoided interference with the Katanga secession. United Nations officials—heavily influenced by the position of the U.S. delegation—claimed the Katanga affair was an internal dispute; to intervene would therefore violate the international body's charter, which had pledged to refrain from involvement with any nation's domestic affairs. Although the Katanga secession constituted a major source of the chaos that U.N. forces had been deployed to contain, from July 1960 until February 1961 the United Nations troops in the Congo took no steps to prevent Katanga from claiming its independence.

After both Eisenhower and the U.N. demurred to intervene in Katanga, Lumumba turned to the Soviets—much to the alarm and dismay of U.S. officials. On July 13, 1960, the Soviets had made their affinities in the Congo crisis known; that day, Moscow radio declared that the Belgians were "grossly violating, not only the territorial integrity, but also the political independence of the Congo." By late August, Soviet planes and other equipment had arrived in Leopoldville; Lumumba immediately attempted to use the military aid to expel Belgian
mercenary forces from the South Kasai province. Relative to the size of the U.N. forces, the Soviet presence was negligible, certainly insufficient to seize direct control of the republic. Such realities, however, did little to mollify U.S. officials. Although Lumumba must have known cooperation with the Soviets would antagonize the Americans, his determination to prevent the fracturing of the Congolese republic apparently took precedence—a calculation that may have ultimately led to his death. By the fall of 1960, the CIA was actively involved in attempts to destabilize or depose Lumumba, and on January 17, 1961, Lumumba was assassinated, likely on orders from or with the cooperation of the CIA.

Shortly after taking office, Kennedy inherited the Congo crisis from his predecessor. His administration’s opportunity to revise the Eisenhower-era Africa policies came as the United Nations began to reverse its earlier stance toward the Katanga rebellion. On February 1, 1961, a task force of U.S. foreign policy officials issued a report that recommended U.N. force be applied to subdue the Katanga secession; Kennedy endorsed the committee’s suggestion. Shortly thereafter, the Security Council—over objections from France and Britain—approved a resolution that endorsed “measures ... for the immediate withdrawal and evacuation from the Congo of all Belgian and other foreign military and paramilitary personnel...not under the UN command.” The resolution also pledged to use “force, if necessary” to ensure the complete evacuation of Belgian forces and their mercenary armies. But by August 1961, little progress toward that end had been made. The U.N. then dispatched troops to end the secession and forcibly remove the mercenaries, but this military campaign stalled. Then, in September 1961, Secretary General Dag Hammarskjöld died in a suspicious plane crash on his way to meet with
Tshombe. Hammarskjöld was succeeded by U Thant of Burma, the first UN leader from a formerly colonized nation—a symbolic choice and one that further testified to the growing influence of the African-Asian bloc within the United Nations. Thant displayed far greater enthusiasm for a UN mission to reunite the Congo than his predecessor. 55

Although Kennedy had some personal reservations about the use of UN force in Katanga, officials in the Africa Bureau of his State Department began to more vociferously claim that Tshombe’s secession was dangerously destabilizing the Congo and inviting the possibility of Soviet intervention. Stevenson and Williams particularly endorsed a strengthened UN-led effort to end the separatist movement. Kennedy assented and authorized the use of U.S. aircraft to transport UN troops into Katanga in the fall of 1961. U.S. dollars, moreover, supplied the lion’s share of the United Nations’ funding and, by extension, the funds for the Katanga invasion. By December 15, 1961, the UN had ramped up its campaign to expel Belgian and mercenary forces from the Congo. Tshombe showed some willingness to negotiate an end to the secession, but a settlement was never reached and the secession dragged on until January of 1963.

While crisis raged in the Congo, African nationalism clashed with U.S. Cold War interests elsewhere. In 1961 United States ally and intransigent foe of decolonization Portugal came under fire on the floor of the United Nations, setting up a dilemma for the young Kennedy White House. On January 21, 1961, one day after being sworn in as President of the United States, Kennedy learned that a Portuguese ship, the Santa Maria, had been hijacked near Venezuela.

Henrique Galavao, a Portuguese official who had served as colonial inspector in Angola, and Humberto Delgado, a Portuguese army general, orchestrated the event with hopes of exposing the horrors of Portugal's regimes in southwest Africa and emboldening the political enemies of Portugal's dictator Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. February 1961 then witnessed the outbreak of a violent anticolonial insurgency in Luanda, the capital of Portuguese Angola. Early that month armed Angolans descended upon a Luanda prison with the intent of liberating a group of incarcerated nationalist leaders. Following the recent actions of their South African counterparts, white Portuguese police forces opened fire and killed thirty-three black Angolans. The deaths aggravated an already volatile situation. By mid-March, Angolans determined to oust their Portuguese rulers had launched a series of attacks on white settlers and on police and military installations. Shortly thereafter Salazar authorized what historian Thomas Borstelmann described as an “unrelentingly savage” Portuguese military crackdown on the guerilla uprising, leaving a gruesome trail of Angolan rebel and civilian deaths and engulfing the African colony in a vicious armed struggle.

Outraged at the atrocities, a bloc of recently decolonized African and Asian nations asked the United Nations Security Council to pass a resolution favoring immediate, absolute independence for all of Portugal's colonies. A divided Kennedy administration decided the United States would vote in favor of the resolution—the first time America had openly sided with African nationalists over a NATO ally. Joining the U.S. in the vote against Portugal was

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the Soviet Union. Although the motion failed, U.S. relations with Portugal sustained real damage. The Kennedy administration applied other pressures to induce Portugal to surrender its African colonies. After voting in favor of additional U.N. resolutions calling for Angolan independence in April and June 1961, the U.S. slashed military aid to Lisbon, moved to end private arms sales, and opened the lines of communication with Angolan nationalist leader Holden Roberto.\footnote{Noer, \textit{Cold War and Black Liberation}, 72–73.}

Portugal, however, held a carrot that ultimately proved more resilient than the American stick: the Azores Islands, site of a leased U.S. air base. American policymakers considered the Azores installations indispensable, especially after the erection of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. Facing a 1962 round of negotiations to secure U.S. access to the Portuguese-controlled Azores base, Kennedy decided that his hands were tied and he backed down from support for Angolan independence.\footnote{Noer, \textit{Cold War and Black Liberation}, 74–75.} The president ducked the hard confrontation in Portuguese Africa, but American conservatives would not easily forget the 1961 UN votes.

Another Portuguese-controlled colony grabbed headlines only a few months after the Angolan rebellion erupted, when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dispatched troops into Goa, a small coastal territory in western India. Portugal had claimed sovereignty over tiny Goa for centuries until December 1961, when Indian forces swiftly overtook control. That Nehru, the leading U.N. champion of non-aggression, had used military power to retake territory galled
the Kennedy administration, and the Goa invasion set off another vexing foreign policy problem for Cold War liberals. The Kennedy administration condemned the use of force, although the president tried to assure Nehru that Americans supported an end to Portugal’s presence in India. But Kennedy decided against any punitive actions against India.\footnote{Schlesinger, \textit{A Thousand Days}, 526–31.}

The perennial quandary for Cold War policymakers, South Africa, also periodically tested the resolve of Kennedy’s commitment self-determination for black Africans. Despite the increasingly reactionary character of South Africa’s Nationalist ruling party, in the 1950s the United States forged closer economic and military ties with South Africa. Late in his presidency Eisenhower had initiated a plan to build a U.S. missile tracking station near Pretoria, and this agreement severely complicated the Kennedy administration’s tentative attempts to pressure South Africa into racial reforms. In May 1961 South Africa formally withdrew from the British Commonwealth and formed the Union of South Africa.

Representatives from recently decolonized African and Asian nations, sometimes referred to as the “Bandung nations,” tried repeatedly to induce the United Nations to verbally condemn apartheid and induce sanctions if white supremacy persisted in South Africa. Adlai Stevenson, the American ambassador to the United Nations, found himself juggling priorities. As historian Robert K. Massie has explained, the U.S. under Kennedy crafted a rather toothless policy, where Stevenson voted in favor of broadly worded declarations supporting racial equality, but Kennedy drew the line when it came to actual
sanctions or economic punishments. The Kennedy administration lent nominal support for anti-apartheid measures, in other words, without applying any real pressure on the staunchly anti-Communist Union of South Africa. In doing so, however, Kennedy had to fend off increasingly organized pressure from white liberals and African Americans in the U.S. electorate.60

Even in France’s war with Algeria, where a young Senator Kennedy once had painted so confidently with strokes of black and white, the president later saw shades of gray. Though he insisted that American support “continues to be with the nations throwing off the bonds of colonialism,” Kennedy worried that a negotiated settlement or a precipitous French troop pullout would jeopardize the political survival of General Charles de Gaulle, and he concluded, “the cause of anticolonialism will not be helped by the overthrow of De Gaulle.”61

As Cold War tensions in other parts of the world claimed Kennedy’s focus, Africa faded easily from the president’s view. Kennedy inherited from his predecessor a newly independent Congo on the brink of civil war, but also a scheme to depose a revolutionary regime in Cuba, a pending crisis in Berlin, and an American-supported government in South Vietnam plagued with corruption and facing vast popular unrest.62 Pulled in competing directions, stung by the humiliating debacle at the Bay of Pigs, and anxious that the 1961 Berlin Wall construction signaled a phase of renewed Soviet belligerence, Kennedy shifted his calculus with regard to African nationalism over the course of his short time

60 Westad, The Global Cold War, 133.


in office. In the end, he forged a “relationship with the non-white world” that did not look altogether different from the decisions that Eisenhower and Truman had made before him.

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The resolutions Kennedy and the centrist liberal establishment settled upon ultimately dissatisfied Americans on both ends of the political spectrum. Although the Kennedy administration did inch away from Eisenhower and Dulles’s skepticism about decolonization and scorn for neutralism, devoted liberals, leftists, and many African American leaders rightfully tagged Kennedy’s Africa policies as heavier on style than substance, more reliant on personal charm than on genuine commitment to change—not unlike the young president’s stance on domestic civil rights. Yet none were more disquieted by the changes of 1960–1961 than self-identified political conservatives. Even the symbolic shifts in U.S. foreign relations under Kennedy angered white conservatives, many of whom believed that America’s role in the world had veered as dangerously off course as the direction of America’s domestic policy. Crafting a “reasonable relationship” with the decolonized “non-white world,” it turned out, bred the same sort of malcontent that liberal flirtations with civil rights legislation had.

That Kennedy the Cold Warrior chose the Azores over Angola, subdued his calls for immediate Algerian independence, and kept South Africa an intimate member of America’s free-world alliance mattered little to his unrelenting conservative critics. The emerging American Right already had branded Kennedy and the liberals as supporters of African nationalism, willing to sell out America’s closest allies in Western Europe. In other words, a
substantial gap separated Kennedy’s *actual* commitment to self-determination and the conservative *portrayal* of his policies in Africa. This divide between reality and perception mirrored the Right’s tendency to paint Kennedy as an unswerving supporter of federal civil rights legislation, in spite of Kennedy’s less-than-sterling commitment to racial justice and his often-strained relationship with key African American leaders. The chapters that follow recapture the conservative *interpretation* of Kennedy’s actions on the African continent, which, rather ironically, frequently gave Kennedy far more credit for promoting decolonization in Africa and racial reforms than he rightfully deserved. For the nascent conservative movement, determined to advance their fortunes in the arena of domestic politics, what Kennedy *said* could matter as much as what he *did*.

Under Kennedy, white conservatives sensed the ground shifting beneath them. With liberals at the helm, the timbre of public foreign policy discussions had changed, even if most on-the-ground policy realities sounded the same note; and to conservatives, it seemed that groups like the liberal American Committee on Africa were steering public dialogues about European regimes in Africa, persuading more and more Americans that colonialism was an outmoded, damaging, discriminatory system that deserved no direct or indirect sanction from the United States. By the middle of 1961, after the June 1960 Sharpeville massacre triggered a fresh round of anti-apartheid activism, after Adlai Stevenson had cast a vote against Portugal in the United Nations, and after both Kennedy and Nixon had called for a re-imagined U.S. policy in Africa in the 1960 presidential campaign, the dialogue on African colonialism threatened to spin away from conservatives. Conservatives were determined to yank it back.
RICE UNIVERSITY

Race, Conservative Politics, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Postcolonial World, 1948–1968

by

Ann Katherine Ziker

VOLUME II

Together the Sharpeville massacre in South Africa, the Angolan uprising against Portuguese rule, France’s ongoing war with Algeria, and the spiraling violence in the postcolonial Congo kept the African continent squarely in the spotlight of American politics in 1960 and 1961. By showcasing U.S.–Africa policy in the 1960 presidential campaign, President Kennedy and the national Democratic leadership had staked out the liberal party line on colonialism and minority rule in Africa. Essentially a bolder restatement of the principles that had animated Cold War liberalism since the Truman administration, liberal Democrats claimed that the United States must display sympathy for the right of national self-determination and that open U.S. support for colonial regimes harmed American prestige in the world. With U.S. encouragement for speedy decolonization and economic development in the “emerging world,” liberals promised, Communism would lose its appeal to independent African nations and the continent would join the free-world alliance.

In each of the places on the African continent where colonized societies fought to end the era of European domination, the Kennedy administration faced real diplomatic challenges—real assessments to be made about the potential for Soviet influence in Africa, real choices between alienating a NATO ally or betraying America’s putative commitment to anticolonial ideals. Yet as U.S. officials tangled over the proper response to the crises in Angola, Algeria, and the Congo, a different sort of tug-of-war was taking place.
Away from the negotiating tables and beyond the halls of the State Department, political organizations across the United States advanced vying interpretations of nationalist wars for independence and fought wars of words over the correct U.S. policy response. How were American observers to think about the centuries-long history of colonialism on the African continent? Should Americans see reflections of their own anticolonial revolution in the armed struggles of Algeria and the Congo, or should they interpret the violence as irrational, savage, or communist-inspired? Were the newly independent African nations entitled to an equal voice in the international community? Or would decolonized African states first need to “prove” their readiness? And did the continuing presence of European rulers on the African continent help or harm U.S. national security, aid or hinder the American objective of containing Communism? Each of these questions was up for grabs during the peak years of African decolonization, roughly 1957–1962, and American conservatives were determined to counter the answers that liberals had constructed. Conservatives turned events in the Congo, Algeria, Angola, and South Africa into a battleground of representations.

Seen through the eyes of a hardheaded diplomat, the verbal sparring matches being waged on the pages of political magazines and in local meeting-places likely appeared trivial, irrelevant to the actual practice of foreign policymaking. But for conservative and liberal groups alike, the stakes were high. Some honestly hoped their lobbying activity might influence the course of U.S. policy in the world, perhaps by cajoling a vote from a key senator or by convincing the president that his actions abroad carried consequences at the polls. Mostly, though, the stakes were domestic.
Leaders of the budding conservative movement believed that the violent insurgencies in the Congo, Algeria, and Angola offered a ripe opportunity for them to expose gaping holes in the logic of Cold War liberal internationalism. Hoping to regain control over the public dialogues about African nationalism, conservatives sought to convince the American public that anticolonial rebellions were not valiant liberation struggles, that colonialism was not a historic wrong that deserved redress, that the black peoples of Africa were not ready for—or perhaps capable of—self-rule, and most of all, that the downfall of European rule on the African continent was not in the best interest of the United States of America. If they could win American public opinion on these questions, conservatives could call into question the fundamental assumptions of Cold War liberal internationalism—a set of assumptions that the moderate Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party largely shared—and advance the electoral fortunes of the political Right.

The purpose of this chapter is not to adjudicate the competing representations of anticolonial revolutions. It does not attempt to prove or disprove the connection between Communism and anticolonial nationalism, nor does it aim to evaluate the decisions and policies of U.S. presidential administrations. Instead, the chapter’s purpose is to illustrate how politically active American citizens responded to the global surge of anticolonial revolutions—why regular Americans cared about these international developments, how they interpreted anticolonial movements, and how their views on domestic political issues impacted their perceptions of the sweeping changes in the postwar world. Just as citizen organizations formed to resist the grassroots African American freedom struggle, groups of conservative
Americans mobilized in opposition to liberal foreign policy choices. The ultimate aim of these conservative organizations was to elect candidates who shared their views and supported their principles, not to actually steer the course of international affairs, but conservatives sensed the need to add their voice to discussions about U.S. foreign policy in a decolonizing world.

The chapter's second purpose is to reveal how white conservatives' perceptions about race, culture, and civilization shaped their views on the proper U.S. response to decolonization. It does so with a twofold argument. First, the chapter suggests how southern segregationists and their sympathizers in other parts of the United States easily detected parallels between their fight to suppress African American protest and the fight of white colonials to maintain their control over African land and labor. They were enraged, therefore, to find Kennedy-era liberals contending that the U.S. owed support to the anticolonial revolutions in Africa. Second, by examining how so-called respectable conservatives—the label that some scholars use to describe intellectual conservative leaders such as those affiliated with the National Review—responded to African decolonization, this chapter (and subsequent chapters) calls into question the "color-blindness" of national conservative organizing. If historians focus only on the domestic political issue of civil rights legislation, they do find that non-southern conservatives distanced themselves from racial slurs or the ugly tactics of southern massive resistance. But when we incorporate the topic of U.S. foreign policy, especially in places like the Congo, then we can see how ideas about race and civilization were very much in play in the national conservative revolt. The African crises of 1960–1963 thereby provided a way for
once-disparate strands of conservatism to smooth over some of their differences and focus the energy of the movement.

I. CONTESTING ANTI-COLONIALISM AS ANTI-COMMUNISM: THE CASES OF PORTUGUESE ANGOLA AND FRENCH ALGERIA

"The American people simply do not have the facts. Over the years, we have been subjected to a barrage of wishful thinking and misinterpretation which had emanated from many of our opinion molders, government officials, organizations and periodicals."
"The American people are woefully ignorant and misinformed on Africa. Many of the existing organizations concerned with Africa are either sympathetic to Communist plans or fall into the same fallacies which...lost half of Asia to the Free World."
-- Marvin Liebman, describing the American Afro-Asian Educational Exchange

Founder and director of a profitable New York City public relations firm, Marvin Liebman understood the business of image. The seemingly ubiquitous Liebman—close friend to William F. Buckley, founding member of the American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters, a driving force behind the infamous “China Lobby” and the Committee of One Million, a pioneer of direct-mail tactics, and the man who dozens of conservative organizations hand-picked to handle their publicity campaigns—sensed instinctively that conservatives had to do a more effective job of communicating with the public and promoting their interpretation of the sweeping international changes of the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Other voices on the political right joined Liebman in complaining that liberals created a distorted image of the wars for independence on the African continent. Conservatives grumbled that left-leaning journalists and politicians

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spun anticolonial movements into moralistic tales, where Algerian, Congolese, or Angolan insurgents appeared as heroes and sturdy anti-Communist U.S. allies were cast as villains. The more radically inclined went so far as to claim that a Communist-directed propaganda machine was cranking away, trying to besmirch the good name of western European nations, lure Americans into a mistaken belief that nationalist revolutions were noble, and destroy the good relations among NATO nations.²

A world away from the well-connected and well-heeled Liebman, regular American men and women discussed the need to mount a counter-attack against liberal representations of anticolonial revolutions. Take, for example, Mrs. M. R. Mills of Richmond, Virginia. Mills fit the standard sketch of a politically active conservative woman in the postwar United States. Like the women that historians Michelle Nickerson and Lisa McGirr have profiled, Mills described herself as part of a movement of patriots gravely concerned about “so many issues involving the Republic we are so rapidly losing.” She was a member of the anticommunist John Birch Society and regularly volunteered for the “American Opinion Library” in Richmond, a bookstore that stocked Birch Society publications and other conservative materials. Of the bookstore Mills wrote: “It is our genuine hope that this book store will not only be a tribute to conservatism, but a service to the people of Richmond and a step ... toward preserving the greatly jeopardized traditions upon which this country was

² For a small sample of the widely expressed conservative opinion that the American media provided only selective, biased coverage of the episodes of anticolonial violence, see Liebman memorandum, Russell Papers, UGA; American Committee for France and Algeria, “Concentration Camp for Frenchmen,” France Today 1 (September 1961); and Ernest van den Haag, The War in Katanga: Report of a Mission, The United Nations in the Congo (New York: American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters, 1962), 2.
founded.” Mills rarely indulged in openly racist language, although evidence suggests that her sympathies rested with the forces of massive resistance; she praised, for instance, James J. Kilpatrick’s treatise on the South’s right to resist the Brown decision, The Sovereign States. But if Mills was a devoted anticommmunist and segregationist, her activism far transcended the typical image historians have presented of anti-civil rights forces and of grassroots southern conservatives.\(^3\)

Reading Birch Society booklets had convinced Mrs. Mills that most Americans received grossly misrepresented information about the state of world politics and U.S. foreign policy, and she was determined to do her part to combat what she perceived as a naïve and slanted liberal narrative. With regard to the French war in Algeria, Mills found it galling that the “American press” depicted French president Charles de Gaulle as a “hero” for his decision to negotiate with the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) leaders in 1961 and 1962. Meanwhile, Mills noted, members of the “anti-communist pro-France OAS [Organisation armée secrète] group” were accused of being “traitors” on the pages of America’s newspapers. “[T]ime after time we read that such devious characters as Castro, Mao, Tito, Nehru, and De Gaulle are heros (sic)....It is particularly frightening because we do not always get the facts in the news.” France’s decision to

negotiate an end to its eight-year war against Algerian nationalists was but one of the issues aggrieving Mills. She was incensed that President Kennedy had entered talks about nuclear disarmament, and she could barely contain her fury over U.S. and U.N. actions in the Congo. (Mills reported with satisfaction that she and her conservative collaborators had “so beseiged” the U.S. State Department with scathing letters about the Katanga invasion that she had begun to receive “mimeographed” replies.) The United States, Mills concluded, had been deluded by ideas like “the brotherhood of nations” and “anti-colonialism” and, as a consequence, was pursuing a course of foreign policy sure to spell doom for the American nation and American democracy.\(^4\)

Mills and her fellow members of the John Birch Society, like Liebman and his circle of conservative powerbrokers, were determined to reclaim control of American dialogue on colonialism and convince the American public that nationalists were \textit{not} heroes but Communist-inspired revolutionaries. Events in Angola, Algeria, and especially the Congo fueled conservative anger about the liberals’ approach to waging the Cold War. Liberals like Chester Bowles or Adlai Stevenson may have seen decolonization as a promising opportunity to cement U.S. influence on the African continent, but conservatives such as Mrs. Mills

\(^4\) Quotations on Algeria, see Mills to Kilpatrick, May 28, 1962; on the Congo and disarmament, see Mills to Kilpatrick, May 8, 1962; both in folder “1962, Personal Correspondence L (2 of 2),” box 4, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA. Spelling of “beseiged” original. See a similar letter from another conservative Richmonder, Crawley F. Joyner II, to Kilpatrick, May 18, 1962, folder “1961-1962, Personal Correspondence I-J,” box 4, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA. Joyner, also active with Richmond’s Birch Society American Opinion Library, complained that the “worldwide news organs” were smearing the OAS as “criminals and terrorists.” It is entirely likely that Mills and Joyner knew one another and discussed the issue of Algeria together, given the similarities of their letters to Kilpatrick and the fact that both came in mid-May 1961.
strenuously argued that the best anti-Communist strategy was a pro-colonial strategy.

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U.S. policies in Cuba and in Vietnam made it painfully obvious that liberal policymakers were prone to mistaking revolutionary nationalism for revolutionary Communism, but it was Cold War conservatives who most forcefully denied that anticolonial nationalism was an authentic or legitimate force. Convinced that Western civilization reflected innately superior values and that the West’s record of overseas interventions was near impeccable, white conservatives had a difficult time imagining genuine discontent with European or American rule. To concede that people in colonized nations had legitimate grievances would puncture the conservative credo that Western rule brought material and spiritual progress to it subjects. Thus, the postwar American Right needed to believe that nationalism derived from false doctrines implanted by enemies of the West.

White southerners proved particularly receptive to such logic. Conditioned to think of blacks as inherently servile and intellectually disadvantaged, white segregationists found it virtually impossible to digest the possibility that African nationalists might challenge the great powers of Europe unaided. This idea cohabited easily with the conservative white South’s response to black civil rights activism. Baffled, enraged, and sometimes hurt to discover that “their negroes” had joined the ranks of the protestors, southern whites often reached for the simplest explanation for why the South’s blacks had
begun to march, boycott, and demand change—they had fallen prey to
Communist agitators.\(^5\)

Segregationists applied an identical logic to explain why native African
leaders suddenly demanded independence from their colonial overlords.
Addressing a gathering of the North Carolina Defenders, an anti-civil rights
organization, shortly before the Year of Africa began, Hugh Grant warned “there
is fertile ground for Communist subversion today in the Dark Continent of
Africa.” Grant, the president of the Georgia States’ Rights Council, went on to
claim that African nations, with their “teeming masses of primitive black
people,” had been “infiltrated in key government places by handpicked natives
trained in Moscow to carry out the Communist conspiracy.”\(^6\) Anticolonial
nationalism signaled the capacity of colonized people to formulate a critique of
European rule and to organize and sustain a mass movement, and neither of
these conclusions fit comfortably into segregationists’ hierarchical views of races
and nations. On the other hand, the proposition that Soviet or Chinese
operatives had fomented nationalist unrest kept the fundamental elements of the
segregationist ideology intact.

Right-wing commentator and newspaper publisher Dan Smoot offered his
rapt readership an alternative narrative of anticolonial nationalism. According to

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\(^5\) As historian George Lewis has shown, the symbiosis of anticommunism and segregationist
sentiment could be complex, and not all white southern opponents used red-baiting tactics in the
same way. See George Lewis, The White South and the Red Menace: Segregationists, Anticommunism,

\(^6\) Hugh Grant, speech before the North Carolina Defenders, April 29, 1959, copy in folder 17, box
1, E. A. Holt Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as UNC). Segregationists also worked to discredit African
nationalists leaders; see, for instance, “Lumumba’s Death Raises Questions,” Texas Councillor 3
(March 10, 1961), series T12, reel 128, Right Wing Collection of the University of Iowa Libraries,
the Dallas-based conservative icon, international Communism had launched a
two-pronged plot immediately after the end of World War II. First, the Soviet
Union instigated a "campaign of hatred" against the United States and the
nations of Western Europe. "It was easy," Smoot informed his audience, for
"trained communist agitators" to inflame Africans' and Asians' "hatred of the
white man." The Communists supplied colonized people with terms like
"exploitation," poisoning them against the "economic developments" that
Europeans brought. Russian operatives "create[d] a demand for 'national
independence'" where none had previously existed. The United States became
an unwitting "ally" to the Soviet "campaign of hate among colonial peoples"
when it expressed sympathy for Africans' desire for self-rule. Little space existed
in Smoot's explanatory scheme for anticolonial activism to reflect an authentic
desire for national independence or economic sovereignty. Without outside
agitation from the Communists, the Dallas right-wing spokesman implied, the
"primitive" peoples of Africa would have remained indefinitely content under
European rule. His words stripped any sense of agency or authenticity from
revolutionary nationalist movements and reduced anticolonial resistance to mere
Soviet "propaganda." 7

As they provoked racial hatred in the colonized world, Smoot's argument
continued, the Soviets planted an even more insidious doctrine among
Europeans and Americans: an "internationalist" philosophy that emphasized the
interdependence and commonalities of all humans beings. Blinded by faith in
global "brotherhood," the United States and other "great nations" had discarded

7 "Congo Intrigue," Dan Smoot Report, November 19, 1962, pp. 369-71, series D1, reel 39, RWC.
their once-unflappable faith in the righteousness of Western religious, cultural, and political traditions. Instead, the Soviets had made “civilized white men” feel “ashamed” and “defensive” about their efforts to transmit “modern civilization to backward lands.” Just as Smoot saw no authentic basis for African or Asian grievances against European rule, he dismissed any suggestion that western nations had wronged their colonies or owed any apology for the legacy of imperialism. If nationalism was little more than a veneer for Soviet expansionism, then it followed for conservatives that U.S. policymakers should treat nationalist leaders the same way it treated the U.S.S.R. or Red China: as enemies.

To many conservatives, the 1961 Angolan insurgency against the Portuguese colonial state seemed to bear out what Smoot and other right-wing leaders had foretold. At a moment when Britain, France, and Belgium had withdrawn their colonial forces from most of the African continent, Portugal dug in its heels. In February and March 1961 Angola had deteriorated into open warfare between anticolonial insurgents and Portuguese colonial forces. Angolan forces began their revolt with an assault on a prison in Luanda, where a number of nationalist leaders were being detained, but the violence spread to attacks on white-owned farms and towns. With a crushing counterinsurgency, Portugal’s colonial armies quickly added to the civilian death toll and spiraling bloodshed.

The Angolan situation was grisly indeed, with both sides guilty of carrying out brutal killings. Americans, observing the mayhem with the luxury of distance and detachment, arrived at their own judgments about who was in the right and who was in the wrong, who was waging a just fight and who was
not. By and large, liberal organizations faulted Portugal for stubbornly clinging to its African territories even while the tide turned against colonialism. Most liberals were pleased when President Kennedy authorized Adlai Stevenson to vote in favor of the March 1961 United Nations resolution that called for Portugal to release all colonial claims in Southwest Africa, and many were disappointed when Kennedy, facing a Portuguese threat to revoke access to the Azores Islands air base, retreated from his original support for Angolan independence.⁸

Conservatives, on the other hand, were far more likely to see Portugal’s acts of violence as a legitimate defense of property and public safety and to interpret the Angolan uprising either as communist-aided or as a source of instability that would benefit Communists. Activists on the American Right hoped to persuade U.S. voters that something sinister—Soviet or Chinese operatives—fueled Angola’s desire for independence. If they could do so, they could portray Adlai Stevenson’s 1961 U.N. votes against Portugal as sheer folly, an unjustified betrayal of America’s NATO ally. More importantly, conservatives hoped to dismantle the liberal claim that American support for decolonization served the Cold War interests of the United States.

A crucial player in this war of interpretation was the Portuguese government itself. In 1961, in the wake of Adlai Stevenson’s pro-Angola U.N. votes, Portugal fired their opening shot in what became a protracted battle for American public opinion. That year Lisbon officials enlisted a team from Selvage & Lee, a New York City–based public relations firm, to rehabilitate Portugal’s international reputation, win allies in Congress, and convince American voters that Portugal was a vital Cold War partner. Selvage & Lee professionals created a front organization known as the “Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs” and selected as their chief spokesperson Martin Camacho, an American attorney and Harvard Ph.D. of Portuguese origin.

Camacho and his backers had little difficulty zeroing in on the likely sources of pro-Portugal sentiment in the United States: civil rights opponents and conservative anticommunist groups. Complimentary Selvage & Lee materials arrived at the headquarters of the Young Americans for Freedom, the John Birch Society, the Young Republicans, Billy James Hargis’s Christian Crusade, and many similar organizations. Elected officials on Capitol Hill also received mailings from the New York City firm. But the real returns, Camacho predicted, would come from the communities in the United States engaged in their own fight to uphold whites-only government. “The entire South could be persuaded to side with Portugal,” he boldly declared to a Selvage & Lee colleague.⁹

⁹ Quoted in Noer, Cold War and Black Liberation, 75. Georgia’s powerful Democratic senator Richard Russell, for instance, received materials from Selvage & Lee; see folder 4, box 8, series XVI, subgroup C, Russell Papers, UGA.
Although it is difficult to measure what impact Camacho and the Portuguese American Committee on Foreign Affairs actually had on U.S. public opinion, the organization made enough of a splash to attract the attention of the United States Senate. Quite reasonably, the Kennedy administration and its supporters were troubled by the prospect of Camacho trekking across the South, stirring up antagonism against a Democratic administration already under fire for its policies in Cuba and Berlin. In July 1962 Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair J. William Fulbright commissioned an investigation of the "non-diplomatic activities" of foreign nations—a category that covered any foreign government activity, clandestine or otherwise, that circumvented normal diplomatic channels and tried to indirectly influence the course of U.S. foreign policy. Hoping to pull back the cloak of secrecy, the Arkansas Democrat Fulbright led a series of hearings that probed the Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs as well as similar public relations campaigns funded by the right-wing governments of the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua.  

Grassroots conservatives also promoted the work of the Portuguese-American Committee, often circulating copies of Camacho's speeches and pamphlets to others. The official publication of the Citizens' Councils of America featured a half-page advertisement for one of Camacho's publications, *On the Morning of March 15*, and interested subscribers could write to the Jackson, Mississippi, headquarters of the segregationist organization to request a copy.

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Virginian John J. Synon, himself a professional public relations consultant, mailed a packet of Selvage & Lee materials to his like-minded conservative friend James Kilpatrick. Synon hoped Kilpatrick would integrate the content into articles for the *Richmond News Leader*. “The enclosures present a damning documentation of our foreign policy as it pertains to Africa. I hope that you will find it worthy of editorial comment,” wrote Synon, who was a regular contributor to the conservative magazine *Human Events* and a leading promoter of the Americans for Constitutional Action. “Negro leaders are determined to subjugate the white people of that benighted land and they admit it,” Synon told Kilpatrick. Synon offers an interesting example of a southern conservative who recognized the importance of forming political alliances beyond the region; recall from chapter 3, for instance, how Synon used racially neutral language to address the nationwide readership of *Human Events* in 1960, speaking only about defending the constitutional system of federalism. But when Synon spoke about Angola, he had little compunction about framing the issue in explicitly racial terms.\(^{11}\)

For those dissatisfied with liberalism, its actions in the U.S., and its actions on the world stage, Martin Camacho provided a counter-narrative. He depicted Angolan rebels as thugs, not liberators fighting a just war for national independence; he insisted that anticolonial movements in Angola did not represent the popular will but was the work of a small, disaffected group of Communist revolutionaries. Rather than referring to Angolan insurgents as

"nationalists" or "anticolonial activists," as a group like the liberal American Committee on Africa (ACOA) might have done, Camacho and the Portuguese American Affairs Committee reached for terms like "terrorists," "savages," and "primitives."

One of the most widely circulated Selvage & Lee documents was *On the Morning of March 15*, a short, photograph-filled book that purported to offer a "factual account" of what happened in the spring 1961 Angolan uprising against Portuguese colonial rule. An image of a bloody bullet hole was emblazoned across the front and back covers, and the interior pages contained horrifying photographs of maimed and mutilated bodies—white and black, children and adults. According to the slim book, the violence was perpetrated by Angolan "terrorists" acting as part of a "carefully prepared plan, instigated and organized outside Angola." Portugal, meanwhile, was cast as the innocent victim merely trying to preserve order in the country. "The Portuguese stood firm, despite the hideousness of the initial shock" of attacks by black Angolans practicing "native witchcraft," something "reminiscent of the dark barbarian eras." The booklet finished with a direct appeal to Americans who were leery of independence for African colonies: "Are those who inspired and ordered these acts fit to govern? Are they fit to merit the support of the UN, or any Christian civilized society? Are they fit to enlist the support of the U.S.?"

Cut from the same cloth, *The Communists and Angola*, another publication of the Portuguese-American Committee, also relied on visual images to communicate its message. Scattered throughout Camacho's simply titled booklet

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were Russian words, the Cyrillic letters rendered in stark typeface to create a menacing effect, and crude cartoon-like sketches designed to suggest that a Soviet propaganda machine had indoctrinated black Africans into believing that "colonialism" and "imperialism" were evil systems. Camacho, like right-wing media personality Dan Smoot or Hugh Grant of the Georgia States' Rights Council, could not conceive of genuine Angolan discontent with Portuguese rule, and so he concluded international Communism had to be at work.

The pamphlet went on to smoothly explain that the ultimate aim of Communist operatives in Angola was to "weaken, divide and defeat the Western nations." Communists fomented unrest in Angola, spearheaded an unfair smear campaign against Portugal, and played on the U.S. goodwill—all cunningly devised to turn the United States against its ally Portugal in the United Nations and drive a wedge into the NATO alliance. Camacho's published materials never failed to note the 1961 U.S. vote against Portugal in the United Nations nor did they neglect to remind sympathetic readers that the United States had voted against Europe but with "Soviet Russia" and the "Afro-Asian bloc." America, in his words, "began voting against the Portuguese at the U.N. and supporting the terrorist aggressors," even though Portugal had done nothing more than "defending themselves" against unprovoked attacks.13

Camacho carefully calibrated his speeches to appeal to potential supporters in the U.S. South and in other communities worried about neighborhood integration. Open segregationists probably found much to their

liking in Camacho’s frequent claim that Portugal was the victim of a “heavy propaganda attack.” Defenders of Jim Crow often complained that a northern-dominated liberal media misrepresented the cause of the white South before the rest of the nation; many segregationists therefore were inclined to readily accept that Communists or other agitators were unfairly targeting Portugal for its racial practices. Camacho also blamed U.S. foreign policymakers of buckling under pressure from “Negro leaders” in the United States and allowing an African American lobby to dictate the course of U.S. policy in Africa. He referred specifically to the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa, the 1962 gathering of Martin Luther King, James Farmer, A. Philip Randolph, and other prominent civil rights activists that demanded significant change in U.S.–Africa policy. Confounded over U.S. support for the U.N. invasion of Katanga, the international attacks on the white Rhodesian government, and the U.N. votes against Portugal, Camacho contended, “the explanation of our amazing Africa policy is the Negro vote in the United States.” Why else, Camacho implied, would American politicians vote against their ally, Portugal? This precisely paralleled a common segregationist assertion: the belief that liberal Democratic members of Congress only voted for civil rights legislation because they depended on black voters’ support. The Portuguese American Committee and its chief spokesman Camacho skillfully suggested how liberal civil rights policy at home and liberal policy abroad had converged.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{14} Camacho, “The Double Standard of American Negro Leaders.” For one example of a southern alleging a media bias, see Tom P. Brady, “Segregation and the South,” address to the Commonwealth Clubs of California, October 1957 (Greenwood, Miss: Association of Citizens’ Councils of Mississippi, n.d.), series A112, reel 13, RWC.
Selecting the most effective weapons from the anticommunist and white supremacist arsenals, Camacho and the Portuguese-American Committee offered Americans an alternative interpretation of the violence in Angola. In their narrative Kennedy and Adlai Stevenson had been hoodwinked into a foolish vote against Portugal; Angolans had rebelled against their colonial overlords at the command of Soviet agents; Portugal had done nothing wrong; and black Angolan nationalists were utterly unready for self-governance or national independence. The Portuguese-American Committee on Foreign Affairs directly attacked the American Committee on Africa, accusing the liberal organization of aiding Communists—of having “contributed directly to the terrorist cause”—by publishing Angola-related material that was “misleading” and based in “a completely distorted picture of what is happening and why.”

While accusing the ACOA of naïve bias, the Portuguese-American Committee claimed to present the factual, unvarnished (one is tempted to say “fair and balanced”) truth about the unrest in Angola. Camacho and the Portuguese-government-funded publicity campaigns were all attempts to control the representations of anticolonial movements that Americans took in.

Camacho’s speeches also contained rhetoric that could appeal outside Deep South centers of massive resistance. Speaking in Newark, New Jersey, in 1963, Camacho lashed out at “American leaders” who had “a double standard on racism.” These liberal politicians, he explained, were “pressing for equality in this country.... But at the same time, they are pressing for Negro domination in Africa, regardless of white rights. Where Africa is concerned, they are racists.”

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Here, with the specter of reverse racism, Camacho raised a set of grievances that many white Americans harbored against liberalism. As historians Thomas J. Sugrue and Kevin M. Kruse have shown, white homeowners in northern and southern U.S. cities tended to defect from liberal reformism as soon as they sensed an infringement upon their rights as homeowners, business owners, parents, and community members. White Americans could extend this logic to the African continent as well.\footnote{Camacho, “The Double Standard of American Negro Leaders”; Kevin M. Kruse, \textit{White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Thomas J. Sugrue, \textit{Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).}

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Virtually indistinguishable efforts were underway with regard to France’s ongoing war to suppress Algerian independence movements. Although France, unlike Portugal, did not sponsor publicity campaigns to generate American support for their struggle to retain control of Algeria, private organizations of U.S. citizens did mount campaigns designed to counter liberal narratives of Algeria’s war for independence.

Early in his presidency Kennedy had worn his 1950s support for Algerian independence like a badge of honor, and the liberal ACOA had made Algerian self-determination a focal point of their lobbying efforts. Vital Center liberals typically argued (publicly, at least) that unless the United States supported Algerian desires for self-rule, the Arab state and indeed the entirety of North
Africa might shift toward the Communist orbit. Conservatives turned this logic around. In the eyes of most conservatives, colonialism—or, in their preferred terminology, “Western control”—was among America’s best weapons for halting the Communist advance. So long as colonial institutions endured in North Africa, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, these regions and their vital natural resources, airfields, and naval ports remained securely in the hands of friendly, anticommunist Western European nations. Cold War liberals, too, recognized this fact, but as the 1960s dawned, conservatives alone openly and unapologetically defended the need to keep places like Algeria in the hands of the West.

Liberal and conservative activists clashed on whether U.S. support for decolonization helped or hurt America’s foreign policy interests. One heated exchange took place on the editorial pages of the New York Times in November 1960 between ACOA president George Houser and the leader of a competing organization, the American Committee for France and Algeria (ACFA). The small American Committee for France and Algeria’s president was Clifford Forster, and its board of directors included prominent intellectual conservatives James Burnham and Thomas Molnar (Burnham, discussed extensively in chapter 7, was the foreign affairs editor for the National Review and Molnar, also a contributor to William F. Buckley’s magazine, later authored two books on U.S.

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policy in Africa.) The ACFA shared office space with a similarly conceived organization, the American Friends of Katanga.²⁸

Whether Clifford Forster, ACFA founder and president, may be properly called a conservative is uncertain. Forster built his career and reputation as an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union and the International League for the Rights of Man. What is clear is that by the late 1950s and early 1960s, Forster had associated himself with many of the conservative movement’s leading lights. His liberal colleagues were bemused and dismayed to discover that Forster had appeared on stage alongside Buckley, Marvin Liebman, Clarence Manion, J. B. Matthews, Ruth Alexander, L. Brent Bozell, and the widow of Senator Joseph McCarthy at a September 1959 New York City demonstration protesting Nikita Khrushchev’s visit to the United States. Forster, however, clearly intended to continue and expand his collaboration with conservative leaders, as evidenced by the makeup of ACFA leadership.²⁹

Like other members of the postwar Right, Forster quarreled with the liberal argument that anticolonialism and anticommunism could coexist. On November 6, 1960, ACOA president George Houser responded to the mounting evidence that the primary Algerian nationalist organization, the Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), had accepted aid from the Soviet Union and China. If


²⁹ Forster’s name was listed in an article about the anticommunist rally; see “2,500 Anti-Communist Rally; Mayor and President Scared,” New York Times, September 18, 1959, p. 18. On the fallout of Forster’s appearance, see “Role in Rally Denied,” New York Times, September 22, 1959, where Roger Baldwin disavowed support for the rally and claimed that Forster’s participation was “purely personal.”
the FLN had turned to Communist nations, Houser said, the blame lay squarely at the feet of U.S. policymakers. "The fact that the Algerians are turning openly for aid to the Communist countries represents yet another tragic failure in United States policy," he wrote in the New York Times. Houser chastised President Eisenhower for his guarded neutrality, for refusing to goad France into ending the war, and for permitting France to use American-made weaponry to wage the war. At the United Nations, the ACOA president continued, "the United States has done nothing better than to abstain on resolutions which African states favored and France opposed."

Houser believed, however, that the United States yet had time to salvage relations with Algeria and other nationalists in the decolonizing world. He urged Americans to act preemptively, at a moment when "the attitude of the Algerian people toward various nations of the world" was taking form, to show Algerian nationalists that the United States of America backed their aspirations for freedom from colonialism. An archetype of midcentury white liberalism, Houser insisted that America could be a shining beacon on the world stage—all the United States had to do was bring its policies into conformity with its professed commitment to freedom, equality, and democracy. He pointed to an upcoming debate about Algeria at the United Nations. "This may be the last chance the United States has....the last opportunity to win the friendship of what is destined to be, in a very short time, a large and influential independent North African country."20 Sounding very much like the young Massachusetts Democrat who had just finished an arduous campaign season, Houser contended that

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decolonization was imminent; the United States should accept that reality and demonstrate their respect for Algerian anticolonial nationalism. By doing so, U.S. officials could protect American power in North Africa.

Only a week after Houser’s editorial appeared (and only days after Kennedy won the White House), Clifford Forster fired back. Houser’s letter, wrote an irate Forster, “makes assertions which cannot go unchallenged.” Foster began by denying that the FLN spoke for the majority of Algerian residents—precisely as Martin Camacho averred that Angola’s anticolonial movement spoke only for a tiny fraction of the nation’s population. Most Algerians, whether of French or Arab origin, had no desire to be independent, the president of the ACFA maintained. Regardless, Forster was convinced that America’s loyalty must rest with France. “It is in the best interest of the United States and all members of the NATO alliance to support the French Government.” In its war with the FLN, France fought to preserve “a bulwark against Soviet penetration of North Africa” and block Soviet access to the Mediterranean coast.

Forster also gestured to the shared histories of France and the United States. Although he made no mention of racial or religious characteristics, he did emphasize that France had nurtured “democratic traditions” and “a great humanist and political system with enormous capacities for economic growth,” subtly reminding his American readers of the cultural similarities between France and the United States and their common values of democracy and free-enterprise capitalism. “It is in the American interest to sustain France,” he insisted. “It is to be hoped that in the forthcoming debate in the United Nations
on Algeria the United States will not forsake its great and trusted ally." Why, Forster implied, would the United States court left-leaning Algerian nationalists when their culturally similar friend, France, needed support? He vigorously disputed the liberal Houser's attempt to wed anticolonialism and anticommunism. Liberals might claim that American support for decolonization could keep communists off the African continent, as chapter 4 suggested, but Forster dismissed this notion as facile at best and malevolent at worst.

ACFA member Thomas Molnar seconded Forster's support for the French colonial state in another New York Times editorial, this one appearing in early December 1960. Molnar took a different tack, emphasizing France's military right to defend its position in Algeria. Here Molnar's argument resembled Camacho's assertion that Portugal was merely defending its rightful territorial claims when it launched a counterattack against Angolan nationalist forces. Members of the NATO alliance had a right to "fight the enemy," wrote Molnar, and "the French Army in Algeria...does just that: it stands on an exposed front." He continued: "When Morocco asks for Soviet fight planes...when Ghana and Guinea serve as outposts of Communist infiltration in Africa—I think one may say that the French Army defends a vital NATO area." With his depiction of Africa as the site of open warfare against the Soviet Union, Molnar advanced an alternative vision of the war between France and Algeria. Where George Houser portrayed France as fighting an ill-fated war to staunch the inexorable progress of decolonization, Molnar painted Algeria a something of a proxy for the Free World's struggle against Communist totalitarianism. Houser pitted colonial

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rulers against nationalists; Molnar pitted the West against the East. And if defending the “West” meant continuing colonialism, Molnar stood ready to champion colonialism. 22

Forster promoted these same types of arguments though his work with the American Committee for France and Algeria. The ACFA disseminated “special reports” designed to reveal the North African insurgency as Communist-sponsored; their January 1962 release likened the FLN to Fidel Castro’s small bands of communist revolutionaries. Like Marvin Liebman and Mrs. M. R. Mills, the ACFA asserted that mainstream American media coverage chose to “ignore” or “minimize” evidence that the FLN had direct links to Communists. 23 Forster’s Algeria organization attracted substantially less attention than groups lobbying on behalf of Katanga, the secessionist Congolese province, but some grassroots conservatives did take notice of ACFA activities. 24

Men like Forster and Molnar concentrated on the national-security dimensions of U.S. policy toward the Algerian war, but other self-described conservatives could inject the politics of race into American dialogues on the France’s struggles with North Africa. Some conservative voices questioned whether Algerian Arabs were ready to govern themselves, such as a 1962 essay in Human Events that concluded: “Algeria is more advanced than most emerging


23 American Committee for France and Algeria, “Special Report on the Communist Background of the Algerian Rebellion,” Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection, KU. This thirteen-page report aimed to demonstrate that every phase of the FLN’s battle was Communist-directed. On claims that the American press reported biased and inaccurate information, see also France Today 1 (September 1961), 1; France Today was the monthly publication of the ACFA.

24 See, for instance, Crawley F. Joynier II to James J. Kilpatrick, May 18, 1962, folder “1961–1962, Personal Correspondence I-J,” box 4, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA. Joynier writes in praise of the American Committee for France and Algeria’s efforts to combat skewed news coverage.
African nations, but it is not prepared for self-government.” A number of ardent segregationists also rushed to France’s defense.25 Florence Sillers Ogden, founding member of the Mississippi-based Women for Constitutional Government, described Algeria as having “shown no ability to govern itself.”26 Mississippi Citizens’ Council secretary Robert Patterson took heed of the racial elements inherent in the Algerian war, although he complained, “our national press plays down the racial angle.” “Frenchmen in Algeria resent being placed at the mercy of an Algerian majority,” and their resentment, Patterson explained, motivated French violence against Algerian Arabs. The segregationist leader clearly empathized with France and its military crackdown on Algerian nationalists, and Patterson linked the white South’s resistance to racial integration and white French settlers’ resistance to rule by an independent Arab-run government.27 Forster and Molnar saw the Algerian war through a free world–Communist world lens; Robert Patterson saw white Westerners fighting back against emboldened people of color.

Segregationists could move interchangeably between seeing North Africa as a Cold War battleground and as a site of racial struggle—in part because many segregationists instinctively considered “Western” and “white” synonymous terms. Houston conservative Mrs. Sam H. Davis wrote a 1961


27 Robert B. Patterson to Jack [James J.] Kilpatrick, February 27, 1962, folder “Personal Correspondence, P (1 of 2),” box 5, collection j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
article that offers an illustration. Editor of the monthly Texas Councilor, official newspaper of the Texas Association of Citizens Councils, and an executive officer for the white supremacist organization, Davis was clearly a staunch segregationist, although she regularly described herself as a conservative and read national conservative publications like Human Events. And, although historians have rarely studied segregationists for anything more than their views on domestic civil rights, Mrs. Sam Davis devoted ample space in the Texas Councilor to foreign policy topics. She despised the influence that "the Stevensons, the Schlesingers, [and] the Bowles" exercised on U.S. policymaking, and she held Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy equally responsible for leading the United States down "a false road" in international affairs. In the summer of 1961 Davis warned readers of her pro-segregation newspaper to "watch the part that will be played by our U.N. representative in the coming debate over Bizerte."28

Davis referred to the Tunisian port of Bizerte, the location of a strategic French naval base that had been the site of significant military operations during World War II. When France hammered out the terms of Moroccan and Tunisian independence in 1955 and 1956, they negotiated access to several key Mediterranean naval bases in exchange for financial aid and other concessions. In July 1961, with French-North African relations already strained by the

28 See "Editor's Note," Davis's introduction to an article reprinted from Human Events, "Racist Demagogery vs. the Status Quo," Texas Councilor 3, (August 25, 1961), series T12, reel 128, RWC. On Davis's role as Executive Vice President of the Texas Citizens Councils, see John R. Anthony to Mary Dawson Cain, March 26, 1959, box 52, unprocessed Mary Dawson Cain collection, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi; on Davis and the Houston school board, see Margaret Nunnellely Olsen, "Teaching Americanism: Ray K. Daily and the Persistence of Conservatism in Houston School Politics, 1943-1952," Southwestern Historical Quarterly 110 (October 2006).
protracted Algerian war, Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba initiated a
campaign to evacuate French forces and secure Tunisian sovereignty over the
Bizerte base. France refused to cede control of Bizerte, prompting Bourguiba to
blockade the port with Tunisian forces. France countered by sending its own
brigade to the area. Armed clashes broke out July 19, 1961. The episode
snowballed into a Cold War geopolitical showdown after Tunisia reached for the
main weapon that small, newly independent nations had in the postwar world:
the authority of the United Nations. Accusing France of impinging upon
Tunisian sovereignty, the North African nation asked the U.N. for assistance in
its struggle to claim control over the military base within its national borders.29

Once again pulled between the demands of the Cold War and the
decolonizing world, the Kennedy team was none too pleased with Tunisia's
decision—Dean Rusk informed the Tunisian minister that the United States
considered the timing "most unfortunate." But where Kennedy liberals sensed a
conundrum, Mrs. Sam Davis saw an utterly straightforward, black-and-white
decision. "If we are maneuvered by Russia into taking sides with Bizerte against
France," the Citizens' Council enthusiast wrote, the United States would face
"further deterioration of Western power." To Davis it seemed obvious that the
"so-called 'neutral' or 'uncommitted' nations of Africa and Asia" were nothing
more than "Russia's secret allies." France, on the other hand, was a vital member
of the West. "Can it be that those in Washington...are simply dumb and know

29 On Bizerte, see "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in France," July 19,
not what they are doing to destroy Western civilization and freedom?"30

Blurring communism and nationalism, Davis revealed her belief that true
freedom resided only with people of a Western European heritage. The free
world, the Western world, the white world—these labels were equivalent as far
as Davis was concerned. She classified white Americans and white Europeans in
a single category, linked by a single civilization, fighting a single battle to save
freedom, so she could not fathom why American policymakers would try to strip
France of its economically and militarily vital territories in North Africa. 31

Davis, Clifford Forster, Thomas Molnar, and Robert Patterson all
emphasized different aspects of the Algerian War, but all four vigorously
contested the liberal idea that anticolonialism could serve anticomunist ends.
All four were convinced that Americans received slanted, inaccurate information
about the true nature of nationalist movements on the African continent, and all
four were steadfast in their efforts to advance conservative interpretations of the
dramatic international changes of the Kennedy era.

None of the four likely anticipated that their activism would directly
impact American policy with respect to France and North Africa. Yet they each
felt deeply invested in the outcome of these distant events. Patterson and
Davis—both ardent segregationists—were desperate to represent the French-
Algerian War in the same way they wanted to represent the African American
freedom struggle: as an unjustified, unmerited, communist-inspired rebellion
that aimed to subjugate white people. For these two white southerners, Algeria

30 Rusk quoted in ibid., 250.
31 Editor’s note to “Racist Demagogery vs. the Status Quo,” Texas Councilor 3 (August 25, 1961),
series T12, reel 128, RWC.
mattered because France’s fight reverberated with their own fight to preserve Jim Crow. Forster and Molnar focused less on the racial overtones (although they, too, seemed to harbor doubts about whether self-government was suitable for Algerian Arabs), but they were equally convinced that Algeria was relevant to their domestic political battles. Sensing a chance to impugn liberal foreign-policy strategies, Forster and Molnar represented France as a vital American ally, fighting a vital battle for the collective good of the free, Western world.

The case of the Algerian War thus suggests a different way of understanding how anti-civil rights activists and anticommunist conservatives made common cause in postwar American politics. Segregationists and intellectual conservatives like Molnar were defining their beliefs against the choices and assumptions of Cold War liberalism. The new directions in U.S. foreign policy under Kennedy helped conservatives to clarify their own positions, and those positions turned out to be elastic enough to appeal to a variety of self-identified American conservatives. This proved especially true for events in the post-independence Congo, which, beyond question, did more to galvanize conservatives than any other facet of U.S. policy in Africa.

II. CONSERVATIVE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE POSTCOLONIAL CONGO CRISIS

On the evening of November 15, 1960, amid a showdown over the integration of the New Orleans public school system, Louisiana parish boss Leander Perez addressed an auditorium full of anxious white parents. Hoping to rouse the pro-segregation crowd to action, Perez reached for the most inflammatory image available. “Don’t wait for your daughter to be raped by these Congolese. Don’t wait until the burr-heads are forced into your schools.
Do something about it now." As a slice of the raw hatred and the hysteria that characterized white southern resistance to black equality, Perez's speech is almost as notorious as George Wallace's "segregation forever" vow. Yet it seems likely that something besides unadulterated racism prompted Perez to choose the term "Congolese" from the long list of odious epithets available to him, something suggestive about the course of southern racial conservatism in the Kennedy era.\textsuperscript{32} While the New Orleans school desegregation crisis simmered, scenes of violence and atrocities were issuing forth from the Central African territory of the Congo. Almost immediately after the June 30 independence ceremonies, rebellions and factional strife engulfed the country where European colonialism had assumed some of its harshest and most exploitative arrangements. The reluctant departure of Belgium's occupying forces prompted violent reprisals from Congolese nationalists, and tales of crimes against white settlers—rape, murder, and seized property—quickly circulated in the United States. The parents who assembled in the New Orleans municipal auditorium that November evening undoubtedly were concerned with the fate of their own children first and foremost, but like Leander Perez and George Wallace, many segregationists recognized that New Orleans whites were not the only embattled ruling class in the summer and fall of 1960.

Indeed, the post-independence crisis in the Congo figured prominently in the American political landscape at the dawn of the new decade, for white southerners as well as self-identified conservatives from around the nation. Here

was a case where the process of decolonization appeared to have gone desperately wrong, where whites' nightmarish imaginings about a formerly servile class seeking revenge seemed to be materializing. While the tumultuous conditions in the postcolonial Congo were manifest, the precise source of the disorder was subject to widely varying interpretation, and competing interest groups in the United States stood ready to advance their own explanations for why the young Congolese republic teetered on the edge of chaos mere weeks after independence. Whether the blame should fall upon the colonial system for decades of gross maltreatment or upon those who had agitated for an immediate end to Belgium rule, whether the escalating violence would be eased or exacerbated by a refortification of Belgian military power—questions like these drove a deep wedge between liberals, nominally sympathetic to national liberation movements and ambivalent over the history of colonialism, and conservatives, who stood ready to champion the past achievements of Western imperialism and shield the colonial system from further dissolution.

From the cosseted New York City offices of the *National Review* to the local gatherings of southern Citizens' Councils to anticommunist women's meetings in suburban southern California, there rose cries of rage over Kennedy's policies in the Congo. These groups turned their eyes to the Congo for varying reasons—some to "prove" blacks were unfit to govern themselves, some to sound the alarm about Communist designs on Africa—but they all arrived at a single conclusion: liberals had made a grave error in promoting speedy independence for Europe's African colonies. Conservatives used the Congo to reinforce the arguments that they had made with reference to Algeria and Angola, but, even more, they used the Congo to contest the liberal claims that colonialism was
intrinsically wrong, that all nations had a right to self-determination, and that Africa’s anticolonial revolutions were comparable to the eighteenth-century American revolution.\footnote{33 Described in greater detail later in this chapter, most of the members of the Executive Board of the National Review organized the “American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters” and roundly denounced liberals for pressuring Belgium to surrender control of the Congo and Kennedy for supporting the UN invasion of Katanga. For an example of the local Citizens’ Council chapter, see J. Walter Cowart to Sen. Richard B. Russell, September 20, 1961, folder 15, box 12, series XVI, Russell Papers, UGA. Cowart sent Russell a copy of a resolution passed by the Chatham County, Georgia, branch of the Councils that called the Congo “savage” and “uncivilized” and deplored the U.N. intervention in Katanga. For an example of a anticomunist women’s organization, based in Southern California, see Network of Patriotic Letter Writers, see petition and reprinted reports on Katanga invasion, n.d., copy in folder “Katanga—The Congo,” box 26, Knox Mellon Collection, Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles (hereafter cited as UCLA).}

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Conservatives across the South and across the nation were paying attention to events in central Africa—and drawing connections between those events and their domestic political agendas. The simplest explanation for the Congo’s descent into chaos, the one segregationists favored, was that members of the African race simply were incapable of orderly self-governance. Civil rights opponents grasped the unrest in Central Africa as a counterweight to the liberal argument that colonialism was an outmoded, destructive system. As violence roiled the newly independent Congo, segregationists believed they had found empirical corroboration for their insistence on strict racial hierarchy, and they used stories from the Congo to re-assert an ideology where self-government was a privilege to be earned, not an innate right. Just weeks after Belgium formally relinquished control over the Congo, in July 1960 an editorial appeared in the Citizens’ Council newspaper that characterized the Central Africa territory’s decolonization as follows:
Black Supremacy has come to full flower in the heart of darkest Africa. Congo natives celebrated their recently acquired independence ... by going on a spree of unbridled savagery. Luckless whites, unfortunate enough to think they could remain in safety under Negro rule, were raped, murdered, assaulted and made to suffer unspeakable personal indignities.

That whites in the U.S. South had long used rape, murder, and affronts to personal dignity to secure control over southern blacks never entered into the calculus of the author of this editorial, unidentified but likely William J. Simmons. Conveying a clear sense of the relevance of the Congo to the conservative white South, Simmons concluded: "If proof were ever needed that the Negro is utterly incapable of governing himself, much less governing anyone else, the Congo has written that proof in letters of fire and blood."34

Eager to assemble as much "proof" about black self-rule as they could, the leadership of the Mississippi-based Citizens' Council featured monthly reports on the bloodshed in the Congo, including regular features from a correspondent stationed in South Africa. These articles often directly equated the historical dilemmas of whites in the American South and white settlers in Africa, creating an imagined bond between communities of "civilizers" on either side of the Atlantic. For instance, Dr. Ruth Alexander jeered the creation of independent African states by likening the postcolonial Congo to the Reconstruction-era South, an example sure to appeal to The Citizen's readership. Alexander, known for her nationally syndicated news columns and her long-running radio program "Wake Up, America," claimed that the liberated Congolese were at "precisely the same level of civilization" as emancipated American slaves a century prior.

Relying on virulent stereotypes of power-drunk black legislators running amok during Reconstruction, Alexander warned that entrusting the “illiterate, primitive, savage” Congolese with the solemn responsibilities of governance would result in corruption, destroyed property, and sexual violence against white women—an identical outcome, Alexander concluded, to the Northern Republicans’ insistence on enfranchising former slaves in the 1860s and a good reason why the South was “understandably reluctant” to give blacks the vote in the 1960s. The conservative Alexander alternated seamlessly between arguments against black enfranchisement in the United States and black independence for the Congo, as did The Citizen editor William Simmons. He added a note introducing Alexander’s article about the Congo: “Dr. Alexander shows why the South is determined to resist black rule!” Southern racial conservatives like these needed to dispel liberal arguments against colonialism as much as they needed to resist attacks against segregation.35

In the eyes of the white South’s devoted defenders of Jim Crow, the decolonized Congo represented something like a laboratory where Americans might observe the potential consequences of dismantling the infrastructure of white rule, and indeed, phrases like “another Congo” came to function as a sort of shorthand for white southerners’ worst fears about integration and black enfranchisement. William Simmons warned that the Congo offered a “grim

35 For examples see, for instance, “Congo Atrocities Described By White Victims in Shocking Official Report,” The Citizens’ Council 5 (August 1960), and “World Press silence in Wake of Congo Atrocities is Noted in South Africa Report,” ibid., 4. Quotations, see Dr. Ruth Alexander, “Violence in the Congo is Reminiscent of Tragedy of Reconstruction in South,” The Citizen (December 1962), 11–12. [The Citizens’ Council changed its name to The Citizen in late 1960.] For another argument that the Congo “proved” that blacks were unfit for self-rule, see Carleton Putnam, “This is the Problem!” The Citizen (November 1961), 14, and Putnam, “Race and Reason: A Yankee View,” reprinted in Summit Sun, July 6, 1961, p. 2., in series S37, reel 120, RWC.
presage of things to come,” and his fellow Citizens’ Council officer Medford Evans predicated that “the horrors of blood and lust in the Congo” were a “preview of the future” that the South could except if political leaders and clergy pursued “doctrinaire racial equalitarianism.”36 For segregationists in places like Mississippi or Georgia, the stakes in the American battles to interpret the Congo’s turmoil were unmistakable; they had a direct, abiding personal interest in rationalizing white political control over black.

Conservatives beyond the Deep South, on the other hand, were far less likely to draw neat comparisons between colonialism in Africa and segregation in the United States, as intellectual conservatives and foreign policy conservatives typically shied away from open racism even if they questioned the constitutionality of the Brown decision. But while “respectable” conservatives withheld public support for white rule in the American South, most were absolutely willing to endorse white European rule in black Africa. Like segregationists, anticommmunist conservatives saw in the Congo a chance to prove that liberals had accepted anticolonial values too uncritically, that the self-rule was not necessarily appropriate for all people and all places in a Cold War world. Northeastern and west-coast conservatives offered representations of the postcolonial Congo that differed in degree, though not in substance, from those of segregationists.

Although leading chroniclers of the modern American Right have downplayed the role of racial ideologies in the rise of intellectual conservatism, contributors and editors at the National Review were as convinced as William

Simmons that the Congolese were simply too primitive and too backward to rule themselves responsibly. Compare, for example, how Connecticut Senator Thomas Dodd (a Democrat, but a leading critic of Kennedy administration policies in Africa) characterized post-independence conditions in the Congo with the description that William Simmons ran in the July 1960 issue of The Citizens' Council, quoted above. Dodd told readers of the National Review tales of "berserk demonstrators" who "rampaged through the residential areas of Congolese cities in a national orgy of murder, mayhem, rape, and pillaging," and he called the Congo a country "only recently emerged from the jungle."  

The same month that The Citizens' Council newspaper recounted tales of "unbridled savagery" in the "heart of darkest Africa," William Buckley's magazine presented its readers with a similar, if slightly more muted, narrative of Independence Day in the "Heart of Darkness." The National Review dwelled on images designed to highlight the vast cultural gap between Africans and Westerners and depict the Congolese as primitive, heathenish, and utterly unsuited for participation in the solemn tasks of governance: "feather-crested village headmen" and "bare-breasted drum-prodded dancers" participating in rituals to ward off "demons." In the summer months of 1960, the standard-bearer of postwar conservatism also described native residents of the Congo as "black savages," engaged in behavior that "civilized men" could scarcely imagine. Like The Citizens' Council, the ostensibly race-neutral National Review related tales of rape and other attacks on Belgian whites and cast the violence not as retribution

37 The most vocal argument that race had little to do with modern conservatism has come from Donald T. Critchlow, Phyllis Schlafly and Grassroots Conservatism: A Woman's Crusade (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
for decades of harsh colonial oppression but as an indicator of the "true" nature of the Congolese people unleashed in the wake of independence. Buckley's staff contended that as Belgian power receded, the "jungle" was reclaiming the Congo and its residents were tending "to revert to savagery." 38 National Review conservatives might have thought it unseemly to advocate open defiance of school integration orders, and they may have worked to dissociate themselves from the excesses of southern racism. Nevertheless, when it came to the African continent they had little trouble speaking in a language that reinforced the crudest stereotypes about people of African descent.

By the spring of 1961 the conservative publication framed the issue in stark, unambiguous language: "the evidence of the Congo has proved...that black Africans, with some but insufficient exceptions, cannot handle their own political and economic affairs." Whereas segregationist publications concluded their summaries of the Congo crisis with warnings that an integrated South might suffer the same indignities as the Belgian settlers in the Congo, the National Review articles forewarned of the lurking Soviets, ready to seize control of the fractured African territory. Despite these different emphases, the two conservative factions were closely aligned in their explanations for the disarray in the postcolonial Congo. 39

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Conservatives also believed they had found in the Congo proof that colonialism was not an absolute moral wrong, as liberal organizations like the American Committee on Africa claimed, and they aggressively resisted the liberal suggestion that the Western powers owed an apology or restitution to the territories they had controlled. On the contrary, while leading postwar liberals called for United States policymakers to prove that American power was fundamentally different than European colonial power, conservatives did not hesitate to describe the United States as an integral part of a unified West—a West with a common history of imperialism of which it might be proud, a West with an ongoing responsibility to civilize and rule those unfit to rule themselves.

Conservative activists contrasted the violent, splintered post-independence Congo to the earlier conditions under Belgian rule to vindicate their perspective that European rule in Africa was salutary for colonizer and colonized alike. American conservatives often had outside help in their efforts to rehabilitate the reputation of European rulers like Belgium. Early in the 1950s, Europe's smallest colonial power formed the Belgian Information Center, headquartered in New York City. Taking on the daunting task of softening the public image of Belgian rule and extolling the achievements of Belgium's civilizing work, the center published glowing reports about the prosperous and stable conditions in the Congo. Several Brussels officials and business executives toured the United States promoting the same message.40

Southern segregationists, keen to tout their own record as civilizers of a politically immature population, also set to work restoring the image of

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colonialism. Novelist, columnist, and virulent racist Robert C. Ruark published a 1962 defense of Belgian rule in the Washington Daily News. “The bloody history of the last 18 months in the Congo,” Ruark wrote, demonstrated that “a few kind words may be said for the old colonialism.” The postcolonial Congo was “closer to savage tribalism and jungle living than it has been for three-quarters of a century. Under the colonialists some order, at least, was kept; some advances in public health, in employment, in respect for law and order and the rights of property were maintained.” He delivered a message to African nationalists: “stop maligning the powers that brought you out of the jungle and made this so-called freedom possible.”

While some pro-segregation conservatives acknowledged the gross exploitation and abuse that took place in the colonial Congo, they nonetheless maintained that even the excesses of Belgian rule were preferable to the post-independence turmoil. Holmes Alexander, a news columnist with unmistakable sympathy for the conservative white South’s views on race relations—in 1956 Citizens’ Council officer William Simmons called Alexander “the only syndicated columnist with a national circulation who really and truly understands our problems”—arrived at such a conclusion. Alexander granted that Belgium’s King Leopold had been “an arch-monster,” a perpetrator of offenses “as unforgettable as Hitler’s,” yet he contended that conditions were little improved in the independent Congo. Blaming “radical reformists” and “agitators for racial equality” for unwisely accelerating the timetable for

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Congolese decolonization, Alexander asserted that the “orgy of rape, mutilation and murder” in Central Africa showed that anticolonialists could be as destructive as colonialists. “This history of the Congo,” he wrote, “raises the question of which type of malefactor is worse for society—the robber barron or the reformist.”\textsuperscript{42} Thurman Sensing, spokesperson for the conservative Southern States Industrial Council (SSIC), had no doubt that liberal reformers had harmed, not helped, the Belgian Congo. “Under the Belgians the people were advancing, they were prospering, there was peace!” Indeed, Sensing believed colonialism was “the only thing that brought [Africans] out of savagery in the first place” and represented the “only thing” that might “keep them out” in the future.\textsuperscript{43}

Southern foes of civil rights were not alone in defending the merits of the colonial system; anti-Communist conservatives likewise praised the record of Western colonialism. The \textit{National Review} commissioned the controversial social scientist Ernest van den Haag to investigate conditions in the Congo in late 1961. Like Holmes Alexander, van den Haag’s report on his travels acknowledged the cruelties that accompanied Belgian rule in Central Africa, yet he pointed out that


the Congo's standard of living, health conditions, and welfare services compared favorably with other parts of the African continent and appeared inclined to believe colonialism had brought more benefits than costs.\textsuperscript{44} Prophet of the anticommunist right Robert B. Dresser used his personal funds to finance an advertisement in the \textit{Providence [Rhode Island] Journal} shortly after the United Nations deployed troops to the Congo's Katanga province. Determined to counter what he called a "severe attack" on the colonial system, Dresser wrote: "During the last few years we have heard a lot about the evils of 'Colonialism.'" Yet in Dresser's estimation, the critics of colonialism had failed to account for the vast "benefit" that European rule had brought to Asian and African territories. "The citizens of the governing countries have invested large sums of money in the development of the colonies, which have raised the standards of living of the people far beyond anything which they could have achieved independently," creating a "stable government which they would not otherwise have had."

Furious that the United States under Kennedy had "joined in the attack" against colonialism, Dresser claimed the Congolese chaos proved that African independence was "disastrous" for the "native people."\textsuperscript{45}

One of the starkest rebukes of liberal anticolonial values came from L. Brent Bozell, the shadow author of Barry Goldwater's best-selling \textit{The Conscience of a Conservative}. In early March 1962 Bozell stepped onto a podium at Madison Square Garden, looked out onto the crowd assembled for the annual rally of the

\textsuperscript{44} Ernest van den Haag, \textit{War in Katanga}, 12.

Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), and proclaimed to the wide-eyed conservatives in his audience that they, along with the rest of the “Christian West,” should feel no guilt over the European and American legacy of colonialism. A devout Catholic, Bozell countered liberal Christians’ moral denunciations of white rule in Africa with a missionary-like zeal of his own. “Are we Americans to repent for having planted Western standards in the Philippines? ... Should the West be ashamed for having gone to Africa? For lighting a spark of truth in the midst of untruth? For building an outpost of civilization where barbarism was unrelieved?” No, Bozell boldly declared. If the “Christian West” had any cause for shame or contrition, it rested with the act of *decolonizing*, not colonizing. “Rather should we be ashamed for having fled ignominiously from the scene before the job was done. The unmanliness of it!”

In Bozell’s narrative, effeminate Cold War liberals had caved to international pressure, abandoned a once-unflappable faith in the righteousness of Western civilization, and allowed men like “Mr. Nehru” and “Mr. Sukarno” to convince them that Western imperial expansion was wrong. ImPLYing that conservatives would return masculine toughness to American foreign policymaking, that conservatives alone possessed the brawn and mettle to stand up against neutral leaders like India’s Prime Minister Nehru or Indonesian President Sukarno, Bozell promised that the Right would help the West regain “faith in itself” and in the “truth” of its civilization. Conservatives, he told the YAF gathering, would embrace the idea that “Africa desperately needs the West”
and would "not hesitate to return" to the continent as benevolent colonial rulers, regardless of the international pressures to withdraw.46

As he chided liberals for prematurely abandoning the African continent, Bozell revealed the slipperiness of the term "West" in the era of decolonization. Some parts of Bozell’s 1962 speech used the term "West" to designate the anticommunist nations of the United States and Western Europe, a surrogate term for the NATO alliance, where the unspoken "East" referred to the Soviet Union, China, and their satellite states. Yet in other places in his YAF address, Bozell applied the term "West"—always with a purposeful capital "W"—to refer to a civilization, a set of cultural and religious traditions, rather than a geographic place or a political cluster of democratic states. Here the enemies of "the West" included Communists but also anticolonial nationalists trying to throw off Western imperial influence; here, African movements for national self-determination were, by their very essence, as anti-Western as Communism.

It was in the latter definition of "the West" that racial conservatives discovered space to insert white supremacy into conservative foreign policy recommendations. Bozell clearly considered Belgian influence in the Congo a vital bulwark against Soviet penetration of Central Africa. Yet he also expressed an unapologetic conviction that the cultural traditions of the West, especially the Christian religion (more specifically, his particular understanding of Christianity), held a higher truth than African or Asian cultures, and for that

46 L. Brent Bozell, "To Magnify the West," National Review 12 (April 24, 1962), 285-87. Bozell was not representative of all intellectual conservatives; indeed, some disliked his intense religiosity. Yet other leading conservatives shared his views on the end of colonialism and the unmanly "retreat" of the West from Africa. See, for instance, Frank S. Meyer, "Abdication of Responsibility," National Review 10 (April 8, 1961), 218. Meyer called the West’s withdrawal an "immoral casting aside of burdens," "a sloughing of responsibility."
reason he commended the colonial system. Few observers, contemporaries or historians, would place Bozell in the exact category of conservative as, say, William Simmons and his fellow officers of the Mississippi-based Citizens’ Council (although to be certain Bozell had his doubts about the wisdom of federal civil rights law). Still, a southern segregationist might easily mold Bozell’s description of world affairs into an appealing point of view. Bozell appeared to use his version of Christianity as the primary marker of “the West,” but racial conservatives might just as easily use whiteness to delineate “Western” from “non-Western” or “anti-Western.”

Consider, for instance, the North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights. The Defenders, formed in 1958 to replace the defunct Patriots of North Carolina, were above all else an organization devoted to the preservation of racial segregation in the United States. The group’s leader, the Reverend James P. Dees, subscribed to a range of noxious white supremacist philosophies that surely relegated him to the outer fringe of the postwar conservative movement. Yet the opening paragraph of the Defenders’ printed platform contained a statement that varied only slightly from what Bozell declared before a packed arena of Young Americans for Freedom supporters. “We consider ourselves to be conservative American citizens,” read the Defenders’ organizational literature.

[W]e believe that the western European heritage, of which we are the heirs, is worthy of being cherished as a precious gift from our Fathers...the heritage of basic freedoms...the heritage of its art, its music, its literature, its mores. We are of the belief that the western European culture which is our heritage is superior to the African and the Asiatic.47

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The North Carolina Defenders sensed domestic and international threats to their cherished “heritage.” At the group’s first meeting in 1958, the members adopted a statement that read: “Under fire is the white race and heritage throughout the world, in South Africa, Asia, Europe, and in this country.” It continued into a defense of the achievements of colonialism.

The world has advanced to its present status of world culture and democratic government because it had the white race to lead it and to look up to. The whole world today can be grateful to western European culture and the Caucasian race for its progress upward out of ignorance, superstition, and want. If the white race and democratic government are destroyed as a consequence of the work of the ‘liberal’ integrationists, then we can look for the world generally...to sink downward into the jungle and chaos of an Afro-Asian culture. 48

The venomous rants of James Dees, probable author of both of the preceding statements, lay far beyond the pale of what most postwar conservatives would have considered rational or acceptable political discourse. Distilled to its essence, however, Dees’s conception of “the West” was not altogether different from Bozell’s. Both men contested the liberal tendency to reflexively disdain European colonialism; both men saw something exceptional in Western civilization and argued that Western colonialism brought benefits to the colonized and to the world as a whole. Although it would be historically inaccurate and unduly simplistic to assert that all postwar conservatives tacitly condoned James Dees’s brand of racial hatred, no great sleight-of-hand was

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48 Statement issued by the General Council of the North Carolina Defenders of States’ Rights, Inc., November 22, 1958, copy in folder 19, box 1, Holt Papers, UNC. For a similar argument by another white supremacist voice, see Hugh Grant, speech before the Citizens’ Councils of Lowndes County, Ga., June 27, 1959, folder “Citizens Councils,” box 56, E. L. Forrester Papers, Russell Library, UGA, and Grant, speech before the North Carolina Defenders, April 29, 1959, copy in folder 17, box 1, E. A. Holt Papers, UNC.
required for southern segregationists to see their values reflected in the mainstream conservative critique of liberal policy in Africa.

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The elastic definition of the term "West," whether in Bozell's conception of a Christian West or Dees's imagined heritage of whiteness, hints at one way that the coincident quickening of decolonization and U.S.-Soviet rivalries brought racial, cultural, and religious ideologies to bear on the subject of U.S. foreign policy. So too did ideas about the West and Western culture influence conservative views on the nature of Africa's anticolonial revolutions and the potential for Western-style democracy to germinate in African soil. Political conservatives in the United States used the Congo to contest the liberal claim that American democratic values were universally desirable or immediately replicable in African societies emerging from colonialism. Cold War conservatives were dubious that liberal democratic ideals might take root among non-Western civilizations, and indeed they insisted that the cultural and religious traditions of Western Europe were absolutely foundational to America's system of government. Events in the postcolonial Congo affirmed what most postwar conservatives already believed: that individual freedoms and the right to self-rule were untenable in the absence of Judeo-Christian (or, for some, simply Christian) ethics and the traditional cultural values of Western Europe, such as the sanctity of private property, the nuclear family, and a self-regulated work ethic.

By extension, voices on the postwar Right—some racial conservatives, others religious traditionalists, still others intent on conserving what they
thought of as the American way of life—frequently denied that black Congolese
or other black Africans had the capacity to understand Western democracy. For
unabashed defenders of white supremacy, the ability for self-rule hinged upon
biological categories of race and little else, yet a self-identified conservative could
disdain the intemperate vitriol of a figure like Simmons and still contend that
black Africans were, by virtue of their culture and civilization, unable to
comprehend the meaning of "freedom" or "liberty" in the same way that white
Americans understood those terms.

One of the most enduring voices of twentieth-century American
conservatism, radio and news commentator John T. Flynn, offered one such
cultural explanation for why he considered Congolese independence premature.
Flynn was among the few figures that successfully weathered the American
Right's stormy transition from prewar isolationism to Cold War interventionism.
A veteran of the American First Committee in the 1930s and 1940s, after World
War II Flynn emerged as a leading anti-Communist spokesman, authoring books
such as The Road Ahead: America's Creeping Revolution (1949, reprinted 1959) and
While You Slept: Our Tragedy in Asia (1951), both widely read and quoted among
grassroots anticommunist activists. Flynn eschewed the open bigotry of someone
like William Simmons, although he clearly considered federal civil rights
legislation an unconstitutional infringement upon states' power. He had no
qualms, however, about using cultural arguments to contend that the Congolese
were unprepared for the types of freedoms enjoyed by American citizens.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See John E. Moser, Right Turn: John T. Flynn and the Transformation of American Liberalism (New
York: New York University Press, 2005). On civil rights, see Flynn, radio broadcast March 6,
"It goes without saying," Flynn assured his listeners, that Americans "sympathize with the desire for freedom of these colonial peoples." However supportive they might be of the principle of self-determination, American officials had to "face the fact that 'independence' and 'freedom' have an entirely different meaning to them [colonized populations]." Questioning whether any of the recently decolonized African or Asian states grasped "the true meaning of liberty," Flynn argued that the Congolese lacked the internal mechanisms of self-discipline that separated civilized freedom from the licentious exercise of free will. "To the Congolese," he argued, the term "freedom" implied "a chance to kill the herds in the game preserves," an opportunity to rekindle the "old jungle customs" that white colonials had labored to eradicate, an unrestricted license to behave in any fashion that brought personal gratification or benefit. "The pygmies in the forests think it means more beer." Here Flynn gave voice to an argument that had been commonly used to justify colonialism as well as the white South's tight controls over its African American labor force—that African-origin people lacked the cultural tools necessary to responsibly enjoy freedoms and, if released from the hierarchy of white rule, would simply interpret "freedom" as the unchecked right to act however one pleased. He considered it sheer folly for American liberals (or, as Flynn preferred to call them, the "fuzzy-minded one-worlders and do-gooders") to promote the ideal of self-rule for all peoples when the "facts," as he understood them, indicated that only individuals of a European background were equipped to handle "true independence."50

Flynn was not alone in his views. In the pages of the Citizens' Council newspaper, William Simmons accused the Congolese of defining “independence” as the “privilege of taking over the houses, autos and wives of white men” (a statement that reveals Simmons’ views on gender hierarchy as much as on racial hierarchy).51 Like Flynn, many conservative and segregationist authors enclosed terms like “freedom,” “independence,” and even “nation” in quotation marks when referring to newly decolonized states like the Congo. The sardonic use of punctuation testified to their skepticism that Africans could realize liberty, freedom, or democracy without the order and stability they believed sprung exclusively from an Anglo-Protestant culture.52 William Flax, a Cincinnati, Ohio, attorney who characterized his political philosophy as one of “unashamed and undiluted conservatism,” also questioned black Africans’ ability to comprehend the bedrock values of democracy. Flax made no secret of his opinion that African Americans had fewer intellectual talents than whites and were innately predisposed toward criminality and immorality, and he provided legal representation for a white Ohio father who refused to enroll his sons in the predominantly black school to which the children were assigned. In a 1959 letter

continued to receive the byline credits in America’s Future through 1960, although it is entirely possible that his close associate Rosalie Gordon, herself a well-known conservative and the author of two books, What’s Happened to Our Schools (1956) and Nine Men Against America (1958), or another staff member was actually doing much of the writing. As Moser’s biography notes, Flynn, nearing eighty years old and battling ill health, substantially scaled back his involvement with the radio and print editions of America’s Future in the late 1950s, recording his final radio program in November 1960. Gordon increasingly shouldered the day-to-day management of Flynn’s print and radio empire, taking it over after his retirement and death. See Moser, Right Turn, 199–200. See a similar line of argument in Dr. Ruth Alexander, “Violence in the Congo is Reminiscent of Tragedy of Reconstruction in South,” The Citizen (December 1962), 11–12.


to Citizens' Council leader Robert Patterson, James Kilpatrick called Flax a "tower of strength" for the southern cause in Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{53} Likening decolonized nations to "children with restraint and discipline removed," Flax directly translated his racist views into opinions on U.S. policy in Africa. The "liberal," Flax wrote in 1961, "wants to sell democracy...to the world." But for democracy to succeed, Flax argued, a population must possess a "high level of native or hereditary intelligence," a "cultural background of individual dignity and respect," and an advanced economic state—and in Flax's opinion "the vast majority of the world's peoples" lacked "at least two." In the absence of any of these three qualifications, national independence would amount to little more than "an excursion in mob rule."\textsuperscript{54}

By highlighting the relationship between culture and readiness for self-rule, conservatives disputed a guiding principle of postwar liberalism—that the institutions of American democracy and American capitalism were universally desirable, ready for transmission to nations across the globe. Later in the 1960s, the liberal faith in American exceptionalism came under fire from leftist critics determined to unmask the blinding chauvinism and destructive arrogance that could accompany U.S. exceptionalism. In the early 1960s, however, conservative authors, thinkers, and leaders launched an entirely different attack on liberal universalism, contending that American models of democratic governance and

\textsuperscript{53} William Flax to James Kilpatrick, May 4, 1961, folder "1960–1962, Personal Correspondence F," box 2, collection 6626-j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA, in which he describes his political philosophy as one of "undiluted conservatism" and identified himself as a speaker for the John Birch Society; "tower of strength," Kilpatrick to Robert B. Patterson, April 16, 1959, folder "1959–1962, Personal Correspondence P (1 of 2)," box 5, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.

\textsuperscript{54} William Flax to James Kilpatrick, July 13, 1961, folder "1960–1962, Personal Correspondence F," box 2, collection 6626-j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA. Emphasis original.
free-enterprise capitalism could flourish only where specific cultural conditions existed. And, not surprisingly, conservatives tended to see proper conditions only in places where Western European or American cultural influence predominated.

For an illustration, consider the right-wing revulsion to the liberal suggestion that African revolutions were a mid-twentieth-century echo of the eighteenth-century American revolt against British rule. Most conservatives found the comparison between the American Revolution and African anti-colonial revolutions utterly facile, and they recoiled from liberal Democrats’ suggestion that states like the Congo had begun to tread the same path as the United States after its war for national independence. “What could be sillier,” queried National Review foreign affairs editor James Burnham, than “the efforts of Chester Bowles or Soapy Williams to find some analogy with our own history?” In May 1961, the conservative weekly Human Events fired back at Bowles’s and Stevenson’s public calls for the United States to “march with” the forces of anticolonial nationalism. “Such talk hasn’t made any sense for a long time,” the right-wing journal concluded, and even more “idiotic” was the suggestion that “Communist-fomented upheavals” in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean had anything in common with the American Revolution. There existed absolutely “no historical justification” for likening the “leaders of 1776” to “the Sukarnos, Nkhumahs, Mao Tse-tungs, Castros, and other contemporary revolutionaries,” the Human Events article insisted. “The intense nationalism of Sam Adams and the Sons of Liberty...had little in common with the kind of revolution going on

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today." The conservative *Human Events* author applied descriptors like "reasonable" and "justifiable" to describe the actions of American revolutionary leaders, revealing the conservative magazine's sense that Western violence was rational, legitimate, orderly, controlled. It found absurd the idea that the American Revolution was "sort of prelude to the liberation of Angola." 56

James J. Kilpatrick, the Richmond, Virginia, newspaper editor with close ties to both the South's leading segregationists and prominent conservatives outside the region, aimed a direct counter-shot at the liberal interpretation of African anticolonial revolutions, and he dwelled particularly on the Congo. In the early summer of 1961, renowned scholar Arnold Toynbee delivered a speech at Williamsburg, Virginia, on the subjects of African decolonization and U.S. foreign aid to newly independent nations. Toynbee had argued that the Congolese and other mid-twentieth-century liberation struggles "display[ed], unmistakably, their origins in the parent revolution in this country," and he further suggested that Thomas Jefferson would have "contemplated them [anticolonial revolutions] with a sympathetic and indulgent eye." A few weeks afterward Kilpatrick remarked to his friend Senator A. Willis Robertson, "The more I have thought about that speech of Toynbee's, the more I have concluded that it was the damndest stupidest address I ever heard a supposedly intelligent man make." As Kilpatrick explained to the readers of his Richmond News Leader editorial page, Toynbee gave voice to a "fuzzy notion" that "all revolutions are

56 *Human Events* article reprinted in the *Texas Councilor* 3 (August 25, 1961), p. 4, series T12, reel 128, RWC.
equal”—a notion that, according to Kilpatrick, “recurs these days with amazing frequency on the Liberal left.”

To Kilpatrick, the Congolese uprising against Belgian colonialism represented nothing more than a baseless, irrational expression of savagery, and for that reason he deeply resented the comparison with what he considered America’s noble, legitimate revolt against the British in the eighteenth century. Thomas Jefferson, he thought, “would have contemplated the Congolese revolution with horror.”

The raping of nuns, the obscene mutilation of women and children, the pillage of native villages by black savages, the hysterical mouthings of a Lumumba—this is to be equated with Valley Forge and Yorktown and the eloquence of Patrick Henry? ... It is preposterous to suggest that [Jefferson’s] revolution of 1776, led by men of literacy, sound education, and deep political tradition, in any way is to be equated with the chaos of the Congo...

Even before Toynbee gave the speech that so inflamed Kilpatrick, the conservative Virginian had written editorials reviling liberals’ “false comparison” between American and African revolutions. His opinions about domestic race relations no doubt shaped his view of the Congo revolution; in 1960, he readily admitted: “I believe the Negro race is inferior, and I don’t see how any person who weighs the evidence objectively could come to any other conclusion.” And indeed, Kilpatrick’s interpretation of African revolutions bore the marks of his ideas about Western and non-Western civilizations. “The American colonies sought self-government because they could govern

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57 “damndest stupidest,” Kilpatrick to A. Willis Roberston, June 16, 1961, folder “1959–1962: Robertson, A. Willis,” box 6, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick papers, UVA.

themselves,” he wrote. Where founding fathers had drawn on “the political wisdom of our European heritage” to construct a Constitution-based system of government, the independent Congo was “wildly steering a vast machinery of government which it does not understand, in whose formations it took no part.” Unlike the British settler states in eighteenth-century North America, Europe’s colonies in Africa had “no history,” no civilization, no culture of democratic equality upon which to mount a revolution for independence.59 As a result, Kilpatrick concluded, the Congo’s revolution tended toward chaos, lawlessness, corruption, and instability. Americans internally possessed the self-discipline to create a stable self-governing republic, but authentic liberation for the Congo would come only through the restoration of colonial rule, the “discipline of civilization” imposed by a strong-handed European presence.

Virginia Senator Robertson, also in the audience for Toynbee’s Williamsburg speech, concurred heartily with Kilpatrick’s point of view. A stalwart of southern conservatism in the Senate (and the father of Pat Robertson, who by 1961 had already founded his Christian Broadcasting Network and embarked on his career as an influential broadcast evangelist), Willis Robertson insisted that Toynbee had grossly distorted “the true meaning of our democracy” where he likened the postcolonial Congo’s “orgies of rape and murder” to the early history of the American republic. The senator wrote a speech of his own for July 4, 1961, festivities that hoped to refute “Dr. Toynbee’s proposal that the mass programs of organized rape and murder which we have been witnessing in

59 Quotation, “negro race is inferior,” Kilpatrick to Robert B. Patterson, November 7, 1960, folder “1959–1962, Personal Correspondence P (1 of 2),” box 5, collection 6626-j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
the Congo and elsewhere had their origin in our Revolution and would have the approval of Thomas Jefferson."

When Flynn, Kilpatrick, and other postwar conservatives alleged that cultures of black Africa made independence impossible, when they emphasized the relationship between culture and the right of self-rule, when they painted the American Revolutionary War as rational but the Congolese revolution as frenzied, uncivilized, and barbarous, they expressed a seedling of an idea today associated with Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington. In a 1993 issue of Foreign Affairs, the journal of the prestigious Council on Foreign Relations, Huntington foretold epochal struggles between Western and non-Western civilizations. A simplified, more polemic rendering of historian Bernard Lewis’s September 1990 Atlantic essay “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” Huntington’s article “The Clash of Civilizations?” maintained that the cultural and religious traditions of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa were inalterably at odds with Western modernity and American values of liberal democracy. Huntington wrote amid a flurry of articles and books seeking to characterize post–Cold War international relations. The Harvard scholar presumed that the U.S. – U.S.S.R. rivalry had been so totalizing that it essentially subsumed and overshadowed all other potential sources of international conflict until the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 and Mikhail Gorbachev initiated glasnost in the early 1990s. After the disappearance of the superpower rivalry that had restrained latent intercivilizational discord, however, Huntington feared that a flood of cultural

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60 Robertson to Kilpatrick, June 14, 1961 and June 23, 1961, both letters in folder “1959–1962: Robertson, A. Willis,” box 6, collection 6626-m, Kilpatrick papers, UVA.
antagonism would be let loose and that the nations that compromised "Western civilization" would be set on a collision course with societies outside the West.\(^6^1\)

Huntington followed up his "Clash of Civilizations" essay with a book of the same title, and in the expanded text he included a piece called "The West: Unique, Not Universal." Herein Huntington extended his earlier conservative critique of modernization theory and contended that all Westerners (by which Huntington means people of a European, Judeo-Christian background) possessed a single, distinctive, definable culture that made free political and economic institutions possible. In the absence of core Western cultural values—values that Huntington believes can be precisely identified and catalogued, values that Huntington believes all Western people share by virtue of a vaguely defined common heritage—free political institutions are impossible. Not unlike Brent Bozell in his 1962 speech before the Young Americans for Freedom rally, Huntington conceptualizes "the West" both as a political cluster of democratic states and as a civilization grounded in culture, religion, national origin, and, at some level, race.\(^6^2\)

More than three decades earlier, confronting a world where Western European powers were beset by revolutionary nationalism, many American

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\(^6^1\) Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993), 22–49. Huntington presented a more polemical expression of historian Bernard Lewis's work. It was Lewis that first employed the phrase "clash of civilizations," in "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly* 266 (September 1990). Huntington's thesis made deep inroads among the US policymaking establishment, although a number of scholars have fiercely criticized the "clash of civilizations" model, including Ussama Makdisi, "Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History," *Journal of American History* 89 (September 2002); and Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: American, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

conservatives expressed an incipient variation of Huntington’s argument—what political philosopher Mahmood Mamdani has dubbed “culture talk.” In Mamdani’s words, culture talk “assumes that every culture has a tangible essence that defines it, and it then explains politics as a consequence of that essence.” Different than the biological racism that reigned at the turn of the twentieth century, such an explanatory scheme divided the world into categories of “modern” and “premodern,” differentiating between people who could transcend the bounds of culture and those were trapped by their static, unchanging cultures. Mamdani’s model cannot perfectly translate into the 1950s and 1960s, since Mamdani wrote after the attacks of September 11, 2001, and his discussion of culture talk focused on American representations of Muslims. Still, Mamdani notes that American observers applied a version of “culture talk” to black Africans in the Cold War years.63

When John Flynn argued that the Congolese could only understand “freedom” as license for self-gratification, or when James Kilpatrick claimed that a European heritage made America’s revolution noble and an African heritage of “savagery” made the Congo’s revolution descend into anarchy, they offered an early version of what Mamdani calls “culture talk.” Neither Flynn nor Kilpatrick could imagine the Congolese as capable of modern self-governance unless they first accepted Western cultural values, or, more accurately, unless the mechanisms of Western colonialism had more time to introduce those values. Moreover, many conservatives doubted whether people of an African heritage might ever overcome the trappings of their cultures to adopt the ways of life that

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63 Mamdani, Good Muslim, Bad Muslim, 17–20; quotation, 17.
men like Kilpatrick believed were necessary for freedom. In the absence of a European, Christian way of life and system of values, freedom could not exist, according to many postwar conservatives, and the Congo’s revolution represented nothing but the destruction of law and order. Conservatives thus understood African revolutions not as admirable progress toward freedom, not as echoes of America’s own war for national independence, but as an outburst of premodern, irrational, groundless violence.

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For the budding conservative movement, Kennedy’s promise to overhaul America’s relationship with the African continent could hardly have come at a more auspicious moment. In the South, an increasing number of segregationist leaders sought to preserve Jim Crow by hitching their fortunes to a nationwide revolt against liberal reformism and an activist federal government. And white segregationists saw African decolonization as an ideal vehicle to attract a broader base of national support. The inner cadre of segregationist leaders predicted that independent African republics would slip swiftly into disarray and were buoyed by the prospect of empirical “evidence” to vindicate the South’s calls for rigid controls over its black population. Robert B. Patterson, a founding member of the Mississippi Citizens’ Councils, was certain that “events in the rest of Africa” ultimately would “prove” that white supremacists in the U.S. South and in South Africa had the right idea about racial segregation.64 He believed that if Americans grew more aware of the “racial dimensions” of the wars for national

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64 Robert B. Patterson to James Kilpatrick, November 2, 1960, folder “Personal Correspondence P (1 of 2),” box 5, collection 6626-j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
liberation in North and sub-Saharan Africa, it “might make Americans less inclined toward integration!” Conservative columnist Dr. Ruth Alexander expressed a similar reaction to the violent crisis that gripped the postcolonial Congo: “Whatever the outcome of the Congolese violence may prove to be, it could serve a worthy purpose for our America....close observance and analysis of it could lead to a sympathetic and comprehensive understanding of the Southern position today.”

Thomas Waring, editor of the segregationist Charleston News and Courier, went so far as to suggest that greater attention to events in Africa might present “opportunities” to “get the South off its regional defensive position” and broaden the appeal of its conservative message. Grassroots conservative warriors in the South arrived at an identical conclusion: calling U.S. policy in the Congo a “tragic blunder,” Georgia Baptist minister Milton B. Rexrode asked “Can there not be formed a coalition of conservative Republicans and Democrats that can do something to stop the appeasement policies of the Kennedy administration before it is too late?”

At the same moment that southerners were linking their situation at home to the situations in postcolonial Africa, conservatives from the Northeast and the Sunbelt West were making significant inroads toward capturing the Republican Party from the moderate Rockefeller wing. The Cold War arrived on the African

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65 Patterson to Kilpatrick, February 27, 1962, box 5, collection 6626–j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.

66 Dr. Ruth Alexander, “Violence in the Congo is Reminiscent of Tragedy of Reconstruction in South,” The Citizen (December 1962), 11–12.

continent during the formative years of the conservative revolt, and, although tangible policy changes were far scarcer in the Kennedy era than grandiose promises, the "new frontiers" of Kennedy's administration provided just enough change to help the Right clarify and articulate their points of departure from Cold War liberalism. Their central contentions—that the West should not apologize for colonialism or liquidate the remaining colonial states; that black Africans lacked the cultural tools to emulate America's democratic revolution; that U.S. support for decolonization aided only the Communists—appealed to a broad range of constituencies, especially southern racial conservatives. The Right's responses to the foreign policy crises in Algeria, Angola, and the Congo advanced values that easily corresponded with white racism, while still allowing the leading voices of so-called respectable conservatism to avoid the taint of association with southern massive resistance.
CHAPTER 6: "JUNGLE RULE" VERSUS "FREEDOM FIGHTERS": IMAGES OF LAW & ORDER IN THE POSTCOLONIAL CONGO

"The Conservative is the first to understand that the practice of freedom requires the establishment of order: it is impossible for one man to be free if another is able to deny him the exercise of his freedom."

-- Barry Goldwater, *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960)\(^1\)

Of all the slogans and images associated with the rise of the modern Right, few have served conservatives more effectively or proven more durable than appeals to "law and order." Taking cues from Alabama governor George Wallace's third-party bid for the presidency, Richard Nixon made law-and-order the centerpiece of his 1968 campaign when he captured the White House from a Democratic Party splintered and roiled by urban riots, anti-war protests, and a surging youth counterculture. The language of law and order similarly propelled Ronald Reagan to a stunning defeat of incumbent Pat Brown in the 1966 California gubernatorial race, another turning-point election for the conservative movement. Years after the cultural upheavals of the Vietnam era had subsided, George H. W. Bush again capitalized on white voters' attraction to law-and-order rhetoric when he successfully depicted his 1988 presidential challenger Michael Dukakis as a soft-hearted liberal more concerned with civil liberties than punishing criminal offenders—by using an inflammatory tale of a paroled black rapist.\(^2\)

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In each of these cases racial politics were never far below the surface. It is a mistake to reduce public concerns about law and order solely to white fears about poor African Americans and criminality, though there can be little doubt that the phrase "law and order" often functioned as a kind of code language in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a neat refrain that encapsulated a tangle of visceral reactions to Vietnam War demonstrations, leftist attacks on time-honored patriotic ideals, and especially radical black ideologies of empowerment and liberal plans for compulsory racial integration. The Republican Party did on occasion deliberately tap into white fears and prejudices about black Americans, as historian Dan T. Carter has shown. Yet the pervasive conservative language of law and order could assume milder forms and could be grounded in several sets of intersecting, deeply held beliefs about homeownership, community, child-rearing, and family life.³

Seminal historical studies of the so-called white backlash in the United States have shown that white homeowners from Detroit to Atlanta to Los Angeles argued that the foremost obligation of state and national governments was to protect the rights of Americans who dutifully paid their taxes, kept up their properties, maintained orderly communities, and lived quiet law-abiding lives. Many working- and middle-class moderate white Americans defected from liberal reformism when they perceived their property rights and personal freedoms to be violated by free-housing ordinances, busing plans, or court-ordered desegregation. As members of this silent majority argued, civil and legal

rights were not automatic or guaranteed. Rather, government-protected rights were reserved first for those individuals who had empirically demonstrated an ability to maintain law and order, work hard, and bring economic progress. With race as their central yardstick for measuring a group’s propensity for orderly living, many white homeowners insisted their civil rights took precedence over the rights of African Americans.⁴

White property owners could apply this logic as readily to black Africans in the Congo as to black Americans in Detroit or Atlanta. Well prior to the social tumult of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the American Right began to berate liberals for prioritizing abstract ideals of freedom over the preservation of law and order—only it was the “chaos” in the newly decolonized nations of sub-Saharan Africa, not violence on the streets of Watts or protests on university campuses, that prompted outcries against liberalism. Historians typically consider “law-and-order” rhetoric a phenomenon of the Nixon era, a reactionary product of the unsettled cultural environment of Vietnam years. Nixon may have been the first presidential candidate to capitalize on appeals to lawfulness,

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but as this chapter suggests, conservatives had used the notion of order to critique liberal foreign policy in decolonizing Africa.

Anti-liberal forces in the United States found an emblem for their law-and-order philosophy in the Congo's secessionist province of Katanga. Nationalist leaders in the Congo and other parts of decolonized Africa were determined to expel all vestiges of white rule from Central Africa, but Belgian settlers and capitalists resisted challenges to their power. The breakaway province of Katanga thus became a crucible where the issues of African colonialism, anticommunism, nationalism, and race mixed with explosive results. Led by the elite cadre of National Review editors, the American Right mounted a formidable lobby on behalf of Katanga's "freedom fighters" struggling to secede from "jungle rule" of the Central Congolese government. Their campaign and other related pro-Katanga activism consistently described the Belgian-dominated province as a bastion of order, efficiency, and material progress while portraying the rest of the Congo as an irrational, undisciplined place where property rights were violated and lawlessness reigned.

Although the politics of race and colonialism were patently at work in the struggle over Katanga, the American campaigns on behalf of Katanga's independence relied largely on an ostensibly color-blind language that emphasized law and order and the rights of property owners, both business owners and homeowners. By contrasting the "orderly" province of Katanga to the "jungle rule" of the black-nationalist-controlled portions of the Congo (the

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5 Thomas Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 128–32, has noted the apparent "racial coding" of the Katanga crisis; this chapter is an attempt to analyze the coding in greater depth, especially at the level of grassroots conservatism.
portions that from 1961 to 1963 had the backing of the Kennedy administration), U.S. conservative leaders found a language that could appeal to communities of white Americans in suburbs and cities across the nation, unlike the language of naked racism that, accurately or not, has been associated exclusively with the rural Deep South.6

American conservatism’s rally behind Katanga and its pro-Belgian leader Moise Tshombe also emphasized another principle that won support from racial conservatives: the notion that individuals—or nations—first had to demonstrate their readiness for political rights and personal freedoms, a rebuke of the principles behind the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As conservatives interpreted the state of the postcolonial Congo, Katanga had proven its ability to sustain economic productivity, protect European property, and comply with the rule of law; thus, Katanga had earned the right of self-determination and national independence, and President Kennedy had gravely erred when he assented to the use of U.N. force to end Katanga’s secession. By contrast, other regions of the Congo had regressed into a state of semi-savagery, conservatives claimed; black Congolese nationalists had failed to establish order, and therefore they had absolutely no claim to the right of national independence or political freedom. Further, American conservatives argued that the rights that deserved U.S. protection were the rights of the Belgian settlers, who had developed the region’s mineral wealth, built cities and hospitals, and introduced stability.

6 Conservatives regularly used the image of the “jungle” to characterize the Central Congolese authority (in contrast to the orderly province of Katanga). Just one example, the quotation “jungle rule” comes from an angry white southerner who wrote to his senator to protest Kennedy’s policies in Katanga. See M. H. Vaughan to Sam Ervin, December 22, 1961, folder 2747, Senate Records, Series I, Sam Ervin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as UNC).
The changing face of American liberalism meant that in the Kennedy years, conservatives emerged as the principal defenders of the notion that order had to precede freedom. This represented a significant departure: earlier in the twentieth century, when the term "liberalism" itself signified something quite different, it had been widely assumed that democratic ideals first required social order and that order demanded a citizenry with a proven capacity for self-discipline; otherwise, individual liberty dissolved into anarchic license. One of the architects of modern liberal internationalism, President Woodrow Wilson, resolved the apparent incongruity between his professed commitment to self-determination and his interventions in Mexico, Haiti, or Nicaragua by claiming the need to establish order in Central America. After World War II, the postwar human rights moment and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, along with growing power of anticolonial nationalist movements, remade the contours of liberal internationalism. However erratically American liberals actually conformed to the ideals inscribed in the Universal Declaration, conservatives believed that liberals had entirely and unreservedly exchanged an ideology where individuals first had to earn rights for one where every person, by virtue of their humanity, was automatically entitled to certain individual freedoms and certain political rights, including the right of self-determination—precisely what George Wallace’s inaugural address implied when it spoke of liberals who had replaced the concept of "individual rights" with a code of "human rights."7

7 Governor George C. Wallace, inaugural address, January 14, 1963, Montgomery, Alabama, transcript available on the website of the Alabama Department of Archives and History (hereafter cited as ADAH), http://www.archives.state.al.us/govs_list/inauguralspeech.html.
To conservatives, the swap was not a positive development. They were determined to act as custodians for the older way of thinking, and they effectively used the issue of law and order—the idea that rights and freedoms were *contingent* rather than automatic—to differentiate their political philosophy from postwar liberalism. As Barry Goldwater suggested in *The Conscience of a Conservative* passage quoted above, conservatives had come to believe, fairly or not, that the American Right alone understood the importance of *order* to free societies and that liberals, in their blind adherence to ideals of human rights, had prematurely granted the right of self-governance to African peoples incapable of maintaining order or disciplining themselves.

And, like Woodrow Wilson and other prominent liberal philosophers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, most post-World War II conservatives equated rational order and self-discipline with Western European, Christian cultures and *disorder* with civilizations beyond the West. Thus, the politics of race were never far from conservative appraisals of Africans’ ability to establish law and order. Nor was it difficult for white opponents of integration, whether in the Deep South or the urban centers of the North, to see the Congo as an imagined reflection of their own experiences. Many white Americans saw the Congo as a place where blacks had been prematurely awarded rights that they had not earned at the expense of the rights of orderly, lawful white European property owners. Conservative activism on behalf of “pro-Western” Katanga bore striking resemblance to the anti-civil rights protests heard in the meetings of white neighborhood associations from Detroit to Chicago to Atlanta, pointing to the seamless connections between conservatism’s domestic and foreign policy ideologies.
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Among all the complex and multi-faceted elements of the Congo crisis, American conservatives zeroed in on the 1961 United Nations invasion of Katanga as the target of their ire. On July 11, 1960, less than two weeks after the Congo's independence day, provincial president Moïse Tshombe declared the mineral-rich Katanga in secession.

Geographically and economically, Katanga long had been distinct within the Congo. The province's highland topography created a more temperate environment than the tropical climes of the rest of the nation. But most significantly, Katanga was set apart by its relative wealth. At the time of independence, the mines of Katanga supplied a substantial proportion of the world's cobalt, copper, and uranium and accounted for about half of the Congo's national revenue. Although Belgian-owned companies oversaw the majority of the operations, other European and American investors also held a stake in Katanga's industries. The Belgian mining corporation Union Minière for years had influenced provincial politics in Katanga; Tshombe's political party owed no small debt to the Belgian-dominated Union Minière for its very existence. In the aftermath of the Congo's independence, Tshombe—who had accumulated a fair bit of mining wealth himself—was determined to preserve order and minimize disruptions to business operations in his province. He appealed to Belgium to send troops to Elisabethville, Katanga's capital. Belgium, anxious to safeguard its economic interests and settlers in the Congo, readily complied with Tshombe's request.
The precise nature of Belgium’s involvement in the secession remains clouded, but David Gibbs’s analysis has suggested that Belgian mining companies “played a crucial role in the Katanga secession.” While Lumumba sought to unify the Congo under a centralized government, Belgium apparently saw a decentralized scheme as more favorable to their interests and explored other secession scenarios in the Kivu and South Kasai provinces. White Belgians dominated the provincial government bureaucracy, and the Katanga military police force consisted largely of white Belgians as well as white mercenaries from South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Gibbs has concluded that Tshombe “relied primarily on his white advisors” and that Katanga “functioned as a neocolonial puppet state.” Whether Tshombe acted with encouragement from Belgium or on his own volition, Belgian support for the Katanga secession further inflamed Congolese nationalists and pushed the former colony closer to a state of total disarray.  

Although Patrice Lumumba, his fellow Congolese nationalists, and other African leaders like Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah demanded that the international community put an end to the attempted secession, which they regarded as a nefarious Belgian scheme to retain control of Katanga’s mines and destabilize the young Congolese nation, the United Nations took no action until the late fall of 1961, after Lumumba had been assassinated. The United Nations tried diplomatic talks to compel Tshombe to end the secession and disband his mercenary army of white Belgians, Rhodesians, and South Africans. When these efforts stalled in September 1961, the U.N. launched the first of two attempts to

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expel the mercenaries by military force. Tshombe's forces prevailed against the September 1961 attacks, but less than two months later, this time with limited encouragement from the Kennedy administration, the U.N. once again built up military forces in the Congo, and in mid-December 1961, United Nations troops entered Katanga, determined to end the secession, re-unite the Congo, and curb Tshombe's power.\(^9\)

The second military campaign lasted only a few days; the United Nations declared a ceasefire on December 19, 1961, but the fighting had been intense while it raged, with both sides apparently guilty of atrocities, civilian deaths, property destruction, and general brutality. The Belgian company Union Minière and the white Rhodesian government both supplied Tshombe with aid, and the Katangan forces were composed primarily of white mercenary soldiers, whereas the UN forces included regiments from India's Ghurka region and from Ethiopia. Few observers failed to notice the racial dynamics of the opposing armies. Although an uneasy truce emerged after less than a week, UN troops remained in Katanga and Tshombe continued to proclaim the province independent until 1963.

A divided Kennedy administration ultimately adopted a policy based on the premise that a disintegrated Congo would benefit the Soviet Union. The left-leaning G. Mennen "Soapy" Williams, chief of the State Department's Africa Bureau, supported efforts to forcibly end the secession, as did Congo ambassador Edmund Guillion and George H. Ball, who replaced the ousted liberal Chester Bowles as Undersecretary of State in September 1961. Ball argued

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\(^9\) Ibid., 130–33.
that a unified Congo stood the best chance of warding off Communist penetration into Central Africa, and he sent Kennedy a report in the fall of 1961 to this effect. "Tshombe is the basic problem ... Our policy must therefore be directed most immediately to destroying Tshombe's assurance in his military supremacy, and to removing, or at least greatly weakening, the influence of his Belgian advisers." Reasserting the familiar Cold War liberal stance on Africa, the Kennedy team wanted to avoid aggrandizing nationalist leaders by backing what the formerly colonized world perceived as a neocolonial power grab in Katanga.

Initially Kennedy's White House sought to bolster a "coalition of the center" in the Congo, hoping to avert the emergence of either a radical nationalist or a reactionary regime. To this end the administration backed the government of Cyrille Adoula against Antoine Gizenga's challenges from the left and Tshombe's challenge from the right (a strategy that crumbled toward the end of Kennedy's presidency, as instability persisted in the Congo and Adoula lost legitimacy, prompting an increasingly desperate United States to throw its weight behind the tyrannical General Joseph Mobutu). But in 1961 the Kennedy administration concluded that Katanga's secession harmed the interests of the United States, and, as George Ball explained in a speech defending U.S. support for the U.N. invasion, ending the secession was the only way to save Central Africa "from chaos and Communist infiltration." The U.S. provided aircraft to

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Kennedy’s decision met instant controversy in the United States. Few Americans fully understood the complicated events in the postcolonial Congo; between the rival Congolese political factions, the United Nations, the United States operatives, the multinational corporations, the Belgians, and the white mercenary troops from various parts of southern Africa, merely keeping the array of players straight presented a substantial challenge for outside observers. As such, the American political dialogues about the Congo and Katanga—like those about Algeria and Portuguese Africa—often boiled down to contests over interpretation, competing narratives about who was in the right and who was in the wrong. A host of issues intersected in the American battles over the Katanga invasion, including the ever-contentious debate about how (or whether) the United Nations should shape U.S. foreign policy, but most participants were alert to the racial fault lines at play in Tshombe’s breakaway province.

Although a fair number of American blacks looked with ambivalence on the leftist leadership of Patrice Lumumba, the leading black American newspapers uniformly vilified Tshombe as a self-serving “Uncle Tom.” Wrote the Chicago Defender: “Beneath the secession movement...is Belgian treachery and machination,” and similarly, the Baltimore Afro-American argued that
“greedy Belgian whites,” along with “Congo Uncle Toms,” had engineered the secession, hoping to derail Central Africa’s transition to independence.¹²

Kennedy also won guarded praise from many white liberals, including former President Truman, for his choice to subdue Katanga’s secession and force pro-Belgian interests out of the Congo. For white liberals, as for some African Americans, the Congo crisis lacked the clear-cut moral boundaries of a place like South Africa. After the 1960 shootings at Sharpeville, South Africa, white Americans leaders sided passionately and unreservedly with the nonviolent blacks protestors who were mowed down by white police gunfire. But the violent revolutions in the Congo put many well-intentioned liberals on edge. Indeed, the liberal American Committee on Africa (ACOA) initially shied away from the sticky Congo situation, contending that their organization existed only to lobby for African independence from colonialism; however, at the urging of Executive Director George Houser, the group eventually distributed a statement in support of efforts to end the Katanga secession and keep the Congo unified under a central government. However, both the quantity and the zeal of ACOA activism on behalf of Katanga paled next to their work to end South African apartheid.¹³

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¹³ Brenda Plummer rightly observes that white liberal organizations, however well intentioned they might have been with regard to African freedoms, had difficulty accepting revolutionary techniques. See Brenda Gayle Plummer, Rising Wind: Black Americans and U.S. Foreign Affairs, 1935–1960 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 234. White liberals had far less activist enthusiasm for places like the Congo, where violence was a part of the anticolonial revolutions. See, for instance, minutes from Executive Board Meeting, November 13, 1961, frame 45, reel 5, in Randolph Boehm, ed., Records of The American Committee on Africa, microfilmed from the Amistad Research Center, Tulane University (Bethesda, Md.: University Publications of
In light of the dizzying complexity of the Congo crisis and the rather flimsy resolve that Kennedy administration officials brought to their policy choice in Katanga, the White House probably would have preferred for the United Nations mission to unfold quietly and go unnoticed by the majority of the American public. The American Right, smelling blood, was not about to let that happen. Katanga became an issue in American political life because conservatives made it so. Conservative leaders had been looking for an issue to mobilize a broad base of liberalism’s discontents, and when Kennedy moved to suppress the avowedly anti-Communist, pro-Belgian regime of Moise Tshombe, conservatives pounced.

A full-page advertisement in the December 14, 1961, New York Times heralded the arrival of an organized pro-Katanga campaign in the United States. “Katanga is the Hungary of 1961!” blared the headline, invoking President Eisenhower’s decision not to aid the 1956 Hungarian uprising against the Soviet Union, a staple source of conservative ire. “Ten days ago the United Nations, without a trace of legal authority, launched a merciless military action against the people of Katanga. The United States government has supplied, and is supplying, the financial and logistical support that makes this act of aggression possible.”

Almost immediately after the United Nations authorized troops to suppress Katanga’s secession, a small circle of influential conservatives, nearly all connected in some fashion to the National Review, gathered in New York to

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protest the Kennedy administration’s policy toward the Katanga secession. The meeting resulted in the formation of the American Committee For Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters (ACAKFF). The group’s December 14 Times advertisement, complete with a list of seventy-five prominent conservative “sponsors,” urged the American public to join with “men all over the world who believe in freedom” in their fight to end “UN aggression” in Katanga.14

Nor were Tshombe and his Belgian allies prepared to stand idle in the battle for international opinion. Moving decisively to rally outside supporters to their cause, officials in the renegade province established an “information office” in New York City. Headed by a Belgian public relations officer, Michel Streulens, with a generous budget at his disposal, the Katanga Information Office disseminated printed materials that questioned the ability of the Central Congolese government to protect law and order and hailed Tshombe as a pro-western, pro-business, anti-communist leader—material that often surfaced in the speeches of U.S. congressmen, the columns of conservative journalists, and the angry appeals of right-wing grassroots organizations. American liberals may have considered Streulens a purveyor of crude propaganda, but to many on the political right, his words were gospel, an oasis of truth in a desert of biased liberal reporting. As one conservative U.S. businessman put it, “His [Streulens’s]

14 “Katanga is the Hungary of 1961!,” paid advertisement, New York Times, December 14, 1961, p. 49. Various manuscript collections also contain copies of the Times advertisements, as the American Committee and its supporters distributed copies to conservative groups likely to sympathize. See three folders of Ephemeral Materials, “American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters,” Wilcox Collection for Contemporary Political Movements, Kenneth Spencer Library, University of Kansas (hereafter cited as KU); folder 2, “Africa,” box 4, and folder 4, “American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters,” box 20, both in Vertical Files Series, J. B. Matthews Papers, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University (hereafter cited as Duke).
sole purpose here is obviously to tell the truth, and God knows the American people need to know the truth about Africa."\(^{15}\)

The ponderously named American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters blanketed the American political landscape with paid advertisements, letters soliciting funds, and reports claiming to expose the true nature of the U.N. invasion over the last months of 1961, 1962, and into 1963.\(^{16}\) Nearly the entire *National Review* staff served as a member of the ACAKFF executive committee, including L. Brent Bozell, William F. Buckley Jr., James Burnham, Frank S. Meyer, Eugene Lyons, and William S. Rusher, and the conservative magazine regularly featured articles promoting ACAKFF activities.\(^{17}\) The official committee chairman was Max Yergan. During the 1930s and early 1940s the enigmatic Yergan had been an active leader on the black Left, an outspoken advocate of civil rights in the United States, and an international organizer of anticolonial and anti-apartheid movements. But in the postwar years Yergan reinvented himself ideologically, leaving behind the days when he called imperialism a "menace," a "wrecker of human welfare," to argue that white rule in Africa was tolerable, even desirable, if it prevented Communist


\(^{17}\) See lists of sponsors in "Katanga is the Hungary of 1961," *New York Times*, December 14, 1961, as well as any of the fundraising letters or other promotional materials in ACPAFF Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection, KU.
incursion. By including Yergan and conservative black columnist George Schulyer on the executive committee, the AAKFF likely hoped to shield itself from accusations of racism.18

With the heft of prominent *National Review* editors behind the organization, the Katanga Freedom Fighters attracted a variety of conservative leaders and conservative constituencies to their cause. The AAKFF aimed to assemble a coalition of supporters “who may differ on many issues” but nonetheless agreed “on the impropriety of United Nations action in Katanga,” as Yergan explained in a 1961 letter to the group’s financial backers. Indeed, the American Committee brought together representatives from nearly every subgroup of postwar conservatism: intellectuals like Meyer, Buckley, and Russell Kirk; veteran anticommunists such as J. B. Matthews; Christian fundamentalists like the Reverend Carl McIntire; wealthy industrialists and conservative bankrollers like Wisconsin magnate Herbert Kohler and California’s Henry Salvatori; grassroots organizers such as Dean Clarence Manion and the Americans for Constitutional Action’s Ben Moreell; and open segregationists, including James Kilpatrick, Holmes Alexander, Tom Anderson, and Ruth Alexander. In the Senate the AAKFF found staunch allies in southern Democrats such as Richard Russell, Herman Talmadge, and James Eastland as well as conservative Republicans like Barry Goldwater and Illinois’s Everett Dirksen. Young Americans for Freedom leaders Richard Cowan and Richard Viguerie responded to the American Committee’s appeal: Cowan encouraged American students to volunteer to go to Katanga to join the “freedom fighters,”

YAF students demonstrated outside the White House in a show of solidarity with the pro-Belgian province, and their 1962 rally in Madison Square Garden paid tribute to Tshombe.  

The ACAKFF additionally attracted some grassroots supporters the *National Review* editors might have done without. As previously noted, leading intellectual conservatives were eager to avoid public associations with groups perceived as too radical, too conspiratorial, or potentially damaging to the broader conservative cause, yet they could not stop militant anticommunists and southern segregationists from joining the insurgency against Kennedy’s Congo policy. The John Birch Society (JBS), a group William Buckley came to detest, commissioned reprints of the book *46 Angry Men* in 1962. In the book, originally published in French, forty-six doctors and medical professionals recounted their impressions of the U.N. invasion in Katanga. They accused the U.N. “blue helmets” of committing egregious acts of violence against civilians, of destroying “huge industrial riches,” and generally engaging in a spree of lawlessness and unprovoked aggression. The doctors, mostly Belgian although some from other

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19 The ACAKFF “partial list of sponsors” varied slightly with time. All of the names listed in this paragraph appeared in the original “Katanga is the Hungary of 1961” advertisement in the December 14, 1961 *New York Times*. It seems possible that the ACAKFF struck some names that were likely to incite controversy; the name of fundamentalist Reverend Carl McIntire, for instance, did not appear on the group’s letterhead only a few weeks after the *Times* advertisement. See Max Yergen to “Sponsors, Contributors and Friends,” December 29, 1961, American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters Ephemeral Materials, Wilcox Collection, KU. On the Young Americans for Freedom and Katanga, see John A. Andrew III, *The Other Side of the Sixties: Young Americans for Freedom and the Rise of Conservative Politics* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 135–37. Andrew notes briefly the YAF activity in support of Katanga, remarking that they favored Tshombe because he was “pro-western,” without particularly investigating or analyzing the implications of the term. For additional ACAKFF efforts to reach out to young conservatives, see “An Appeal to Conservative Clubs,” copy sent to “Students of the American Republic,” of Hillsboro, Kansas, copy in the ACAKFF Ephemeral materials, Wilcox Collection, KU.

European nations, included dozens of grisly photographs of injured whites and blacks, bombed-out hospitals, and destroyed property. JBS president Robert Welch added his own foreword to the U.S. reprint edition; in it, he expressed his hope that 46 Angry Men would counteract the "fog of distortion and falsehood" that the "Liberal Establishment" had purveyed with respect to the Congo.  

And although the majority of ACAKFF sponsors were relatively removed from the white South's fight to resist desegregation, the campaign to win American support for Katanga's "freedom fighters" nonetheless garnered substantial attention among local segregationist forces in the Deep South.  

In September 1961 the Chatham, Georgia, branch of the Citizens' Councils passed a resolution deploiring the U.N. intervention in Katanga and acerbically contending that "savage and uncivilized countries" such as the Congo were incapable of "self-government." The Mississippi-based segregationist group, Women for Constitutional Government (WCG), viewed a film about Katanga at their 1962 meeting, according to the report of WCG leader Florence Sillers Ogden, and another virulently racist WCG leader, Mary Dawson Cain, urged her

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22 For the last few weeks of December 1961 alone (after the ACKAFF published their advertisement in the New York Times urging conservatives to inundate their senators with mail), the constituent correspondence files of Senator Russell include more than seventy letters and telegrams from Americans furious and baffled at the U.S. participation in the Katanga invasion. The letters range from frank white supremacist rants to carefully worded arguments that Katanga was the only African region capable of helping the U.S. combat Communism. Often the letters came in clusters, all with identical dates, from places like Savannah, Atlanta, or Macon, Georgia, suggesting that a local group of citizen-activists had coordinated in letter-writing campaigns. See folders 12-15, box 12, Russell Papers, UGA. Many of these letters copied verbatim text from the ACAKFF's advertisement.

23 On the Chatham Citizens' Council resolution, see J. Walter Cowart to Richard B. Russell, September 20, 1961, folder 15, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.

Countless other local conservative activists—the California-based women’s organization the Network of Patriotic Letter Writers, right-wing radio host Fulton Lewis Jr., Christian Anti-Communist leader Billy James Hargis, the anticommunist umbrella group the Congress of Freedom, to name just a few—lashed out at the U.S. State Department, the United Nations, and Kennedy for attempting to subdue Katanga.

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24 See Ogden’s handwritten minutes, “Dallas Report,” from the Dallas meeting of the Women for Constitutional government, where she notes that members viewed a film on Katanga, folder 114, box 12, Florence Sillers Ogden Papers, Charles W. Capps Museum and Library, Delta State University, Cleveland, Mississippi (hereafter cited as DSU). Cain’s support for the American Committee, see Summit Sun, December 21, 1961, p. 1, in series S37, reel 120, Right Wing Collection of the University of Iowa Libraries, 1918–1977 (Glen Rock, N.J.: Microfilming Corporation of America, 1978), hereafter cited as RWC. Cain regularly reprinted Katanga-related articles written by other leading conservatives. See, for example, column by Billy James Hargis, see Summit Sun, November 16, 1961, p. 6; and a column by Tom Anderson, conservative syndicated columnist, Summit Sun, January 18, 1962, series S37, reel 120, RWC.

25 Telegram from Rev. James P. Dees to Sam Ervin, December 28, 1961, folder 2747, Senate Records, Series I, Ervin Papers, UNC; Elizabeth Osth to Jack [James Kilpatrick], December 28, 1961, folder “1960–1962, Personal Correspondence O (2 of 2),” box 5, collection 6626-m, James J. Kilpatrick Papers, Special Collections Department, University of Virginia, Charlottesville (hereafter cited as UVA). She mentions in the letter that she was having stickers printed that read “Save Katanga.” For additional information about Osth’s ferocious anticommunist activism, Elizabeth H. Osth, “Boycott of Moscow Symphony Urged,” editorial, Richmond News-Leader, Jan. 13, 1960, 10, and for her opposition to civil rights, see Osth, “Sit-Downs Aid Communist Cause,” editorial, Richmond News-Leader, April 21, 1960, 10.

26 On the Network of Patriotic Letter Writers, see petition and reprinted reports on Katanga invasion, n.d., copy in folder “Katanga—The Congo,” box 26, Knox Mellon Collection, Young Research Library, University of California at Los Angeles. For additional information on the NPLW, see Michelle M. Nickerson, “Domestic Threats: Women, Gender, and Conservatism in Cold War Los Angeles, 1945–1966” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003.) The Congress of Freedom
One thing is certain: the U.N. invasion of Katanga inflamed the grassroots. Right like few other issues in the early 1960s. Many conservatives spoke of Katanga as the final straw in a long string of liberal foreign policy missteps, the catalyst for a new self-awareness and a new uprising among conservative Americans. In short, the U.N. invasion of Katanga functioned as a powerful galvanizing agent and provided a specific target for the discontent and frustration that diverse conservative constituencies had been stewing on for some time. “We are so filled with anger, disgust and humiliation these days at our government’s backing of the U.N. against Katanga...we wish there was some way in which we little ‘grass-roots’ folk could register our profound displeasure,” wrote a North Carolina woman, capturing a common sentiment. In his protest against U.S. Congo policy, a New Orleans man claimed, “the middle class citizen down in the deep South is getting fighting mad.... I think the greatest awakening that the U.S. has ever had is just getting underway.” And a Macon, Georgia, resident fervently hoped that conservative members of Congress could “hold back the new frontier elements” in Washington and that “some of the liberals in Congress will listen to the new voices in the grass roots.”

“Abhorrent,” “unpardonable sin,” “shameful,” “unconscionable,” “foolhardy,” “tragic and repulsive,” “worse than sickening...maddening”—these

passed a resolution at their 1961 meeting in Houston, Texas, that deplored the U.N. “aggression against Katanga” and chided the U.S. State Department for their support; see Summit Sun April 5, 1962, p. 1-2, report on the Houston meeting; and reprint of column by Billy James Hargis, Summit Sun, November 16, 1961, p. 6; both in series S37, reel 120, RWC.

were the words that grassroots American conservatives chose to describe U.S. policy in the Congo. A snapshot of the resentment that smoldered at the grassroots, an executive of a small broadcasting firm in eastern North Carolina, R. W. Schuman, sent an incensed letter to President Kennedy shortly after the Katanga invasion began. “I would like in this letter to take a place beside hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of other American citizens and express my deep horror over the actions of my government, through the United Nations, against President Moïse Tshombe of Katanga.” Schuman continued: “I can not possibly express here the depth of my shame over my government’s policy...but suffice it to say that I heartily endorse the efforts of the American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters.”

Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. Orrell, affluent and well-connected conservative activists from Cardinal, Virginia, provide another illustration of the on-the-ground efforts mounted by the sorts of local organizers who made the modern conservative movement thrive. Virginians May and Robert Orrell looked askance at liberals’ support for civil rights reform; May Orrell, for instance, disparaged the National Council of Churches for endorsing “multi-racial assemblies,” suggesting her sympathy for southern resistance to integration. Yet

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28 “Abhorrent,” see M. H. Vaughan to Ervin, December 22, 1961, folder 2747, Ervin Papers, UNC; “unpardonable sin,” see E. L. Rasbury to John F. Kennedy (CC to Sam Ervin), December 19, 1961, in ibid., “shameful,” see Russell Sorrell to Kennedy (CC to Ervin), December 21, 1961, folder 2747, Ervin Papers, UNC; “unconscionable,” see Thomas J. Wesley Jr. to Kennedy (CC to Russell and Herman Talmadge), December 20, 1961, folder 12, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA; “foolhardy,” Mrs. George S. Birch to Kennedy (CC to Richard Russell), December 30, 1961, folder 11, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA; “tragic and repulsive,” see J. E. Powell Jr. to Richard Russell, January 18, 1963, folder 8, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA; “worse than sickening,” see R. W. Edmonds to Dean Rusk (CC to Russell), December 8, 1961, folder 14, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA; R. W. Schuman to Kennedy (CC to Ervin), December 19, 1961, folder 2747, Ervin Papers, UNC. Many of these letters were sent to Kennedy or Dean Rusk as well as U.S. Senators, on instruction from the ACAAFF.
the Orrells appeared to have more in common with the moderate white Virginians that historian Matthew Lassiter has studied than with the state’s ardent, any-means-necessary segregationist forces. The Virginia husband-and-wife team attended and sponsored conservative rallies in New York City, read books by men like National Review author M. Stanton Evans, and wrote extensively about U.S. foreign affairs in their home-published newsletter “Our Country,” delivered free of charge to all interested conservatives. The couple was outraged by the U.N. military operations in Katanga. Calling the invasion a “horrible slaughter,” May and Robert Orrell hoped to “wake up” the American citizens whose tax dollars helped finance the invasion. In late November 1962 Robert Orrell reported that his wife was “working hard on research” to prepare an issue of “Our Country” devoted to disseminating the findings of the ACAAFF “War in Katanga” report, as well as 46 Angry Men.29

With a strong base of grassroots support in hand and dollars flowing in after aggressive fundraising drives, the ACAAFF leadership sponsored a “fact-finding mission” to Katanga. To lead the investigation the committee turned to Dr. Ernest van den Haag, a choice that may have strengthened the group’s appeal to southern segregationists and likely infuriated civil rights advocates. Intellectually isolated and controversial, the Dutch-born scholar served as an adjunct professor of social philosophy at both New York University and the New

School for Social Research, authored numerous books on sociology, criminology, and social psychology, and sat on the Executive Committee of the "International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics." The IAAEE endorsed biological explanations of racial difference; it promoted the research of such figures as psychology professor Henry Garrett and University of North Carolina anatomy professor Wesley Critz George, who both claimed to have scientifically "proved" the inferiority of the African race and were cited widely in segregationist pamphlets, newsletters, and speeches. Van den Haag himself also proved friendly to southern defenders of white privilege. He lent an imprimatur of authority for the oft-voiced conservative argument that Earl Warren's Supreme Court had been unduly and unconstitutionally swayed in deciding Brown v. Board by the testimony of social scientists such as Kenneth Clark. In the fall 1960 issue of the Villanova Law Review, not long before the National Review contracted him as their principal investigator in the Congo, Ernest van den Haag disparaged Clark's conclusions as "misleading" and "pseudo-scientific," and he contended that integrated schools would yield more psychological damage for black students than segregated ones. Van den Haag's association with the National Review continued well after his Katanga expedition was complete; his writings frequently appeared in Buckley's magazine, including an extended piece in 1964 on the subject of school segregation.30

Van den Haag traveled to the provincial capital Elizabethville in late December of 1961, only days after the United Nations initiated its military operations in Katanga. The polarizing social scientist spent nine total days in the Congo, splitting his time between Elizabethville and Leopoldville, then under the control of U.S.-backed nationalist Cyrille Adoula. Upon his return, the American Committee quickly put into circulation a thirty-page report on van den Haag’s findings, simply titled “The War in Katanga.” Yergan supplied the preface and the ACAKFF marketed the report as a desperately needed counterweight to the “scanty” or biased reports of the true nature of Katanga invasion. Van den Haag’s report, Yergan and the committee’s leadership hoped, might “stimulate re-examination” of the U.S. financial support for the U.N. mission and convince the American public that U.S. security interests and the “future of liberty in Africa” would be better served by a sovereign and unfettered Katanga province. The report alleged that the United Nations had executed their mission in the Congo with a “combination of savagery and incompetence,” inflicting grave injury upon the innocent civilians of Elizabethville. Moise Tshombe appeared as an embattled but valiant hero in van den Haag’s version of events in the Congo; President Kennedy was portrayed as a co-conspirator who had been duped by the demands of the United Nations. Along with materials produced by the Belgian-run Katanga Information Office, van den Haag’s report and other ACAKFF materials became a major source of information on the Congo crisis to conservative Americans.\footnote{Ernest van den Haag, \textit{The War in Katanga: Report of a Mission} (New York: American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters, 1962.)}
The newspaper ads, the "fact-finding mission," and the distribution of van den Haag’s report constituted the major achievements of the American Committee for Aid to Katanga, although the group undertook several other campaigns to attract public attention to the Congo crisis. To supplement their frequent full-page newspaper advertisements, the ACAKFF’s other major media venture was a television film, “Katanga, the Untold Story.” The American Committee reported that its proceeds would provide medical and emergency aid to Katanga residents, although the group appeared to have channeled the bulk of its monetary intake into publicity materials. In early 1962 the State Department denied Tshombe a visa to enter the U.S.—arming the conservative pro-Katanga lobby with a rallying point for their activism. Dubbing the State Department move “outrageous,” ACAKFF supporter James Kilpatrick reported to an American Committee financial contributor that the group planned to launch a legal challenge on Tshombe’s behalf. Kilpatrick doubted the lawsuit would succeed, but he expressed hope that it would at least keep the Katanga issue “before the public.”32 Around the same time, after the Katanga mission had severely depleted the U.N. coffers, the international organization made a plea to the U.S. for additional funds. When Kennedy asked Congress to approve a multi-million dollar bond, the ACAKFF and the National Review used the occasion to demand Congress withhold any additional funds until they completed a full-scale investigation of the Congo invasion. Together the bond issue and the denied visa application helped conservatives keep Katanga in the spotlight.

32 James J. Kilpatrick to Ed Hardway Jr., March 5, 1962, folder “1960–1963, Personal Correspondence: H (1 of 3), box 3, collection 6626 j-k-m, Kilpatrick Papers, UVA.
Despite the bewildering array of competing political factions and cross-cutting problems in the postcolonial Congo, conservative activists were quick to represent the Katanga affair as an unambiguous, cut-and-dried case of right versus wrong, good versus evil, legitimate versus illegitimate claims to freedom. Only Katanga, the province that the National Review called "the lone Congolese rampart against the jungle's advance," had earned the right of self-governance, and its bid for independence from the Central Congolese government therefore deserved the unmitigated support of the United States. According to the conservative story of Katanga, freedom thrived in the pro-Belgian province because its president Moïse Tshombe had preserved a semblance of order: he had acted to defend the property rights of Belgian settlers and business owners, permitted foreign mining companies to continue their lucrative operations, and, unlike the nationalist Lumumba, welcomed cooperative relations with Belgium and the West. Tshombe, in short, had preserved crucial elements of the order that the Belgian colonial state had created.33

This commonly voiced perspective on Tshombe’s regime, like the very term "West" itself, could take on slightly different meanings in the hands of different groups of postwar conservatives. The ACAKFF might have tightly controlled the messages that left their New York City headquarters, but once the Katanga issue spilled into the grassroots conservative arena, the dialogue could assume various shapes. Although National Review editorials, like the one quoted

above, frequently chose the loaded term "jungle" to describe the parts of the Congo in the hands of black nationalists, most American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters material was judiciously worded, free of the coarse racist epithets that southern segregationists so willingly deployed. This did not mean, however, that the American political fallout over the Katanga invasion was race-neutral or disconnected from the politics of civil rights. Descriptions of "law and order" in pro-Belgian Katanga, like law and order rhetoric in the United States, proved supple enough to attract a range of self-described conservatives, from the die-hard segregationists of the Deep South to the moderate whites across the nation who worried about demographic change in their own neighborhoods, from the anti-Communist crusaders in thriving Sunbelt suburbs to the cerebral intimates of William F. Buckley.

The AACKFF lavished praise on the "brave people of Katanga" for battling back what conservatives characterized as the forces of savagery and anarchy in the Congo. The committee acknowledged the challenge of fully understanding the upheaval in the former Belgian colony. "The political situation in the Congo is complicated. Few of us would pretend to understand everything about it." Nevertheless, the AACKFF felt confident in asserting "certain basic facts" in the postcolonial state. "Katanga is the one part of the former Belgian Congo that, in general, managed to preserve law, order, and decency." The Central Congolese government, on the other hand, had "proved its incapacity to govern." This stock image recurred throughout the materials of the right-wing Katanga lobby: whereas the residents of Katanga had "proven their ability" to conduct their political and economic affairs efficiently and
lawfully, the Congolese nationalists were irrational, childlike, and utterly "incapable of maintaining order."\textsuperscript{34}

With a modest amount of tinkering, a racial conservative or a southern segregationist could transform the carefully crafted, ostensibly race-free position of the ACAKFF into a bald appeal to white defiance. Major General Edwin A. Walker, who many Americans considered the embodiment of dangerous right-wing extremism, offers an illustration. A thirty-one-year veteran of the U.S. military, Walker had commanded the unit of U.S. paratroopers sent to Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957 to enforce integration orders at Central High School, despite his personal misgivings about federal intervention in education, and in 1959 he was placed in command of the 24\textsuperscript{th} Infantry Division near the East German–West German border. Then, in the summer of 1961, facing accusations that he had inappropriately "indoctrinated" his troops with conspiratorial theories about Communists, Walker left the United States military under a cloud of ignominy. The general allegedly told his troops to vote only for political candidates endorsed by the conservative Americans for Constitutional Action (ACA), claimed that Harry Truman, Dean Acheson, and Eleanor Roosevelt were all "definitely pink," and disseminated John Birch Society material among his enlisted men. Walker's discharge sparked a firestorm: in the U.S. Senate, Strom Thurmond called for a congressional investigation to determine whether the Pentagon "muzzled" military officers, and Thurmond's segregationist colleague

John Stennis of Mississippi chaired the subsequent hearings. After his ouster
Walker became a hero to the anticommunist Right and to conservative whites in
the Deep South but a scourge to mainstream conservative leaders like Buckley,
who, not unreasonably, felt that Walker only armed liberals with more
ammunition to smear all conservatives as unstable, fanatic nuts. (By 1962 Walker
faced federal charges of inciting insurrection after he urged Mississippiansto
defy Kennedy's attempt to integrate the state's flagship university, Ole Miss, and
he was ordered to undergo mandatory psychiatric evaluations.)

In an incendiary—and widely reprinted—speech that he delivered before
a cheering crowd of thousands at Jackson, Mississippi, in December 1961, shortly
after the Katanga invasion got underway, Walker alternated easily between
foreign and domestic policy topics, lingering on the subject of U.S. policy in the
Congo. The same speech that lauded white Mississippian for standing up
against "federal tyranny" also denounced the United Nations invasion of
Katanga as "a vicious, pro-Communist action," an "immoral, illegal, corrupt,
destructive and murderous" act. The same speech that told southern whites that
they were "being defrauded of your sovereignty" and called civil rights resisters
a "symbol of the cause of freedom everywhere" also lionized President Moise
Tshombe as "one of the few African leaders proven to be anti-Communist and
friendly to the white man," as "a Christian, and the only leader in the Congo
with a proven ability to maintain law and order since the Belgians left." And
Walker paired Mississippi's massive resisters with Katanga's freedom fighters by

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35 On Walker and the Ole Miss integration, see "Walker Asks Drive to Support Barnett if Troops
are Used," New York Times, September 28, 1962, p. 23. See also "Senate Unit Votes Study of
Pentagon," New York Times, September 21, 1961, p. 20. For an overview of the Walker case and
Walker's valorization on the far Right, see Schoenwald, A Time for Choosing, chapter 4; "definitely
arguing that “Communists hate Katanga the way they hate Chiang Kai-shek’s China; the way they hate Franco’s Spain, the way they hate Mississippi—because all of these at one time or another have blocked a specific Communist objective.”

Most likely, the leadership board of the ACAKFF would not have publicly endorsed Walker’s casting of the Katanga crisis in overtly racial tones, his rendering of Tshombe as “friendly to the white man,” or his praise for Mississippi’s defiant whites. Nevertheless, the shell of Walker’s position differed little from the ACAKFF’s. Both emphasized Tshombe’s track record for establishing law and order; both noted that Tshombe had vowed support for anti-Communist nations, and both associated Katanga’s secession crusade with the noble cause of human freedom. Walker only added what the ACAKFF left unspoken: that Tshombe cooperated willingly with “the white man” and that, along with the politics of anti-Communism and the politics of U.S. foreign policy, the politics of race were undeniably at play in Katanga. In their December 14 New York Times advertisement, the ACAKFF had reminded American readers that the UN invasion had destroyed “hospitals, churches, missions, and worker-camps” in Katanga, thereby subtly reminding readers that Belgian settlers and the institutions they had built were the primary victims of the UN-led and U.S.-supported operation to unify the Congo. The campaigns to support the “freedom fighters” in Katanga carved out ample space for pro-segregation conservatives to join with other types of postwar conservatives.37


Like Walker, conservatives at the southern grassroots also introduced their own nuances and variations into the basic message that law and order had deteriorated in the Congo following the withdrawal of Belgian colonial rule. The standard conservative conception of law and order in the Congo revealed that many white Americans instinctually equated white European rule with order and black African rule with disorder—not unlike white homeowners' tendency to associate African American residents with deteriorating conditions and lawlessness in urban neighborhoods in the United States. A man from Atlanta, Georgia, wondered if the U.S. Congress or the American president might act to restore colonial rule in the Congo. "It appears that the Congo was certainly not ready for independence...I wonder, even over the protest of the Congolese people, whether it would be at all possible to recommend that the Belgian government take over the Congo for another 25 years." Revealing his sense that a smoothly running economy and a stable system of governance were more important than the ideals of self-determination, he asserted that Belgium deserved control over the Congo because the tiny European nation had "operated the Congo on a profitable basis and had law and order well established in the area."

Conservatives, both at the grassroots and leadership levels, used the slippery term "pro-Western" to describe Moise Tshombe's Katanga government. Sometimes they applied the label "pro-Western" simply as a synonym for "anti-Communist" or "pro-capitalist," but in other cases, they used racially or

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religiously coded definitions of "pro-Western" and "anti-Western." In the case of the Congo, Tshombe and Katanga were considered pro-Western because they worked cooperatively with Belgium and with mercenary soldiers from places like anti-Communist South Africa; Congolese nationalists like Lumumba and his ideological successors were anti-Belgian and therefore anti-Western.

Conservatives could carry this transitive property further, arguing that all anticolonial movements were pro-Communist, since African nationalists worked against Western European democracies. This line of thinking made the colonial system pro-Western and pro-American—contrary to the liberal suggestion that U.S support for decolonization aided American interests on the African continent.

While left-leaning American observers denounced Tshombe as a colonial stooge, the provincial leader's friendly relations with Belgium were precisely why conservative Americans considered Tshombe nothing less than a hero.

The notion of Katanga as a friend to the West surfaced repeatedly, often with different inflections. James Kilpatrick, the southern newspaper editor who actively promoted the work of the ACAKFF, articulated a common conservative view when he called Katanga "the West's best and strongest anti-Communist friend in Africa."³⁹ This image circulated among grassroots supporters of Katanga's "freedom fighters" as well. For instance, J. Milton Lent, an active conservative crusader from Savannah, Georgia (whose wife, Mrs. J. Milton Lent, headed a small but vigorous local organization known as The Conservatives and published a newsletter called the Bulletin Board of the Conservatives, formed in 1961 after a conference sponsored by Human Events) described Katanga as "the

most pro western, Christian, civilized, and stable country of central Africa” and as “our best friend in Africa.” On one hand, the Lents endorsed Kilpatrick’s general sentiment; they considered Tshombe an ally worthy of U.S. support. But, as Lent’s references to Katanga as “Christian” and “civilized” indicated, the Savannah couple had more than U.S. security interests in mind when they praised Tshombe’s regime and urged U.S. friendship with Katanga. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lent were as staunchly segregationist as they were staunchly conservative, and it seems clear that their ideas about race and religion shaped their perspectives on the Katanga secession. Lent saw a natural affinity between the U.S. and Tshombe based in Christianity and in Katanga’s pro-Belgian orientation.40

Countless other conservative Americans advanced virtually identical perspectives. To quote several additional voices from the grassroots, Moise Tshombe was “the closest thing to a pro-Western, anti-Red leader that can be found in the turbulent Congo, and his province was...the most orderly in the region.” Katanga and its “relatively stable law-abiding government, which has always been western oriented,” is “trying to be a friend of the West,” whereas the rest of the Congo was “now and has always been anti-West.”41 Katanga was

40 J. Milton Lent to Russell, January 2, 1963, folder 8, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA. For more on Mr. and Mrs. J. Milton Lent, see Bulletin Board of the Conservatives, series C46, reel 31, RWC; copies of Bulletin Board newsletters also in folder 13, box 126, Tom Anderson Papers, Knight Library, University of Oregon. Lent labored successfully to get the state of Georgia to pass the “liberty amendment,” an effort to annul the Sixteenth Amendment and make the income tax illegal. See “Liberty Wins in Georgia,” American Progressive 7 (March-April 1962), series A43, reel 7, RWC, which describes Mr. Lent’s leadership. Senator Russell received dozens of pro-Katanga letters from Savannah, likely a byproduct of the local meetings and organizing of members of the Lent’s “The Conservatives” group.

41 First quotation, (“the closest thing”), see William G. Preussel Jr. to Sam Ervin, December 25, 1961, folder 2747, Ervin Papers, UNC; remaining quotations (“relatively stable,” “trying to be,” “is now and has always been”) William F. Story to Russell, December 12, 1961, folder 13, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.
"an anti-Communist friend of the Free World," unlike the "communist dominated group of savages" that governed the Congo's other provinces.\textsuperscript{42} Why, inquired a retired United States Air Force officer in a December 1961 newspaper editorial, would the United States help "to beat into submission a pro-Western, predominantly Christian, well run, progressive Katanga province" and support the U.N. mission to reunite Katanga with the "disorganized, Communist-dominated Central Government?"\textsuperscript{43}

As the quotations above indicate, many U.S. conservatives were fond of noting Moise Tshombe's Christianity. Senate Majority Leader Richard Russell was among the many who favorably referred to Tshombe's Methodist affiliation and Katanga's "Christian institutions of government." For many on the Right, Christianity and democracy were not merely compatible but actually constitutive of one another: Christianity stood foremost among the cultural values that created the order necessary for freedom to flourish, and Tshombe's religious affiliation reinforced the notion that true order could thrive in Katanga whereas the rest of the Congo required Belgium or another outside power to introduce discipline and order.\textsuperscript{44} When postwar conservatives sought to explain, for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[42] Harold S. Williams and Clifton A. Dukes, December 22, 1961, folder 12, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.
\end{footnotes}
instance, why America’s revolution against British colonialism had resulted in an orderly, constitutional republic and why the Congo’s revolution against Belgium had not, they often pointed to the role of religious faith in early American society. Christian morals, they argued, furnished an inner code of self-discipline, an internal source of order that put a check on liberty—an idea that had been a staple of U.S. political discourse in one form or another since the eighteenth century.

But as some postwar Americans increasingly imagined individual rights and freedoms in secular terms, like those laid out in the religion-free Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it fell to conservatives to uphold the idea that American democracy worked because of the Christian character of its citizenry. Founder of the rightist Christian Freedom and publisher of *Christian Economics*, conservative Christian Howard Kershner remarked: “The more we study the Ten Commandments, the more we perceive how basically important they are to the maintenance of freedom. . . . If men do not voluntarily discipline themselves by loyalty to the laws of God, then they must be disciplined by ... the iron heel of authoritarian government.”45 Kershner implied that Christian societies were

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orderly because religion lent a moral structure, a higher law that governed individual behavior. Conversely, his words conveyed the impression that in the absence of Christian ethics or some set of divine law, order in a society had to be externally imposed by individuals who had attained the ability to internally regulate their personal conduct. In this way religious conservatives wedded Christianity and freedom. Christianity, along with other elements of Western culture, supplied the internal order necessary to a free, self-governing society.

The implication of these arguments, of course, was that in the absence of internal mechanisms of self-restraint and self-discipline, the non-Christian Congolese must have discipline imposed upon them externally through colonial or neo-colonial arrangements. The postcolonial crisis in the Congo allowed conservative Christians to deepen and extend the objections they first articulated in the wake of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the provision of individual rights and freedoms should not necessarily be universal—rather, the rights of humans had to be tethered to certain cultural traits, including a religious values system that created order. Katanga, as a province with a Christian leader, had demonstrated a capacity for orderly freedom, whereas the other provinces of the Congo patently had not; thus, conservatives concluded that Katanga deserved the right of self-determination where the rest of the former Belgian colony did not.

Free-market conservatives also appreciated that Tshombe had kept the engine of Katanga’s economy running and protected the financial interests of foreign investors and business owners. In particular, they lauded Tshombe for preserving what they believed Belgium had created: prosperity, development of the Congo’s natural resources, a capitalist system, and an orderly class of
laborers. Columnist Robert Ruark applauded Belgium for bringing “order” to the Congo, imposing a “respect for law,” and protecting “the rights of property.” AKAFF materials often commended the pro-Belgian leader for ensuring that Katanga’s mines continued to produce, and the American Friends for Katanga, a smaller though similarly conceived organization, applauded Katanga for its belief in “free-enterprise, the basic rights of the individual, and the sanctity of private property.” Katanga was a “free, self-supporting and fiercely anti-communist state” that had never “asked for a handout from the American taxpayer,” unlike the many decolonized African nations that received U.S. aid payments. The American Friends of Katanga group was baffled that the United States and the United Nations were trying to destroy what it considered the only orderly, productive economy in Central Africa.

Grassroots conservatives too seized Katanga’s economic vibrancy as another reason to oppose the UN mission to quell the secession. John R. Cella, resident of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, congratulated Tshombe for his conciliatory attitude toward Belgian officials, technicians, and investors. Tshombe, wrote Cella, “uses the skills of the Belgians to make his country progressive instead of throwing them out of the country on independence day. In return for private investment of capital, he assures free enterprise and no

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socialistic interference." In contrast, Cella thought the Central Congolese government was "characterized clearly by chaos, leftist leanings, savagery, and no hope of economic stability." Cella also called Kennedy’s policies "reckless" and expressed hope that Americans could "start a trend to constitutional government at home," suggesting his anti-liberalism and possibly his opposition to civil rights legislation.48

Whether they were discussing the orderliness of Katanga’s economy or the order Tshombe’s Christianity supplied, conservatives implied that Belgian colonials had introduced the only source of law and order in the Congo. And because postwar conservatives, more than liberals, emphasized the need for order to precede the extension of political rights or individual freedoms, the American Right tended to believe that the cause of freedom in Africa was best served by the continuation of colonialism, not the end of European rule. If order disappeared, then freedom disappeared. Many white Americans believed that the withdrawal of Belgian forces necessarily spelled the collapse of law and order. Convinced the black Congolese lacked internal mechanisms of self-discipline, they insisted that order had to be imposed from external forces. At the heart of this dichotomy was a conservative worldview that associated the Christian, European heritage with freedom and democracy and an African heritage with the kind of disorder that imperiled freedom.

Exemplifying this logic, Professor Hans F. Sennholz wrote a revealing editorial for the conservative weekly Human Events. Sennholz, an economist at a small Pennsylvania college and a sponsor of the ACAKFF, spoke glowingly

48 John Cella to Ervin, December 7, 1961, folder 2747, Ervin Papers, UNC ("uses the skills"); Cella to Ervin, December 19, 1962, folder 3212, Ervin Papers, UNC.
about European colonialism, a system that, in his words, "carried the light of
Western civilization into all corners of a dark globe." If colonial rule disrupted or
displaced the cultural traditions of native inhabitants, maintained Sennholz,
sounding every bit like a nineteenth-century imperialist, the world had little to
mourn, since the West brought political, economic, and religious systems that
were "preferable by far to the barbarism of stone-age clans and tribes." The
economics professor went on to extol the contributions of "Western law and
order" for societies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Western law and order,"
he wrote, "proved more viable not only for economic betterment and
technological progress, but also for peaceful cooperation and the preservation of
human life." 49

Having established his general view that European imperial rule benefited
colonizer and colonized alike, Sennholz turned to the particular case of African
demands for self-determination. He conceded that the "right to self-
government" was fundamental, an ideal worthy of pursuit, but he doubted
whether law, order, and stability could survive without the presence of
European administrators. "There cannot be any doubt that the withdrawal of
European occupation forces would have thrown most colonies into a wild state
of bloody chaos," wrote Sennholz, likely thinking about the Congo. "The law
and order which the European countries had imposed, the peace and
cooperation...would have vanished immediately." He praised the "responsible,"
"wise" European leaders who had refused immediate independence for colonies

Arnold Foster and Benjamin R. Epstein, Danger on the Right (New York: Random House, 1964),
199, note that Sennholz also served as a contributing editor for American Opinion, the magazine of
the John Birch Society.
in Africa and Asia. African nationalists, he argued, could not promote and did not wish to promote true freedom and independence. Rather, anticolonial nationalists sought a “kind of independence that responsible European statesmen dreaded...the freedom to destroy the achievements of the West.” He continued: “To the many new countries in Africa, independence means mainly the freedom to expel racial and linguistic minorities forcibly, especially the white settlers and merchants, and the freedom to seize or destroy European property.” Underlying Sennholz’s words was a worldview where European cultural influence translated into stability, freedom, and prosperity, and African rule degenerated inevitably into chaos.⁵⁰

To Sennholz, true freedom demanded a structure of law, order, and the protection of individual rights to property. Yet, like the many Americans who for so long had imagined Africa as a place more primitive, more uncivilized, more barbarous than any other on earth, Sennholz could not conceive of black Africans conducting responsible, orderly self-government without close oversight from European administrators. To him European culture was synonymous with civilized, orderly living—and African culture with unchecked licentiousness. In his mind, therefore, decolonization diminished freedom by removing the orderliness necessary for true liberty to exist. Moreover, Sennholz believed that freeing black Africans from the hierarchical controls of colonialism further undermined human freedom because the individual rights of European settlers—the carriers of “true” liberty—would be squelched once decolonization occurred. To protect human freedom, Sennholz implied, the United States

⁵⁰ Sennholz, “In Defense of Colonialism.”
should preserve the colonial system and promote the rights of those with a proven ability to maintain *orderly* freedom: the white European settlers.

Here Sennholz, spokesman for the ACAKFF and *Human Events*, sounded remarkably similar to some white American homeowners in the South and beyond it. As historian Kevin Kruse has shown in his study of anti–civil rights activism in Atlanta, Georgia, conservative white Americans often juxtaposed *individual* rights against the concepts of civil or human rights. In the minds of many white conservatives, the concept of individual rights included the rights of parents, homeowners, and business owners to determine their neighbors, their patrons, and their children’s classmates—what Kruse terms “freedom of association.” Civil rights legislation, as they saw it, infringed upon individual rights and individual freedoms, because desegregation laws forbid shopkeepers from freely choosing how they would conduct business, homeowners from freely selecting a buyer for the sale of their properties, or parents from determining the course of their child’s education. In short, many white Americans who did not consider themselves racists or segregationists came to conclude that federal civil rights laws curtailed the sacred freedoms of American democracy: the sanctity of private property, the right of free enterprise, and the institutions of the family and child-rearing.51

Like a Georgia man who blasted the U.S. State Department for supporting the Katanga invasion, claiming that liberal diplomats were foolishly trying to “destroy anyone who favors freedom of the individual, Christianity, and free enterprise,” many American conservatives applied a variation of the philosophy

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Kruse describes to the Congo. According to the common conservative interpretation, Christian Katanga was trying to preserve individual rights and freedoms, like the rights of Belgian business owners to operate Katanga’s mines and the rights of Belgian settlers to stay in Central Africa. In this conservative narrative the Congolese nationalists were working *against* individual rights; they wanted to seize control of the mineral wealth and lands that were the rightful property of Belgians, and they wanted to destroy the order, prosperity, and civilization that the Belgian colonial state had created.52

With few exceptions, the political rifts created by the Katanga controversy mirrored the divides created by the American civil rights movement. Die-hard segregationists lined up behind pro-Belgian Katanga because they had a direct stake in rationalizing continued European influence on the Africa continent. But, just as there were Americans uncomfortable with civil rights reform for reasons other than sheer unadulterated racism, the Katanga crisis tapped into deeply held beliefs about property, freedoms, and lawfulness. When conservative Americans characterized Katanga as “pro-western,” “law-abiding,” “stable,” or “prosperous” while using expressions like “jungle rule” to describe the rest of the Congo, they reinforced racial ideologies that associated white rule with efficiency and rationality and black rule with chaos and unrestrained barbarism. When voices from the Right labeled the pro-Belgian Katanga residents as “freedom fighters” and the Congolese nationalists as Communist agents, they buttressed segregationist claims that black liberation movements aided the Soviet cause and were vulnerable to Soviet manipulation. Individuals could oppose the

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52 W. E. Wilson to Russell, December 8, 1961, folder 14, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.
use of U.N. force in Katanga for reasons that had nothing to do with race or human rights. However, the language and imagery invoked by conservative critics of U.S. Congo policy blended seamlessly with the types of arguments white southerners made about the African American freedom struggle.

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At the core of the conservative philosophy was a premise that stressed the need to prove readiness for political rights and earn the privilege individual freedoms. Like the concept that order had to come before freedom, the notion of "readiness" for rights certainly was not new or unique to post-1945 U.S. conservatism. On the contrary, such notions had been built into the history of liberal thought and inscribed into the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century empire-building. But changes in the post–World War II era, both in the direction of American liberalism and in international human rights discourse, left conservatives more isolated in their insistence that rights were not axiomatically guaranteed to every human being. Conservatives preferred to speak of their philosophy in terms of individual rights rather than human rights, and they emphasized personal responsibilities that came along with individual liberties.

In his notorious inaugural address of 1963, George Wallace lashed out at liberal "pseudo-intellectual" spokesmen for swapping a theory "of what it calls 'human rights' for individual rights." To Wallace, the human rights ideology translated into a "theory that everyone has voting rights without the spiritual responsibilities of preserving freedoms." America's founding fathers had supported voting rights and government by consent of governed, Wallace contended, "but only within the framework of spiritual responsibilities." The
bombastic governor expressed his profound dismay with the direction of liberal ideas about rights and responsibilities: the “so-called ‘progressives’” had abandoned the “strong, simple faith and sane reasoning of our founding fathers” and had left behind the wisdom of “our Constitution” and “the Ten Commandments.” In its place, liberals had embraced a philosophy where all people were automatically entitled to basic political and economic freedoms—whether or not they had demonstrated an appropriate degree of responsibility for those rights.53

Law and order, economic stability, an educated populace—these were, as conservatives saw it, absolute prerequisites to political freedoms. Many conservatives applied this logic identically to African Americans in the United States and to black Africans in the Congo. Writing about voting rights in the U.S., the segregationist activist Florence Sillers Ogden emphasized that the franchise was neither an “inherent right” nor an entitlement of every American. She reported that her “blood [was] boiling” over John and Robert Kennedy’s attempt to interfere with what Ogden disarmingly referred to as Mississippi’s “voting requirement laws” like the literacy test. “It is a privilege to vote,” she seethed. “A citizen must earn this privilege by proving proper qualifications for such high responsibility.”54 The rural Mississippian neatly transplanted her convictions about political rights onto the Katanga situation. Just as she believed black Mississippians had not sufficiently earned their right to participate in democracy, she also was convinced that the nations emerging from colonialism in Africa had

53 Wallace, inaugural address, ADAH.
54 Florence Sillers Ogden, “Kennedy Clan Slaps at State,” in Summit Sun, September 30, 1962, p. 7, series S37, reel 120, RWC.
not sufficiently proved that they could handle individual freedoms and the right of self-determination. Baffled by what she perceived to be an absurd double standard, Ogden struggled to make sense of Kennedy's policy in the Congo. "We refuse anti-Communist Katanga, the best qualified of the underdeveloped nations, self-government," yet U.S. policymakers "grant it [self-rule] to every bush tribe in Africa, even though we know that they are not qualified for self-government and will be under Communist domination."55

The American Right's interpretations of the Katanga secession revealed that all types of conservative Americans were as eager as Wallace to argue that rights had to come with responsibility—responsibilities like establishing order, having an independent, self-sustaining economy, and the "responsibility" of supporting the United States in its all-consuming battle with international Communism. Unless a people or a nation fulfilled one or more of these responsibilities, they had no claim to the right of self-government or the right to have a voice in international decision-making. Katanga (like the white governments of Rhodesia and South Africa) had lived up to their end of the bargain, as conservatives saw things, and so Katanga had a rightful claim to self-determination, whereas the rest of the Congo had not. Conservative representations of the Congo directly contested the premise of human rights doctrine: rights were not forthcoming to every human; rights and individual freedoms were conditional and revocable.

If foreign policy and domestic policy questions could be neatly contained within discrete spheres, as historical scholarship once tended to presume, the

55 Ogden "Mississippi Begins Year as Occupied Territory; World Front," "Dis 'n' Dat," January 6, 1963, folder 213, box 29, Ogden Papers, DSU.
Katanga/Congo crisis might never have galvanized conservatives as it did. If stories of Congolese violence against white Belgians settlers might have been cordoned off from the charged debates over African American civil rights, the white South might never have taken notice of events transpiring in Central Africa. The voices of open segregationists like Wallace or Ogden indicate that southern conservatives understood the relevance of events in decolonized Africa to their domestic fight to keep African Americans disenfranchised. And the voices of anticommunist conservatives like the National Review-dominated AACKFF—though they spoke about order, prosperity, responsibility, and stability rather than race—suggest how easy it was for racial conservatives to see their values reflected in the broader conservative outcry over Kennedy’s policies in Katanga.

During the Kennedy era conservative leaders went to work devising a foreign policy program in line with their vision of rights, responsibilities, and freedom. The postcolonial crisis in the former Belgian Congo helped conservatives sharpen and clarify their critique of Cold War liberalism; it sparked a tremendous surge of grassroots conservative anger, and it furnished an issue that conservatives of all stripes could rally behind. At a moment when the conservative movement was struggling to define itself, events in faraway Africa drove the progress of the American Right’s revolt.

From the perspective of policymakers, U.S. policies toward the Congo or Angola may have seemed peripheral, relatively insignificant when placed against the backdrop of the global Cold War. But these places were crucial to the progress of the postwar conservative movement in the United States. These were the places where conservatives tried to expose what they perceived as the flaws
and cracks in Cold War liberal strategy, and these were the places where conservatives believed they could gain political traction among those American voters disgruntled, bewildered, and disaffected by liberal policy choices. In the wake of the Cold War crises in Algeria, Angola, and especially the Congo, conservatives crafted a specific, alternative path for U.S. power in the world; the ideology and application of the conservative foreign policy vision is the subject of Part III.
PART III: "OUR TIME-TESTED FRIENDS": THE IDEOLOGY AND APPLICATION OF COLD WAR CONSERVATISM

"I think we [conservatives] are against the hypocrisy of assailing our allies because here and there they cling to a colony, while we engage in a conspiracy of silence and never open our mouths about the millions of people enslaved in Soviet colonies...."

-- Ronald Reagan, "A Time for Choosing,"
Speech in support of presidential nominee Barry Goldwater
Aired October 27, 1964

Foreign policymaking, like all policymaking, is about choosing priorities—identifying the gravest threats, weighing potential tradeoffs, balancing interests and ideals. In a nationally televised address that conservatives have come to know simply as "The Speech," Ronald Reagan made clear how a Goldwater administration would prioritize the competing demands of America's international affairs. Reagan started by summarizing the stakes.

"We're at war with the most dangerous enemy that has ever faced mankind," the soon-to-be California governor explained. Only the United States, the cradle of human freedom, had the power to vanquish that enemy: "If we lose freedom here, there's no place to escape to. This is the last stand on earth." The threat was too perilous, the consequences of failure too grave, for the United States to adopt any strategy other than one that sought total victory.

"Our well-meaning liberal friends," Reagan reported, had regrettably failed to recognize the magnitude of the Communist threat and had therefore chosen incorrect priorities. The rising conservative star proceeded to list specific grievances with liberal foreign policies. Here Reagan touched several of the same hot-button topics as had George Wallace's 1963 inaugural speech. Liberals, he argued, had hamstrung U.S. policy by placing too much emphasis on the
vagaries of international opinion at the United Nations. "I think we're for an
international organization, where the nations of the world can seek peace. But I
think we're against subordinating American interests to an organization that has
become so structurally unsound that today you can muster a two-thirds vote on
the floor of the General Assembly among nations that represent less than 10
percent of the world's population." Wallace, in his distinctively derisive style,
had spoken of the United States being "footballed" by the "Afro-Asian bloc" at
the UN, but Reagan used more dispassionate tones, staying focused on national
defense. Still, members of Reagan's rapt television audience undoubtedly caught
his implication: the fact that decolonization had swelled the UN's ranks with
new African and Asian member-states. That expanded membership had enabled
the General Assembly to force the Security Council to consider resolutions on
topics like Portugal's African colonies or apartheid in South Africa—resolutions
that most conservatives, Reagan included, considered frivolous diversions from
the more important matter of defeating Communists.

Indeed, Reagan next went on to denounce the "hypocrisy" of criticizing
America's European allies for holding colonies, quoted in the epigraph.
Softhearted liberals had foolishly allowed anticolonial ideals to distract them
from the sinister plots of the *real* colonial aggressors, the Soviet Union and
Communist China. Meanwhile, an incredulous Reagan observed, liberals had
unjustly attacked America's closest friends in the Cold War and turned their
backs on those suffering under the heel of communist totalitarianism. According
to Reagan, the people living in the so-called captive nations of Eastern Europe
were the *real* victims in the postwar world, not the people of colonized Africa,
since, as his speech implied, living under the rule of a free Western power was surely not so bad as living under Soviet tyranny.

As the California conservative suggested again and again, not only were the liberals’ choices unwise from a national security standpoint, they were also morally and spiritually wrong. To leave a “billion human beings” in Eastern Europe and East Asia “enslaved behind the Iron Curtain” constituted an accommodation with evil. Facing an immoral enemy, the United States needed a strong-handed approach, a strategy that never deviated from the relentless pursuit of victory. And yet the liberals had elected a path of passivity. They were content to merely contain the enemy rather than confront it. They had selected a course that betrayed America’s longstanding allies, and they had placed other values above the best interests of the United States. Their foreign-policy priorities, Reagan firmly concluded, were unacceptable. Barry Goldwater offered America something better.¹

The 1964 “Time for Choosing” speech catapulted Reagan into the national political limelight. In it, he offered a succinct articulation of the foreign policy philosophy that conservatives had been formulating for more than a decade. Seen retrospectively, conservatives’ recommendations do not look altogether different from the policies that vital-center Democratic presidents actually pursued. Yet conservatives in the early 1960s believed that they had a markedly different plan for American power in the world. That plan—the specific,

concrete policy ideas that conservatives championed—is the subject of this chapter.2

Summarized compactly, conservatives endorsed a policy whereby America took an unswerving, aggressive path toward victory over communism. Any nation that helped the United States on this path deserved America’s unequivocal loyalty, and any issue that did not directly relate to the defeat of communism would have to be shelved. Multilateral collaboration, such as the NATO alliance, was desirable where it served U.S. interests, but if international organizations hindered the United States in its primary mission, then conservatives urged unilateral action. Decrying the containment doctrine as overly timid, conservatives endorsed a muscular, nationalistic approach to policymaking unfettered by United Nations edicts or the vagaries of international opinion. Finally, as Reagan’s reference to hypocrisy indicated, conservatives thought liberals had been foolish to encourage accelerated timetables for decolonization; the United States should be grateful to see the salutary influence of Europe remain on the African continent, and, rather than courting the friendship of African nationalists, American policymakers should cement alliances with anti-Communist Western Europe, the nations that shared a common civilization, culture, and political heritage of democracy with the United States.

Any of these views might have been articulated purely out of concern for the strategic Cold War interests of the United States, without consideration for the racial dynamics at play when, for example, America faced a U.N. vote that
pitted NATO ally Portugal against Angola and Mozambique. But each of these conservative foreign policy recommendations were malleable enough for someone like George Wallace to insert the politics of race—sometimes overtly, sometimes subtly—and capacious enough to accommodate the views of impassioned anti-Communists and the defenders of white privilege.

These conservative foreign-policy perspectives usually originated on the anticommunist Right, among individuals and leaders who believed they were defending American freedom and national security. But by the early 1960s, compatible foreign-policy views appeared among segregationists—among those individuals whose foremost concern was defending white supremacy. Minor differences notwithstanding, both groups forged a tentative consensus about the potential dangers of independent African republics, the wisdom of preserving Western colonialism where it still endured, and the need for a muscular U.S. foreign policy that prioritized anticommunism above all other ideals. In Part III, chapter 7 outlines the post-Kennedy conservative foreign policy vision, suggesting how the vision emerged out of places where the Cold War and anticolonialism collided, and the epilogue uses the example of U.S. policy in southern Africa to analyze how the vision operated.
CHAPTER 7: A CONSERVATIVE VISION FOR U.S. FOREIGN POLICY EMERGES, 1961–1964

— "What Americans call 'liberalism' is the ideology of Western suicide."
James Burnham, National Review editor
In Suicide of the West: An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism, 1964

Although political philosophies are rarely single-handedly forged, the leading chroniclers of twentieth-century intellectual conservatism agree that no single individual left a greater imprint on the development of conservative foreign-policy philosophies than James Burnham. A prolific writer, Burnham published more than half a dozen books over the course of his career and authored scores of articles, and from the time the National Review debuted in 1955 until 1978, he wrote the magazine’s weekly foreign policy column, “The Third World War.” Jonathan M. Schoenwald describes Burnham’s impact on the conservative movement as “difficult to overestimate.” Even stronger praise, the author of intellectual conservatism’s most comprehensive (and highly sympathetic) history, George H. Nash, calls Burnham “probably the most influential right-wing critic of liberal foreign policies after 1945.” Burnham, explains Nash, “provided the theoretical formulation for the conservative critique of liberal foreign policies,” and he “made militant, global anti-Communism a characteristic of the postwar intellectual Right.”


Written in 1964, Burnham’s *Suicide of the West* represented the culmination of his perspectives on Cold War liberalism. Described more fully below, in the book Burnham argued that when liberals expressed solidarity with the aims of anticolonial revolutions and called for a re-imagined relationship with the formerly colonized world, they were leading the United States and, indeed, all of Western civilization, toward certain downfall. Were conservatives in charge, Burnham averred, the United States would abandon the suicidal course of the Kennedy liberals and embrace its longstanding, culturally similar allies in Western Europe and Western European settler states like South Africa. Burnham serves as a convenient vehicle to illustrate how the Cold War in Africa and other parts of the decolonizing world allowed conservatives to construct an alternate vision for U.S. power in the world. Through the influential Burnham, we can trace conservatives’ dissent from Truman’s containment policy, their nascent anger in the Eisenhower years, and their hardening contempt for Cold War liberalism during the Kennedy administration. We can also see how Burnham moved from seeing the Soviet Union as the principal enemy of the United States to a worldview where anticolonial nationalism and communism had merged into a single sinister force, determined to destroy the West.

Burnham and his like-minded colleagues at the *National Review* are figures that modern-day conservatives proudly include in their lineage; although there is a reasonable amount of scattered evidence to suggest that Burnham disapproved of civil rights protestors, he rarely commented on the South’s fight against court-ordered desegregation and therefore steered clear of the political taint of white supremacy. Yet it hardly required a great stretch of imagination for southern segregationists or opponents of black protest in other parts of the nation to
overlay a racialized perspective on Burnham’s call for a reinvigorated alliance of Western, predominantly Christian nations. Americans’ ideas about racial, cultural, and religious differences translated into particular perspectives on the proper aims and uses of American power overseas. Racial conservatives and conservative Christians found a great deal to like in the foreign policy prescriptions Burnham put together.

The chapter begins with the voices of well-known leaders, including Burnham and Barry Goldwater, then shifts focus to regular American citizens, showing how ideas circulated among elite- and grassroots-level conservatives. Although the chapter does not argue that all conservatives spoke in perfect unison about U.S. power in the world, it does suggest that conservatives developed a shared set of policy recommendations, and self-identified conservatives of all stripes began to aggressively market an alternative course for the United States in the world.

I. CONSERVATIVE ELITES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY THOUGHT

In terms of domestic policy, twentieth-century American conservatism has evinced a fair bit of ideological continuity. On issues of business, labor, taxation, social welfare, and government intervention in education and health care, conservative philosophies looked much the same before and after World War II.¹

The war, however, forced the American Right to regroup and reinvent itself with regard to its perspectives on U.S. foreign policy. Many prewar conservatives had espoused some variant of isolationism, and a good number drifted toward groups like the anti-interventionist American First Committee. But after the war and especially after the horrors of the Holocaust came to light in the United States, isolationism, which had often been tainted by anti-Semitism, lost the last remaining crumbs of public respectability. What really pushed conservatives away from isolationism, however, was the emergence of new enemies: the Soviet Union and, after 1949, Communist China.

The American Right’s evolution from anti-interventionism to anticommunist militarism happened gradually and sometimes uneasily. Some remnants of Old Right isolationism survived into the postwar period. The foremost postwar spokesperson for anti-internationalism was undoubtedly Ohio senator and perennial presidential candidate Robert A. Taft. “Mr. Republican,” the nickname that Taft’s supporters applied approvingly and his foes used sardonically, had opposed American entry in World War II until the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. Taft was an inveterate foe of “creeping socialism,” yet he harbored deep skepticism about entangling alliances even after America exchanged its fight against fascism for a fight against international Communism. The maverick senator broke with members of his own party to speak against the creation of NATO, and he contended that U.S. defense policy should focus on Asia, not Eastern Europe. Liberal historians such as Arthur Schlesinger or

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4 Historians have given remarkably little attention to the topic of the Right’s transition away from isolation. Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, especially chapter 4, provides an account of the anticommunism of East Coast intellectuals; and Joyce Mao has written an important new study about conservatism and the Cold War in Asia. Mao, “Asia First: China and American Conservatism, 1937–1965” (PhD diss., University of California at Berkeley, 2007).
Richard Hofstadter sometimes have turned Taft into a caricature of the naïve neo-isolationist conservative, mulishly refusing to acknowledge America's duties as leader of the free world. In fact Taft's views were more complex, and he was never purely isolationist. He was, however, decidedly out of step with the direction of postwar conservatism and the postwar Republican Party, and the conservative passage from prewar isolationism symbolically ended with Taft's unexpected death in 1953. By the early 1950s the majority of self-described conservatives had grown convinced that an expansionist Soviet Union posed a legitimate threat to freedom and that the United States had to confront the danger aggressively and proactively—so by 1953, right-wing Republican Senator William Knowland of California could confidently declare: "We can no more return to isolationism than an adult can return to childhood."

Once most conservatives had come to believe that a robust, active, powerful United States could best protest freedom in the world, the challenge was to differentiate the conservative program from Cold War liberalism, which profoundly dissatisfied the Right. While it was easier to criticize liberals than to propose alternatives, right-wing leaders slowly devised their own vision for U.S. foreign policy; we turn now to James Burnham to explore the evolution of their vision.

Degrees from Princeton and Oxford in hand, James Burnham began his long career as a conservative thinker at New York University, where he held a

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faculty position in the philosophy department from 1929 until 1953. Like a surprising number of intellectuals on the postwar right, Burnham actually started out on the political left. Though never a doctrinaire Marxist, he subscribed to a variety of leftist philosophies throughout the 1930s, particularly the ideas of Leon Trotsky. In 1934 Burnham joined the Fourth International and won recognition as a speaker for the American Socialist Workers Party. But he swiftly grew disenchanted with the Left after the brutalities of Josef Stalin’s regime became apparent. Only months after Stalin and Hitler signed their August 1939 non-aggression pact, Burnham publicly and permanently repudiated Marxism, Trotskyism, and all related ideologies. His political metamorphosis continued in the early 1950s; he moved farther still to the right after the U.S. Senate censured Senator Joseph McCarthy, convinced that myopic liberals had unfairly smeared the Wisconsin congressman, and shortly after McCarthy’s precipitous downfall, Burnham won entry into the inner sanctum of conservative intellectualism: the editorial board of the National Review. He also served as a board member for several of the organizations described in chapters 5 and 6, including the American Committee for France and Algeria and the American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters.

First published in 1947, his book The Struggle for the World contained seedlings of the core beliefs that would guide Burnham’s writings—and the conservative movement at large—for the two decades to follow. In the text he described the “irreconcilable” standoff between the Soviet Union and the United

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7 For a full account of Burnham’s intellectual genesis, see Samuel Francis, Thinkers of Our Time: James Burnham (London: The Claridge Press, 1999); and Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America, 81–86; 105–06.
States. The ruthlessly expansionist Soviet Union, he explained, was perpetually plotting for the "open phase" of the conflict. In preparation, the Soviets had instigated a "coup in Iran," the "anti-United States agitation throughout Latin America," and the "step-up in activities among the U.S. Negroes." Only the United States, which Burnham called the "deputy for Western Civilization," had the power to save the world from Communist tyranny. America and the world would be safer once U.S. politicians abandoned attempts at compromise, coexistence, or negotiation and accepted the fact that "the fate of the world in this epoch will be decided by the United States.\(^8\)

Here, on the subject of America's singular obligations to the postwar world, Burnham did not sound altogether different from leading Cold War liberals such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., although even in 1947 Burnham criticized some facets of liberal anticommunism. His points of departure from liberalism became more apparent in one of his next major books, *Containment or Liberation?* (1952). The book's title aptly summarized one of his most important contributions to conservative foreign-policy thought. Since its inception under the Truman administration, the doctrine of containment had infuriated American conservatives. The architect of the containment policy, George Kennan, had argued that the United States should assume responsibility for the defense of free societies against external aggressors. As the sole western democracy to escape crippling wartime damage to its industrial and agricultural productivity, America would supply financial and military aid wherever totalitarianism threatened to expand. To some, Kennan's recommendations were impossibly

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broad and likely to overextend American resources. To others, including Burnham, Kennan’s doctrine was not audacious enough.

Why, containment’s detractors asked, was the United States content to merely stem the tide of Communist expansion? Did containment not represent a moral betrayal of the millions of Christians behind the iron curtain, a craven capitulation to the atheistic Communist aggressors? Most postwar conservatives wanted an administration ready to square off with the Soviets over the fate of Eastern Europe, ready to forcibly reinstall the exiled Chiang Kai-Shek as China’s leader, and ready to roll back Communism’s gains rather than simply contain its advance—in short, as Burnham put it, ready to pursue an offensive strategy aimed at the liberation of captive nations.

Indicative of Burnham’s mounting scorn for liberal anticomunist strategies, Containment or Liberation portrayed Kennan’s doctrine as a dithering, timid, grossly inadequate response to a menacing foe. “The idea of containment deliberately excludes the offensive,” wrote Burnham. Framing the problem in a sporting metaphor, he continued: “A boxer may adopt a plan that keeps him on the defensive for a half dozen rounds.” But “in order to win, he must do more than block blows. He must also hit.” Liberals, Burnham insinuated, refused to hit, and their refusal to act aggressively was, in his view, tantamount to appeasement.

As an emerging spokesman for conservatism, Burnham proposed another path. In his words, the United States could “aim to get rid of Soviet rule, or at least reduce it to a scale which would no longer threaten all mankind.” A strategy of liberation aimed to secure “freedom for the peoples and nations now enslaved by the Russian-centered Soviet state system...including the Russian
people." From the 1952 debut of Burnham's book through Goldwater's presidential campaign, this broad viewpoint dominated conservative foreign-policy thought: Liberals were satisfied with a stalemate; conservatives played to win.9

Conservative antipathy toward the containment doctrine only deepened during the Eisenhower years. Eisenhower's Republican Party affiliation notwithstanding, most self-described conservatives lumped the moderate former general into the same camp as the Democrats. This tendency grew even more pronounced in Eisenhower's second term, when the president took steps permitting Nikita Khrushchev to visit the United States in 1959. Within the space of a few short weeks late in 1956, Eisenhower made two choices that alienated legions of anticommunist American conservatives. (He alienated legions more just over six months later when he dispatched the National Guard to Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas.) First, and perhaps most egregious to the American Right, Eisenhower demurred direct aid to the 1956 anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary. Over the closing days of October 1956 thousands of Hungarians poured into the streets to protest for political independence, mistakenly interpreting American statements to believe that the United States might join their effort to overthrow Communist satellite-rule. Eisenhower did take action, however, after Britain, France, and Israel launched an offensive in response to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's bid to nationalize the Suez Canal. Without openly chastising the Suez attack, Eisenhower effectively paralyzed the

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attempt to retake the canal when he threatened to cut off oil exports and
monetary aid to England and France. Soviet officials scurried to Egypt's defense,
assailing the attack and channeling funds to Nasser.

The concurrent crises in Hungary and the Suez left many American
conservatives convinced that Eisenhower's brand of moderate Republicanism
was as toxic as Truman's liberalism had been. If some Americans thought that
Eisenhower had prudently avoided an all-out war with the Soviets in Hungary,
conservatives condemned his decision as immoral and mourned the lost
opportunity to liberate Hungary from the iron heel of Communist tyranny. And
yet, while the United States stood callous and aloof as Soviet tanks crushed
Hungarian demonstrators and extinguished the flame of freedom in Eastern
Europe, Eisenhower heeded the call of the Egyptian nationalist Nasser.
Incredulous conservatives struggled to understand why the president had acted
decisively against two longstanding American allies when he had turned a deaf
ear to the anti-Communist Hungarians.

Eisenhower's actual motivations and decision-making calculus were of
little concern to conservative leaders. Nor did most conservative leaders care
that the U.S. policy in Suez had angered Egypt as much as it had piqued Western
Europe. Rather, theorists like James Burnham used events in Hungary and Egypt
to further impugn the assumptions of Cold War liberalism and add a new
component to the critique of containment. "Over the humiliated forms of our
two oldest and closest allies," wrote Burnham in the aftermath of the crises, "we
clasp the hands of the murderers of the Christian heroes of Hungary, as we run
in shameless—and vain—pursuit of the ‘good will’ of Asia and Africa’s teeming pagan multitudes.”

In this single sentence, Burnham encased several pieces of the maturing conservative foreign-policy philosophy. According to the containment doctrine, so long as Communism did not gain new ground, American policymakers had succeeded. Containment, in other words, made no provisions for aiding a revolution like Hungary’s, where the Soviets were protecting their existing territory rather than seeking new conquests. To conservatives, the carnage on the streets of Budapest—the slaughter of the “Christian heroes”—exposed the glaring inadequacies of containment as an international strategy.

Burnham further asserted that Eisenhower’s actions in Egypt could be ascribed to the misguided perception that Americans had to court the friendship of African and Asian nationalists. In fact Eisenhower’s foreign policy nearly always prioritized U.S. relations with European countries—the Suez crisis was a rare exception, and the president was hardly motivated by a sympathy for Egyptian nationalism—but conservatives interpreted Eisenhower’s choice as an attempt to pander to international opinion. As conservatives wanted the American public to believe, Eisenhower had acted out of a desire to win approval from African and Asian nationalists. In so doing, Eisenhower had sided with the Soviet Union at the expense of America’s friends in the Christian West.

Suez and Hungary thus advanced the development of a conservative foreign policy critique, as elites like Burnham dashed off scathing columns about the immorality of containment, the undue influence of world opinion on U.S.

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policy, and the misguided ideals of liberal internationalists—a category in which they now included Eisenhower. Over the coming years conservative intellectuals like Burnham would retrospectively point to 1956 as a disastrous turning point in America’s relationship with the world. (Recall, for instance, that conservatives called Katanga the “Hungary of 1961.”) But in 1956 conservatism was better characterized as a loose coalition of disparate factions than as a unified, disciplined movement, and so the coincident crises of Hungary and Suez produced mostly nebulous, undirected anger.

The first full year of Kennedy’s presidency brought another pair of events that rankled conservatives, and, this time, conservatives were in a better position to capitalize. Executing a plan hatched during the administration of his predecessor, Kennedy authorized the landing of fourteen hundred anti-Castro Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. The poorly conceived scheme drew a cacophony of criticism from the left, right, and center of American politics. Some lamented that the president had undertaken the invasion at all, but conservatives (including some hawkish members of Kennedy’s own administration) were upset that Kennedy had not launched the invasion more forcefully. U.S. conservatives instantly honed in on Kennedy’s decision to not use American air power to cover the forces on the ground, claiming that the president had doomed the invasion to failure. As conservatives maintained, the botched plot to overthrow Castro proved that liberals were not seeking total victory in the colossal struggle against communism.

Then came the Congo/Katanga crisis in late 1961. To conservatives, 1961 looked like 1956 all over again: the United States had failed to help anticommmunist Katanga as they had failed to help anticommmunist Hungarians.
But Kennedy had gone one step further than Eisenhower. The president had sent U.S. dollars and U.S. military equipment to fight against Katanga—and fight alongside the Central Congolese government, which most conservatives insisted was Communist-controlled. Conservatives, aghast at Kennedy’s actions, compared the Katanga invasion to sending extra tanks to Soviet forces in Budapest. Containment had been bad enough, but now conservatives believed that liberals were actively aiding America’s enemies.

Conservatives saw the same pattern in Kennedy’s policies toward Algeria, South Africa, and Angola: Driven by a blind anticolonial idealism, liberals had turned their backs on America’s reliable friends and were focused on the wrong enemies. As a consequence, liberals had damaged relations among the Western alliance and transformed once-stable outposts of Western control into zones of communist-infilt rated chaos. Burnham argued that Katanga represented the culmination of a pattern dating back to 1956. Why could U.S. military planes participate in the Katanga mission but not be deployed to depose Castro? Why, he asked with frustration and indignation, did the United States and the United Nations eagerly act to liberate people of color from colonial or quasi-colonial arrangements while refusing to even attempt the liberation of the captive nations of the Communist bloc? Late in 1961 Burnham characterized the “controlling pattern” of liberalism as such:

We can force Britain and France out of the Suez, but we cannot so much as try to force the Russian tanks back from Budapest. We can mass our fleet against the [right-wing Dominican Republic dictator Rafael] Trujillos, but not against the Castros. We can vote in the UN against South African apartheid or Portuguese rule in Angola, but we cannot even introduce a motion on the Berlin Wall . . . . We officially receive the anti-French,
Moscow-allied Algerian FLN, but we denounce the pro-Europe, anti-Communist OAS as criminal.\textsuperscript{11}

Burnham went on with additional examples, like Kennedy's refusal to push Nehru's Indian forces out of Goa. All proved that the United States was treading the wrong path on the world stage, the National Review foreign affairs editor concluded.

By the time the Congo crisis had begun, Burnham had moved from arguing that liberals were too passive to arguing that liberals were actively undermining the best interests of the United States. Another important shift had taken place by 1961. Burnham—a leader and shaper of conservative foreign-policy thought—had also gone from depicting the Soviet Union as the major threat to Western civilization to portraying communism and nationalism as twin threats to the West.

Relying on gendered imagery, Burnham claimed that under the liberals' watch, the West had followed an unmanly course of "retreat" and "surrender." In an early 1961 National Review column, he spun a tale of an emasculated West cowering before the demands of anticolonial nationalists. At the start of Eisenhower's term in office, the West had controlled all of the ports, airfields, and precious natural resources of the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. "The West," as Burnham put it, "still manned the gate" at Suez, across the Mediterranean Coast, and "into Iraq and Persia." The central and southern portions of the African continent were securely in the hands of Belgium and Portugal, who "guarded the ports, river and land transport, and vast new air

\textsuperscript{11} Burnham, "Tangle in Katanga," National Review 11 (December 30, 1961), 446.
bases.” But over the course of the 1950s, the “men of the West” had fled from threats to their hegemony, and they retreated with their “weapons abandoned,” their “property smashed,” their “women raped,” their “children brutalized.” The “men of the West” stood quietly as “fanatic Arabs” took over the Suez Canal, as the “FLN” assumed control of vital bases in North Africa, and as the eastern ridge of the continent fell into the hands of the “Mau Mau.”

In some respects, Burnham rendered fairly accurately the dramatic political changes of the 1950s: beset with nationalist challenges, Western Europe ceded formal control over vast portions of territory on the African continent. Burnham, however, saw the process of decolonization as an act of liberal spinelessness, retreat, and surrender—a refusal to try to win the war against Communism. He elaborated on this theme in his book *Suicide of the West*, published in 1964. The introductory chapter laid out in plain terms Burnham’s understanding of postwar world history. “Over the past two generations Western civilization has undergone a rapid and major contraction.” The West’s decline started, he explained, in the “South Seas” and on the “Indian subcontinent” and then progressed steadily through the “Arab crescent” and “sub-Saharan Africa.” From the first pages of the book, Burnham signaled the differences between his narrative and the standard liberal narrative of decolonization: what liberals generally hailed as inevitable, progressive change, the conservative Burnham characterized as an unfortunate and entirely avoidable turn. Burnham rarely used the terms “colonial” or “imperial”; in place

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of these negatively connoted terms, he spoke merely of “Western political control” or the spread of Western civilization.\textsuperscript{13}

Whereas liberal leaders insisted that U.S. power was different from European colonial power, Burnham emphasized the shared civilization and shared interests that bound the United States to its allies in Western Europe. The United States functioned as the most powerful protector of Western civilization, and so, Burnham claimed, “it follows...that a Western loss, retreat or weakening anywhere in the world...means a weakening of the basic position of the United States.” If France yielded control of Algeria, if Belgium relinquished the Congo, the United States also suffered repercussions. If the United States prodded France or Belgium into surrendering their positions on the African continent, as some American liberals had desired, then America acted in a self-destructive manner—at least according to the National Review’s chief foreign affairs writer.\textsuperscript{14}

Burnham parceled out the blame for the contraction of Euro-American power. “What Americans call ‘liberalism’ is the ideology of Western suicide,” he wrote. According to him, liberalism had emerged as the “dominant” force in U.S. foreign-policymaking during Franklin D. Roosevelt’s presidency, but liberalism ascended after Kennedy took office. “Under the administration of John F. Kennedy the course of United States foreign policy became more openly and

\textsuperscript{13} Burnham, Suicide of the West, 18–19. One of Burnham’s colleagues at the National Review, Frank S. Meyer, advanced a remarkably similar line of argument about Western “retreat” and liberal spinelessness. See Meyer, “Abdication of Responsibility,” National Review 10 (April 8, 1961), 218. Meyer wanted American leaders to acknowledge that the nation “bears the responsibility of the [Western] civilization,” and work to preserve French power in Algeria, Belgian power in the Congo, English and Afrikaner power in South Africa, and he regretted the loss of Dutch power in Indonesia and British power in India.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 258.
more fully assimilated to liberal ideology,” Burnham asserted, listing as evidence the events in Portuguese Angola, the Congo, Cuba, Goa, and elsewhere.15

Eisenhower's response to the Suez crisis hinted at the “suicidal” tendencies of U.S. officials and diplomats. In Burnham’s mind, however, the tipping point came in the 1950s, when decolonization began in sub-Saharan Africa, and continued unabated into the Kennedy years. Elsewhere, Burnham had made abundantly clear his view that black Africans were utterly unqualified to rule themselves and incapable of withstanding a Communist onslaught. The liberal desire to speed decolonization therefore mystified Burnham, and it clinched his conviction that liberals were shepherding the United States down a path of destruction. When African nationalism emerged, “the United States not merely accepted Africa’s breakaway from the West, but actively promoted it under the anti-imperialist liberal slogans of decolonization, self-determination, racial equality, and so on.” In doing so, the liberals oriented American foreign policy toward Africa and away from Europe—this, Burnham frankly maintained, was suicide.16

Burnham, moreover, decried liberalism as a self-defeating philosophy because it tried to deny the unique, special qualities that he saw in Western civilization. Liberalism, he wrote, works “like a spiritual worm, corrupting the will of the West to survive as a distinctive historical entity.” Unless the West acknowledged and embraced its distinctiveness, it could not adequately defend

15 Ibid., 26 (“what Americans call.”); 271 (“dominant”); 273 (“under the administration).

16 On Burnham’s view that the “cultural level” of black Africans was too low for Africans to govern themselves without slipping into “uncivilized barbarism,” and “savagery,” see “What is Ahead for Black Africa?,” National Review 9 (October 22, 1960), 240. See Burnham, Suicide of the West, 274 (quotation) and 276.
itself. And Burnham believed that liberals had not only failed to acknowledge the West’s singularity but had worked actively to destroy the idea of Western superiority. The “spiritual worm” attempted to merge the West “into the distinctionless human mass.” Although he did not use the phrase “cultural relativism,” this is essentially what Burnham meant when he criticized liberals for promoting ideals of universal human rights rather than the special heritage of Westerners (and, implicitly, whites).17

If liberals recognized the shared heritage of America and Western Europe, Burnham implied, they would never had tried to force Britain and France out of Suez, never have supported Algeria’s right to independence from France, never have encouraged Belgium to surrender the Congo, and never have tried to court African nationalists over our traditional European friends. They would have stuck with the colonial system that had served the West for nearly two centuries rather than trying to “tinker with the established order” and “do away with many of the features of the old society.”18 The book concluded by suggesting “the final collapse of the West is not yet inevitable.” Conservatives—who would conserve the old international system rather than try to reform it—might save the United States and Western civilization.19 Here was a major point of divergence between Cold War liberalism and Cold War conservatism. Whereas liberals responded to the epochal global realignments of the postwar decades by calling for new frontiers and new directions in U.S. foreign policy, leaders of the

17 Burnham, Suicide of the West, 287–88.
18 Ibid., 278–79.
19 Ibid., Suicide of the West, 306.
emerging American Right called for the United States to preserve whatever elements of the old system persisted. The progress of decolonization, especially African decolonization, helped to crystallize the nebulous discontent conservatives had been articulating since the Truman era.

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James Burnham, influential though he might have been, was a political philosopher, not a policymaker. He is a useful bellwether for the intellectual winds of postwar conservatism, but to understand the policy recommendations of Cold War conservatism in more concrete terms, it is worth turning to another giant of the Right: Senator Barry Goldwater. If a single figure embodied conservatism by the early 1960s, it was the iconic Arizonan. As a man on an unceasing crusade against liberalism—even when Goldwater was not formally running for office, he was informally campaigning for the conservative takeover of the Republican Party—he published numerous statements of conviction. And these statements, such as his best-selling books *The Conscience of a Conservative* (1960) and *Why Not Victory* (1963), neatly summarize how conservatives wanted America to conduct its international affairs.

Goldwater's foreign policy prescriptions bore unmistakable resemblance to Burnham's ideas. The senator's most fundamental contention was that liberal foreign policymakers had waged the Cold War too timidly, too equivocally, and with too much room for negotiated compromises. Like Burnham, Goldwater considered containment overly passive. "Our strategy must be primarily offensive in nature," the conservative evangelist wrote in 1963. "In addition to paring [the enemy's] blows, we must strike our own." In the kind of remark that allowed presidential candidate Lyndon Johnson to successfully portray
Goldwater as an unstable warmonger, *Why Not Victory* insisted that the United States “be prepared to undertake military operations against vulnerable Communist regimes” and be ready to use “appropriate nuclear weapons” in those operations.20

Goldwater wanted all foreign policy choices to be measured against a single criterion: in his words, “does it help defeat the enemy?”21 If America was serious about pursuing an unqualified victory over the menacing Communist foe, then the United States should undertake only those actions that directly hurt Communist nations or directly helped the free-world alliance. Anything else constituted a trifling digression from the path to victory.

Ridding the world of colonialism, ending apartheid, stimulating economic development in newly independent nations—these goals, however noble in principle, fell short of satisfying Goldwater’s standard for U.S. policy choices. The chief spokesman for postwar conservatism insisted that the fight against international Communism had to take precedence over all other problems in the United States or in the world—nothing trumped the all-consuming need to triumph over the Soviet Union and Red China. As he put it:

> Freedom, in the sense of self-determination, is a worthy objective; but if granting self-determination to the Algerian rebels entails sweeping that area into the Sino-Soviet orbit, then Algerian freedom must be postponed. Justice is a worthy objective; but if justice for Bantus entails driving the government of the Union of South Africa away from the West, then the Bantus must be prepared to carry their identification cards yet a while longer.”


Goldwater felt entitled to ask black South Africans and Algerians to wait for freedom because he, like most conservative thinkers, was convinced that the survival of freedom everywhere depended on the survival of freedom in the United States. "The plain fact is...that if we go down, the whole free world goes down with us. If we survive, all other nations can reasonably hope for their own survival." If black South Africans, Algerians, or any other national group "genuinely desire[d] freedom and independence," then Goldwater wanted them to understand that "the United States is their only hope."23 If America—in the words of Reagan's 1964 convention speech, freedom's "last stand on earth"—stumbled in its mission, then freedom might vanish. The protection of global freedom, therefore, first and foremost required policies that served the interests of the United States.

This logic explains why Goldwater and other mainstream conservative leaders could insist that racism had nothing to do with their support for a strong American-South African partnership, for example. It was not that conservatives approved of racial apartheid, Goldwater would have claimed, but rather that they simply believed the end of apartheid ranked lower on America's proper list of international priorities. Following their logic, freedom would disappear from the earth if Communist expansion proceeded unchecked, and so, American support for the white South African regime—a friend to U.S. Cold War aims—actually served the interest of black South Africans, whether they knew it or not.

23 Goldwater, Why Not Victory, 36.
Goldwater’s stance on South African apartheid illustrates a second major corollary to his “victory first” scheme: America must demonstrate categorical loyalty to its friends and allies. The internal practices of other countries were immaterial, Goldwater asserted. What mattered was whether other countries complied with America’s mission to defeat Communism. In his words, “[o]ur attitude to nations in the non-Communist world should be determined on the basis of a greater emphasis on their friendship for the United States and their willingness to resist communism than on the ideological character of their governments and the nature of their domestic policies.”

Achieving total victory over Communism demanded that the United States accept help where it was offered, so if the South African government acted as a sturdy American ally, then the South African government had earned U.S. friendship and trust, period.

Criticizing American allies for holding colonies certainly had no place in Goldwater’s vision for U.S. foreign policy. To begin, conservatives like Goldwater contended that liberals had exaggerated the malevolence of the colonial system—even those conservatives who conceded that universal self-determination was a laudable goal typically insisted that colonialism was but a minor scrape compared to the gaping wound of Communist tyranny. With the United States shouldering the burden for defeating Communism, American policymakers could ill afford to run in starry-eyed pursuit of anticolonial ideals. Rather than moralize about the evils of colonialism, American leaders needed to look at the decolonizing world “in a realistic way,” according to Goldwater, who implied that liberals approached the problems in an unrealistic, quixotic manner.

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Such a “realistic” approach required that America acknowledge its shared responsibility for guiding colonized and formerly colonized nations toward stability and orderliness. And, to Goldwater, “elevating these nations” left no option but Western control. “We cannot leave them to the Communists,” Goldwater flatly concluded. It was patently obvious to him that the “nations emerging on the great continent of Africa” had miles to go before they would be ready for “responsible self-government.” If, as Goldwater presumed, black African states were incapable of ruling themselves, far better for the continent to remain in the hands of free European democracies than to fall captive to the true colonialists, the Soviets.

Instead, Goldwater forthrightly endorsed the preservation of Western colonialism on the African and Asian continents. “We cannot acquiesce in independence movements where independence means Communist domination or a return to savagery.” Where “Western power still prevails, the full weight of American diplomacy must be employed to sustain it,” declared the Republican icon. Moreover, in the places that had fallen into the hands of the Soviet Union or Communist China (or were perceived to be drifting toward Communism), Barry Goldwater would have American policymakers work “overtly or covertly” to reinstall “Western influence.”

Believing that Western colonialism was essentially benign, Goldwater and his conservative admirers chided liberals for prioritizing anticolonial ideals over America’s good relations with European nations. As far as Barry Goldwater was concerned, decolonization in the Cold War world did not create any kind of

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puzzling dilemma, as the liberals seemed to suggest—America had to side with its European friends, whenever and wherever they were challenged by nationalism. This, from the conservative vantage point, seemed to make common sense.

When the Kennedy administration cast a 1961 vote against NATO ally Portugal and moved to suppress pro-Belgian Katanga, baffled conservatives groped for answers. Why, they asked, had Kennedy betrayed our longtime friends in Europe? Many alleged that an undue liberal preoccupation with America’s international reputation explained why Kennedy acted as he did. Conservatives far and wide lashed out at liberals for following the vagaries of international opinion rather than standing firm with anticommmunist allies.

Here again, Goldwater led the charge. In his 1963 *Why Not Victory*, Goldwater contended that liberal attempts “to please world opinion” were leading the United States down a path of “national and international disaster.” When American policymakers placed too much emphasis on the opinion of other nations, they ended up pursuing policies that were “contrary to the immediate interest of the United States,” policies that distracted rather than contributed to a victory over Communism.26 High on Goldwater’s list of counterproductive actions were Kennedy’s decisions to publicly support Angolan independence or suppress anti-Communist Katanga. To follow conservative logic on the Portugal-Angola example: a free Angola was of little strategic value to the United States, whereas Portugal dangled the militarily crucial Azores Islands air base. Kennedy authorized the vote against Portugal at the United Nations.

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primarily because he did not want other African nations to think that the United States approved of colonialism. By rebuking Portugal’s claim of legitimacy in Angola, Kennedy alienated a vital NATO ally. Thus, most conservatives concluded that Kennedy valued the opinion of African nationalists above the friendship of an anticommmunist European nation.

This galled conservative elites for a variety of reasons, not least of which was the fact that most thought African nationalists utterly unqualified to participate in international decision-making alongside European diplomats. James Burnham said as much in his weekly National Review column. Shortly after Adlai Stevenson voted for Angolan independence at the United Nations, Burnham bitterly mocked the Kennedy administration’s obsession with “the ‘Public Image’ of the United States.” The White House had voted with the hope of winning friends on the African continent. But, Burnham contended, Kennedy had fallen prey to a dangerous philosophy when it made the “preposterous” decision to side with Angola instead of Portugal. “Portugal is our faithful ally and a charter member of NATO,” wrote Burnham. “She has placed her air bases and fine ports at our disposition.” Yet “Washington deludes itself with the illusion that the primitive jungles of Africa are more important than the advanced men, ideas and machines of Europe...What will it profit you to gain the whole of Africa and thereby lose your own Europe?”

Right-wing elites also resented liberals who accepted the “unaligned” strategy of nations like Indonesia, India, Egypt, or Ghana. Since April 1955, when a group of Asian, Middle Eastern, and African leaders gathered for a

conference at Bandung, Indonesia, much of the formerly colonized world had asserted its right to neutrality in the global Cold War. Spearheaded by heads of state from Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Burma, and Sri Lanka, the Bandung meeting delivered a strong statement that the recently decolonized world had no intention of seeing their hard-fought independence subsumed by the superpower rivalry. Bandung delegates, moreover, loudly signaled their intent to harness their combined power to the goal of ending colonialism, racism, and institutionalized discrimination wherever it remained in the world.  

American policymakers initially regarded the nonaligned, neutral movement with skepticism; Eisenhower’s secretary of state John Foster Dulles openly derided the notion that states could be neutral in what he considered a titanic face-off between righteousness and amoral tyranny. Kennedy softened the prior administration’s stance, consistent with his broader call for America to acknowledge the changing international realities. The liberal president argued that America had to respect neutrality, lest African and Asian nations turn toward the Soviet orbit. His efforts to improve U.S. relations with neutral African, Asian, and Middle Eastern leaders provoked an angry reaction from the Right, however.

From the perspective of Goldwater and his disciples, America had gone much too far in its attempt to curry favor with unaligned nationalist leaders. To them, liberals had become completely unmoored from the foremost international objective—defeating Communism—and instead simply pursued any policy that would keep neutral nations in the U.S. camp. This, conservative leaders charged,

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was counterproductive, dangerous to U.S. security, and foolish. The conservative weekly *Human Events*, for instance, lashed out at Kennedy’s State Department for having “consistently waged war against Portugal for the purpose of catering to anti-Western neutralists in India and Africa.” Before a rally of conservative activists, Admiral Ben Moreell, president of the right-wing lobby Americans for Constitutional Action, also expressed his exasperation with the “pseudo-statesmen” of the Kennedy administration. Liberal policymakers “tremble when ‘world opinion’ is mentioned” and “fawn upon, cajole and pamper our enemies and the so-called ‘unaligned’ nations.” Meanwhile, the fixation with international opinion had compelled President Kennedy to “kick our time-tested friends in the teeth.” Moreell implied with his slur “pseudo-statesmen” that liberals chose the popular rather than the principled course of action in foreign affairs, and he seethed with disdain over Kennedy’s support for unaligned nationalists rather than our old allies of Western Europe.

Deliberately spurning the liberal hearts-and-minds formula, conservative opinion-makers like Moreell or Goldwater wanted to substitute a strategy where America pursued its Cold War interests regardless of whether U.S. policies angered neutral nations. This included categorical support for all anticommunist ally-nations, the preservation of remaining Western colonial structures, and, in a final conservative precept, a shrewd U.S. relationship with the United Nations.

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29 “Sandbagging an Ally,” *Human Events* XVIII (December 22, 1961), 862. *Human Events* is still an operational conservative magazine; presently, they are marketing their expose on Senator Barack Obama.

Most conservatives maintained that neutral states at the United Nations exercised an undue and unhealthy degree of influence over U.S. foreign policymaking—why else but to placate the “Afro-Asian bloc” would Cold War liberals turn their backs on America’s NATO friends? In reality, the profusion of new African member-states did little to alter the UN’s decision-making structure; power remained safely concentrated in the hands of the Security Council members, the nations that represented the world’s traditional great powers. Without the consent of Security Council nations (not to mention the support of U.S. dollars), the UN was virtually powerless. Yet, working together, the new African and Asian member-states could place resolutions before the Security Council, forcing an up-or-down vote on issues like South African apartheid, Algerian independence, or Angolan independence. It was this power that vexed American conservatives.31

The patrician elder of postwar conservatism, William F. Buckley, penned a representative right-wing view on the United Nations. In an essay entitled, “Must we hate Portugal?” Buckley offered his interpretation for why Adlai Stevenson voted for independence for Portuguese African territories. The vote was cast “for one reason alone—to ingratiate the United States with the powerful Afro-Asian bloc” in the United Nations. “How much damage, how many distortions we continue to impose on our policies, as the result of that tyrannous parliamentary majority of the General Assembly! . . . Its influence on the West is disastrous.” Buckley was no kinder to other facets of the Kennedy

31 For a description of how formerly colonized states worked collaboratively to enhance their power before the United Nation General Assembly, see Robert Kinloch Massie, Loosing the Bonds: The United States and South African in the Apartheid Years (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 115–18.
administration’s Cold War strategy; he declared, “the axioms of political Liberalism are self-defeating and suicidal,” and he called upon the United States to discard its “dogmatic anticolonialism.”

Buckley’s collaborator Burnham also scorned the UN’s idealism as a frivolous indulgence, a mere distraction from the more serious cause of victory against Communism. To right the ship, American policymakers had to “purge [their] minds of the ideological drivel about ‘liberation,’ ‘fresh winds blowing,’ ‘awakening,’ and ‘equality.’” Without the insidious effect of the U.N., Burnham insisted, the United States would have adopted a more “sensible” policy toward the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, as well as toward “Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.” Conservatives, Burnham implied, would never prioritize abstract ideals over America’s national interest, nor would they allow fuzzy-minded notions of international brotherhood to distract them from the task of defeating Communism.

Such ideas became a mainstay of postwar conservative thought, recurring among a variety of leading voices on the Right. Beginning in the 1960s, the pieces of a conservative foreign-policy philosophy were taking shape, and by the time

32 William F. Buckley Jr., “Must We Hate Portugal?,” National Review 13 (December 18, 1962), 468.


Ronald Reagan announced that Barry Goldwater would carry the 1964 presidential torch for the Republican Party, the conservative blueprint for American power in the world was in place. Nothing, elite voices from the Right argued, should outweigh American security interests—not U.N. edicts, not liberal values of universal self-determination, and not the domestic affairs of vital anticommunist nations.

Conservatives like Goldwater had the luxury of making pronouncements about U.S. foreign policy from the spectator seats rather than the seat of decision-making power—into the early 1960s conservatives wielded little real power in the foreign-policymaking arena, with the exception of seats on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. This was, in some respects, an advantage for the embryonic conservative movement, because they could formulate and promote ideological stances that might not have been truly viable. Put another way, it was easy to insist that the U.S. should use force to liberate Eastern Europe at a conservative rally or in a conservative fund-raising letter. Had conservatives actually been sitting in the policymaking chair and staring down the possibility of sending American troops across the Iron Curtain, they might have toned down their rhetoric. However passionately Goldwater, Reagan, and other conservatives believed in the need for an aggressive Cold War stance, the development of foreign-policy conservatism was more about building a viable electoral coalition in the United States than about shaping on-the-ground international actions.

And in terms of building a thriving political movement, the conservative package of foreign policy recommendations was highly effective indeed. As the next section shall suggest, the Cold War conservative vision succeeded in
drawing together a variety of forces that were disenchanted with liberal reformism, including white southern segregationists.

II. FOREIGN POLICY CONSERVATISM AT THE GRASSROOTS

The historian Leo Ribuffo has playfully but truthfully observed that the United States would have a robust conservative tradition even if storm-tossed seas had deluged William F. Buckley’s yacht and, with a surging wave, drowned the entire staff of the National Review. Ribuffo—who, one might say in the jocular tone he favors, studied conservatism when conservatism wasn’t cool—is entirely correct to remind historians that the phenomenon we now call “conservatism” emerged fitfully from a constellation of deeply held sentiments that have thrived in one form or another for most of the history of the United States, including fierce economic individualism, nativism, and bible-based Christianity.35 Put another way, ordinary Americans did not need conservative philosophies to trickle down from ivory-tower intellectuals, nor did they need a savvy political strategist to “create” a conservative majority—the impulse existed organically.

Ribuffo is also right to point to the continuity and durability of many of the ideological strands that make up post-1960s conservatism, as he is correct to caution historians against over-ascribing influence to a handful of elites. Individual leaders undoubtedly had important roles to play in transforming the postwar Republican Party into an outpost of ideological conservatism, in engineering electoral coalitions, and in winning new converts to the conservative camp. But tempting though it may be to credit Buckley, Burnham, and

35 Leo Ribuffo, commentary at the April 2007 meeting of the Organization of American Historians.
Goldwater with the genesis of Cold War conservatism, elites and intellectuals had to articulate foreign policy perspectives that appealed to ordinary American voters.

Widening the historical lens to include community-level conservatism reveals a striking symmetry between the foreign-policy prescriptions printed in journals like the National Review and those voiced by ordinary Americans, particularly those disillusioned by the domestic path of postwar liberalism. Quite possibly, the symmetry existed because grassroots conservatives were imbibing elite-produced ideas as they read, re-read, and circulated a relatively small set of books, speech texts, and articles. Yet, it is readily apparent that conservative ideas took on new shapes as they moved from the cerebral world of James Burnham or the high-politics world of Barry Goldwater to the realm of grassroots conservatism. While it is impossible to conclude exactly where ideas originated, the fact that everyday conservative warriors could mold and stretch ideas to serve different agendas suggests that the elite-produced philosophies resonated with the views that made common sense at the grassroots.

In small communities and suburbs around different parts of the nation, Americans at the grassroots were voicing the same foreign-policy recommendations as elites, politicians, and intellectuals. Often, particularly in the American South, the conservative foreign-policy philosophy proved pliant enough that open defenders of white supremacy could stitch together their disdain for liberal domestic reformers and for liberal Cold Warriors. Individual white southerners discovered much to their liking in the foreign-policy program that visible conservative leaders were selling.
Specifically, grassroots white conservatives warmly received the idea that America should stand unflinchingly by its European allies and other anticommunist states. They valued the longstanding historical ties between the United States and Western European, and they ridiculed liberals for criticizing American allies in order to court African or Asian nationalists. They despised the suggestion that the U.S. alter or shape its policies to satisfy international opinion, and they tended to dismiss neutralism as little more than a detour on the road to full-fledged Communism.

These ideas wore deep grooves into the minds of ordinary right-leaning white Americans in the early 1960s. In part, such ideas took hold because they snapped neatly together with emerging critiques of domestic liberalism, especially on the issue of civil rights. The section that follows focuses on the conservative grass roots in the U.S. South. It considers two loosely defined segments of the white southern population: moderate conservatives and hard-line segregationist conservatives. Described more fully below, these different groups did not see eye-to-eye on all political matters, but they were arriving at the same vision for America's role in the world—the same vision articulated by men like Barry Goldwater or James Burnham.

* * *

We begin with the subsection of the southern population that can be gingerly described as white moderates. In the era of civil rights, the term "moderate" typically refers to a white southerner who nominally rejected flagrant displays of racial hatred, radical measures like school closures, or the use of extralegal violence to preserve Jim Crow segregation. Speaking broadly, moderates were drawn to law-and-order rhetoric and were more likely to accept
token integration if it meant a return to normalcy and an end to mass protests. As historian Matthew Lassiter has argued, this subset of the white South—not the Citizens’ Councilors or the Klan members—orchestrated the region’s transformation from Democratic base to Republican stronghold.

Like any political category, the concept of the white moderate relies upon comparative placements along a continuum: Florida governor Le Roy Collins may rightfully be described as a moderate in contrast to race-baiting politicians like Alabama’s George Wallace or Georgia’s Lester Maddox, but moderates such as Collins could still demonstrate a fair degree of conservatism and foot-dragging when it faced with genuine racial reform initiatives. Often, the “moderate” designation had far more to do with white southerners’ choices of tactics than with views on racial difference. Writing on 1950s Louisiana, historian Adam Fairclough smartly observed that “ultrasegregationists,” the term he applies to Citizens’ Council members and other vocal leaders of organized resistance, “differed from other whites not so much in their racial views as in the intensity with which they held them…and the lengths to which they would go to defend segregation.” Many white moderates, in other words, were every bit as convinced as their die-hard segregationist counterparts that people of African heritage were mentally, culturally, and in other ways inferior to whites. As Fairclough contends, organizations like the Citizens’ Council gained a great deal of political traction not because every white southerner agreed with their tactics and incendiary rhetoric but because so few white southerners were prepared to actively oppose efforts to preserve segregation.56

For the purposes of this section’s analysis, the term “moderate” is largely defined against the hard-line segregationists that appear in the subsequent section. The voices quoted below are from individuals who, at least in the extant evidence, engage with the topic of U.S. foreign policy on its own terms—unlike the individuals in the next section, who filter their perspective on American international affairs primarily, if not exclusively, through a racial lens.

But if white moderates refrained from spewing racial vitriol or had no stomach for the renegade lawlessness of massive resistance, many of them still turned away from liberalism as the 1960s wore on. And, as this section suggests, many of them had rejected the guiding principles of foreign-policy liberalism when Kennedy was still in office. To the southern whites herein, Barry Goldwater and the conservatives offered a far more appealing blueprint for U.S. power in the world.

Late in 1961 Herman S. Merrell, just one of countless white southerners disillusioned with Cold War liberalism, vented his frustration with Kennedy’s foreign policy. Merrell, an attorney, served as president of the North Carolina Bar Association for 1961–1962, so presumably he exercised some degree of influence over state- and community-level politics. The proximate cause for Merrell’s displeasure was the UN invasion of Katanga. The North Carolina lawyer deemed the Katanga mission “a perversion” of the United Nations’ intended purpose in international affairs, and he contended that American policymakers were “making a serious mistake” in funding UN operations in the Congo.
Merrell moved quickly from the specific case of Katanga into more broad-based objections to Kennedy’s conduct of foreign affairs. Why, he wondered, did Kennedy persist in attempts to woo the “so-called uncommitted nations of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East,” when, to Merrell, it seemed obvious that recently decolonized countries just wanted to “kick us [the U.S.] in the teeth”? He insisted that the United States should have learned long before the Congo crisis that “the so-called ‘neutrals’” could not be trusted. He marshaled his evidence: India’s Prime Minister Nehru had tried to wrest the tiny province of Goa away from Portugal. Indonesia had threatened to take military action to liquidate Dutch holdings in New Guinea. The “African-Arab block” wanted Katanga reunited with the Central Congolese authority, which, Merrell insisted, was “anything but pro-western.” The unaligned, former colonies of Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, he repeated, were “not pro-western” and conspired to “stab us in the back every time they can.”

Rather than trying to win the hearts and minds of Africans and Asians, Merrell hoped the Kennedy administration would resuscitate America’s close-knit relations with “our traditional friends, the British, French, Belgians, [and] Dutch.” Shoring up U.S. alliances with “persons of like background and interest” constituted the nation’s “only hope of survival,” Merrell resoundingly concluded. He did not expressly mention race, religion, language, or culture. But Merrell’s mention of the “like background” of Europeans and Americans indicated that he saw a natural affinity between the two places, and he, like Barry
Goldwater, was at a loss to understand why Kennedy even bothered to make overtures to the leaders of former colonial states.37

Three days later, John E. Munzenrider, a resident of an Air Force base town in central Georgia, voiced opinions on foreign policy remarkably similar to Merrell's. Like Merrell, Munzenrider was outraged that the United States had supplied aid to the U.N. operations in Katanga. Calling the invasion a "tragic and farcical and diabolical episode," he, too, thought that President Kennedy had acted "in a manner directly opposed to both our own best interests" when his administration acted to suppress the Katanga invasion. Equally galling to the small-town Georgian was U.S. policy with respect to Portugal's southwestern African territories. "I am appalled at the way we are selling out our Portuguese allies to curry favor with the Afro-Asian bloc at the UN, and stand idly by while this NATO ally of our has an overseas province which it has held for 450 years stolen from it." Here Munzenrider expressed a variant of what Goldwater and Burnham so ardently desired in U.S. Cold War strategy: unequivocal American support for its culturally similar allies in Western Europe.38

Time and time again conservatives at the southern grassroots lamented that the decisions of American policymakers had made the Western NATO

37 Herman S. Merrell to Sam Ervin, December 20, 1961, folder 2747, series I [Senate Records], Sam Ervin Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as UNC). All citations in the Ervin Papers refer to series I.

alliance more brittle. In the military town of Norfolk, Virginia, Frank R. Ford stewed as he tried to figure out why the United States cared about the friendship of African nations “emerging from savagery.” The nations of Western Europe had “stood shoulder to shoulder” with Americans through “two terrible wars,” yet the United States had failed to reciprocate when nationalist insurgencies threatened its NATO allies. Convinced that America’s turn away from its European allies would yield only “disaster and chaos,” the irate Ford asked: “What did our support of Nasser in the Suez Affair against England and France bring us? Our opposition to Belgium in the Congo, our opposition to Portugal?” Ford’s reference to African “savagery” made clear enough his views on racial hierarchy, and to this he added a barb against liberal politicians who blindly followed “the flimsy flag of civil rights.”39

Further to the South, in the conservative hotbed of Savannah, Georgia, D. D. Irwin also struggled to understand why the United States had failed to stand loyally by its anticommunist friends. Yet another southerner who made reference to the “shameful” Kennedy actions in Katanga, Irwin characterized the entire liberal approach to the Cold War as “not only shameful in the moral sense, but almost incredibly stupid.” In Irwin’s estimation, Kennedy had led the United States “down the road of deserting our NATO Allies” in a misguided attempt at “placating the Afro-Asian Block.” Irwin had little faith that friendship African or Asian nationalists could advance U.S. aims. “From which of these

groups may we expect effective help...?" he queried. Irwin and Ford both feared that the NATO alliance had sustained a potentially paralyzing blow when the United States sided, however superficially, with the forces of anticolonial nationalism.

Certainly, as the letters from Merrell, Ford, and the others quoted above attested, conservatives considered the anticomunist Moise Tshombe regime in Katanga to be a worthy Cold War ally. The Congo crisis, therefore, reaffirmed the common conservative belief that liberals punished U.S. friends and rewarded U.S. enemies. Mrs. C. K. Burton of Georgia expressed a representative view. Furious that Kennedy had condoned the Katanga invasion and generally hostile to the United Nations, Burton lauded Tshombe’s province as a worthy American ally. "They were our friends. We should not have sent jet aircraft to beat down a small nation because the UN said to do it. Where is our sense of fair-play to our friends [?]" She implied that Kennedy was far too accommodating to the demands of the international organizations, and, even more emphatically, she questioned the logic of Americans supporting anticolonial nationalists over anticommmunist states. Burton saw a recurring pattern in the Congo and other parts of Africa. She accused liberals of allowing "Portugal [to] be taken over, piece by piece, by communist nations. Are we entirely impotent?" Liberals, Mrs. Burton asserted, lacked the necessary manliness and resolve to stand by our friends in a war against a deadly enemy.41

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40 D. D. Irwin to Russell, December 14, 1961, folder 13, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.

41 Mrs. C. K. Burton to Russell, December 29, 1961, folder 11, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.
None of the individuals quoted above used inflammatory racial language or openly endorsed racial segregation in the United States. Statistical data and simple probability would suggest that most of these white residents of the civil rights–era South probably opposed the Brown decision, although perhaps not to the degree that they joined organizations like the Citizens' Council. Yet these moderate conservatives all agreed that America's international policies should be oriented toward Europe, European settler states, and pro-European governments.

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It required no complicated alchemy to transform the ostensibly race-neutral foreign-policy views of anticommunist conservatives into an unmistakable appeal to white privilege. Those individuals who brazenly and unapologetically lofted crude racial epithets could appropriate the key tenets of Cold War conservatism and use them to advance their defense of segregation, black disfranchisement, and other forms of racial inequality. When open segregationists seized the emerging conservative foreign-policy perspective, they accrued two distinct sets of benefits: first, they accumulated a broader range of arguments to justify Jim Crow, and, more importantly, they successfully aligned themselves with other strands of postwar conservatism, including intellectual conservatives and politicians beyond the U.S. South. Race may have first prompted white southern segregationists to pay attention to the Cold War in Africa, but once their eyes were drawn to the Congo or South Africa, they adopted the critiques that the wider conservative movement was aiming at liberal foreign policymakers.
Some important differences separated a figure like James Burnham or Barry Goldwater from the visible spokesmen of the segregationist South. Still, a fundamental compatibility existed between the Burnham/Goldwater formula for American foreign relations—support our European friends; stop courting African or Asian nationalists—and the views of white racial conservatives. Ample evidence indicates that Burnham believed in natural hierarchies among the world’s peoples, yet he undoubtedly saw himself in a political—and social class—category altogether separate from the jeering mobs at Little Rock’s Central High School or the University of Alabama. Nevertheless, his vision for America’s role in the world made plain sense to the types of white southerners who rallied behind Orval Faubus or flocked to hear George Wallace speak. Many of the leaders and foot soldiers of southern resistance crusade were mystified to hear liberal admonishments about self-determination for the nations of black Africa. Burnham, who called for the United States to lend unqualified support to the culturally, historically, and religiously similar nations of Western Europe, must have felt like a breath of fresh air to white segregationists.42

A perfect illustration comes in the form of the Reverend A. C. Shuler, a man who apparently was perfectly at ease with his dual roles as a Baptist clergyman and as an officer of a Florida chapter of the Citizens’ Councils. Shuler converted his stark support for white supremacy into a distinctive view on how the United States should conduct its foreign affairs. Along with other

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42 For some of the scattered evidence that Burnham believed in a hierarchy among the world’s peoples and races, see Burnham, “What is Ahead for Black Africa?,” National Review 9 (October 22, 1960), 240; Burnham, Suicide of the West, 283, 287 on civil rights protests in the U.S.; Burnham, Struggle for the World, 148, where he remarks: “We cannot make all nations equal by calling them equal, or writing their equality into the provisions of a Charter. They simply are not equal, and that settles the question.”
participants in Jacksonville’s organized resistance crusades, Shuler chastised Kennedy for “turning away from his European allies—England, France, Belgium” and instead aligning the United States “with the niggers of Africa.” Shuler, obviously, had no qualms about framing America’s international relations in explicitly racial terms. He excoriated President Kennedy and “his brother, Bobby” for damaging America’s relationship with “the white race of Europe.” Yet the substance of his critique differed only slightly from the more temperate words of North Carolina Bar President Hermann Merrell or from James Burnham’s foreign-policy blueprint for America. Where Burnham spoke of a unified West and Merrell spoke of the importance of alliances with “persons of like background,” Shuler introduced hate-drenched racial slurs. Still, all three men strongly disapproved of U.S. policy in decolonized Africa—Shuler claimed Kennedy had made “a fatal mistake” in Katanga—and all favored a revitalized Europe-first strategy in America’s relations with other parts of the world.43

Several states west from Shuler, another committed southern segregationist railed against the direction of U.S. foreign policy. One of the active female foes of integration and black enfranchisement, Florence Sillers Ogden, found Kennedy’s actions in other parts of the world as galling as the president’s actions in her home state of Mississippi. Ogden came from a privileged and powerful Bolivar County family that had supported white supremacist politics since the late nineteenth century; her father, Walter Sillers Sr., helped to engineer the legal disfranchisement of Mississippi blacks in the 1890s, and her brother, Walter Sillers Jr., presided over the virulently segregationist Mississippi House

43 Rev. A. C. Shuler to Russell, December 19, 1961, folder 12, box 12, series XVI, subseries B, Russell Papers, UGA.
of Representatives during the civil rights era. Ogden herself was a seasoned veteran of the South’s battle to maintain Jim Crow. In 1948 she delivered a speech attacking the report of Harry Truman’s Presidential Commission on Civil Rights before an audience of eight hundred women, and she served on a special committee of Mississippi women that canvassed the state in support of Strom Thurmond’s Dixiecrat ticket. And Ogden vigorously defended Mississippi’s apartheid state in her weekly newspaper column, entitled “Dis ’n’ Dat,” carried by the Delta Democrat-Times and the Jackson Clarion-Ledger.44

Ogden despised Kennedy’s decision to side with African nationalists instead of America’s closest allies. U.S. policymakers, she contended, had alienated “every one of the major Western or European nations,” and she was baffled that United States officials had “supported the colored peoples of [Europe’s] former colonies.” The influential Mississippian worked to convince other conservative women that Kennedy had led the United States down the wrong path in world affairs. Addressing a roomful of Daughters of the American Revolution in January 1962, Ogden commented:

The only African state that the United States votes against is South Africa, the only white nation on that continent . . . . Today the United States supports the Congolese negroes against the French, the Belgians, the British, and the Portuguese. It also supports the pro-communist Congolese Central Government against anti-Communist Katanga, and

44 On Florence Sillers Ogden’s background, see Elizabeth Gillespie McRae, “White Womanhood, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Massive Resistance,” in Clive Webb, ed., Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 181–202. For Ogden’s correspondence and close association with Mississippi’s massive resistance leaders, see for instance, Ogden to Citizens’ Council office, attention Robert Patterson, October 30, 1960, folder 43, box 4, Florence Sillers Ogden Collection, Charles W. Capps Jr. Museum and Library, Delta State University, Cleveland, Mississippi (hereafter cited as DSU). This letter mentions that one of Ogden’s columns was reprinted in the Citizens’ Council publication. On Ogden’s involvement with the Democrats for Eisenhower, see McRae, “White Womanhood, White Supremacy,” 184–85, and various correspondence in folder 25, box 2; on her sense of betrayal by Eisenhower, see, for instance, Ogden to Frances Bartlett, June 1, 1954, folder 26, box 2, both in Ogden Papers, DSU.
Indonesia against the Dutch and the U.N. against South Africa. Is this what we call promoting the peace?\textsuperscript{45}

She found it incomprehensible that Kennedy elected to cultivate closer relations with "negroes" and "colored peoples" rather than "white nations" like South Africa, Belgium, and Portugal. Clearly, race dominated Ogden's perspectives on U.S. power in the world. Yet, as her reference to "promoting the peace" suggests, Ogden also believed that the "white nations" of the world pursued policies that benefited the entire world.

Segregationists detected the same forces at work behind liberals' nominal support for domestic civil rights and for anticolonial revolutions. Why, southern defenders of white privilege asked, had Kennedy and liberal policymakers turned their backs on their closest friends in Europe? For precisely the same reason that liberals had betrayed the best interests of patriotic white southerners: liberal Democrats had prioritized abstract ideals of human equality over the security and national interest of the United States. As far as conservative white southerners were concerned, the potential friendship of African, Middle Eastern, or Asian nationalists was essentially worthless in America's Cold War struggle against Communism, for what could the United States have to gain by allying with nations that, in the mind of segregationists, were primitive, savage, self-serving, and untrustworthy?

The Cincinnati, Ohio, attorney William "Bill" Flax articulated a common refrain when he mocked liberals for trying to advance "the equality of all men" on the global stage. Staunchly opposed to the integration of American schools

\textsuperscript{45} Ogden speech before the National Defense Council, Greenwood, Mississippi, January 25, 1962, folder 112, box 12, Ogden Papers, DSU, p. 4.
and public facilities, Flax was equally incensed by the possibility that the international political arena might be opened up to nations beyond Europe or European settler states. Flax accused liberals of irresponsibly indulging in myopic “fantasies” about a “world united in ‘equality’ and ‘brotherhood,’” and he believed the U.S. State Department had subordinated American interests to its quest to repair America’s battered international reputation. His bitter disdain for racial equality in the United States had a direct analog in his contempt for equality in diplomatic relations.

But Flax reserved some of his most acerbic critiques for the U.S. policymakers who prioritized friendship with anticolonial nationalists above the time-tested friends of the United States. Like James Burnham, Flax saw the 1956 Suez incident as a decisive turning point, when the United States began to unfairly punish its allies. “These days, we only criticize England when she fights for the West, as against Nasser at Suez.” He counted Moise Tshombe, Portuguese dictator Antonio Salazar, the Dominican Republic’s tyrannical ruler Rafael Trujillo, and the white regime of South Africa among America’s more important “loyal allies” and lashed out at any policy maker who gave anything less than categorical support to these allies. Flax was well aware that a “revolution [was] sweeping the underdeveloped portions of the world.” But he saw no reason why this fact should alter or redirect the course of American foreign relations. Here, then, was a near-identical echo of the strategy Barry Goldwater had endorsed in his pre-presidential campaign materials: America should care only about a nation’s loyalty to the free-world alliance in the Cold War, never about a nation’s internal affairs.
Rather, he wanted American policymakers to discard any notion of the “equality of man” and concentrate on shoring up the Western alliance—or, as Flax would have had no compunction about explicitly stating, shoring up the alliance among white nations. Shortly after the white South African police forces had mowed down nearly seventy black South African demonstrators at Sharpeville, Flax vigorously defended both the massacre and the U.S. friendship with the apartheid regime in Johannesburg. “A white South Africa is an ally until the end of time,” he frankly declared. “How can it be seriously proposed that the United States ally themselves with people with whom they have nothing in common racially, culturally, politically, or economically, at the expense of a friendly people with whom they closely share all four...?”46 Indeed, he went to great lengths to point out the similarities between the history of the Boer settlers in South Africa and the British settlers in early America. Both, he explained, were forced to tame a vast wilderness and contend with an uncivilized native population, and both had built modern, well-developed civilizations from the ground up. Only when the U.S. abandoned liberal ideals of human equality would “manly vigor” be restored to American foreign policy, Flax concluded, in yet another example of conservatives’ attempt to cast liberals as too effeminate and spineless to defeat Communism.

Other segregationist leaders joined Flax, Ogden, and Schuler in decrying Kennedy-era foreign policy, suggesting that Cold War conservatism enjoyed widespread currency in the 1960s-era South. Indeed, the very same sets of events

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were cited again and again. Nashville-based radio host and columnist Tom Anderson provided his audience with a litany of complaints about liberal foreign policymakers (whom Anderson dubbed “one-world bubbleheads”). The United States had “slapped the face of the anti-Communist government of South Africa,” “kicked in the shins of the anti-Communist Portuguese,” and foolishly negotiated with the “pro-Communist Algerian rebel government in Tunisia.” Fellow pro-segregationist journalist James J. Kilpatrick saw a “master plan” in the Kennedy administration’s policy choices. “On the Dark Continent,” he wrote, American officials had turned against “the only Negro friend and the only white friend we have among the African nations.” He referred, of course, to Katanga’s Moise Tshombe and the government of South Africa. The Union of South Africa—home, as the conservative news editor pointedly reminded his Virginia readership, to “3.6 million white persons”—had been “notably friendly” to the United States. Yet, Kilpatrick complained, “whenever there is a showdown UN vote which involves South Africa, or some news event which involves South African racial policy, the U.S. Government and most of the U.S. press” turned their backs on their devoted ally. Kilpatrick ticked off other examples where the United States had backstabbed loyal allies: in the Dominican Republic, where “Kennedy frowned upon Dictator Trujillo” and “the liberal American press scarcely concealed its elation when he was foully murdered”; in Cuba, where the U.S. had allowed the “friendly-to-America” Batista regime to topple; and in South Vietnam, where Kilpatrick accused Kennedy of forcing “social and political reforms” upon the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem.47 Anderson and Kilpatrick

agreed heartily with the principle Barry Goldwater laid out: authoritarian
governing tactics, internal segregation policies—these were irrelevant so long as
a nation pledged to help the U.S. win the Cold War.

Many grassroots segregationists were also appalled by Kennedy’s action in
Katanga and inaction in Cuba. A member of the pro-segregation North Carolina
Defenders of States’ Rights, Eddie Daniels Jr. of Burlington, North Carolina,
irately contrasted the Kennedy administration’s stance on Katanga to their policy
toward Cuba. Why, he wondered, did Kennedy threaten to impose sanctions if
Katanga seceded when no similar reprisals were ever applied to communist
nations like Cuba? Kennedy had to be “hell-bent on communizing Katanga,”
Daniels decided.\(^{48}\)

Providing striking proof that white southern segregationists had adopted
the mainstream conservative critique of Cold War liberalism, the official
newspaper of the Association of Citizens’ Councils featured regular editorials in
Simmons, the paper’s editor, used the “schizoid” term as another way of
expressing the notion that liberals backstabbed our friends in order to ingratiate
the enemies of the U.S. Like so many other conservatives, the white supremacist
publication denounced the “moral cowardice,” “moral weakness,” “spineless
behavior,” “flabbiness,” “lack of conviction,” and the “appeasement” of
American policy, and it blamed a liberal obsession with world opinion for

\(^{48}\) Eddie A Daniels Jr. to Sam Ervin, November 28, 1962, folder 3212, “Foreign Affairs: Katanga,”
Ervin Papers, UNC.
debilitating U.S. power in the world.49 "Foolish liberals," acting on their "fatuous preoccupation with 'brotherhood' and 'equality'" had surrendered white America’s ability to defend its "basic long-term interests." The vacillations and equivocations that actually characterized Kennedy’s approach to white rule in black Africa were of little consequence to postwar conservatives; they considered the mere suggestion that the fates of black Africans outweighed the security and fortunes of white Europeans preposterous. Present-day conservatives may disavow vitriolic racists like Simmons as legitimate members of the Right’s counterrevolution, but when we interpret the rise of conservatism with foreign policy topics at the center, we see an easy affinity between Simmons’s views and Goldwater and Reagan’s vision for America in the world.

Four years after the Cold War arrived on the African continent, the core elements of the philosophy that Ronald Reagan professed in his 1964 "Time for Choosing" speech had emerged: the United States had a moral obligation to fight the Cold War with as much determination and single-minded purpose as it could muster. If the nation’s foremost aim was defeating the evils of Communism, then the path for American power in the world was clear. The United States must firmly stand with its "time-tested friends." Where an American ally faced a challenge from an anticolonial revolution, the United States should always stand alongside the ally, irrespective of international cries for universal self-determination. Where America’s European friends still held extra-territorial claims, U.S. policymakers should do whatever possible to

preserve the influence of the West. When Moise Tshombe pledged the resources of his province to aid the fight against Communist, the United States should give him its categorical support, regardless of what the Congolese nationalist regime thought. Conservatives like Ronald Reagan promised that these were the only acceptable policies to lead the United States to victory over the Communist foe, and, as we watch presidential candidates for the 2008 Republican nomination jockey to stake their claim to Reagan’s legacy, we can detect hints of these ideological principles in modern-day conservative foreign policy thought.

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In October 1968 two longtime conservative grassroots organizers, May and Robert W. Orrell of Cardinal, Virginia, applied these principles to the U.S. war in Vietnam. Writing in their homespun conservative newsletter, “Our Country,” the Orrells explained why they were giving their support to Richard Nixon in the upcoming presidential campaign. George Wallace could not win, the conservative couple had concluded with regret, but they put their faith in Nixon to restore conservative principles to American foreign policy. To silence the conservative doubters—in 1960, after all, the nascent conservative movement had been deeply skeptical of Nixon—Mr. and Mrs. Orrell argued that Nixon, as vice president, had tried to put Eisenhower on the right path in the war in Indochina. “The French defeat in Indo-China was long ago, but anyone who believes Nixon will not take a ‘hard’ position in Vietnam should know that had President Eisenhower taken Nixon’s counsel to try to rescue the French with active military aid at that time our situation in Vietnam, and the world, might be
different today." The United States, in other words, should not have trifled with military advisors or backdoor support for France; as soon as the French regime in Indochina faltered in 1954, the United States should have immediately committed the full force of its military might to keeping the French colonial state intact.

The Orrells, who opened each edition of their newsletter with a quote from Edmund Burke ("The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing") and signed each edition "Yours for God and Country," applied the Reagan-Goldwater-Burnham scheme to Vietnam: America's allies deserved unequivocal support, and any policy that helped the West defeat Communism should be pursued, even if the newly created United Nations was urging colonial powers to grant self-governance to their overseas territories. In late 1968, when the Orrells wrote, a resurgent American Left criticized centrist, Kennedy-era liberals for perpetuating a quasi-colonial regime in Vietnam and suppressing the nationalist aspirations of the Vietnamese.51

The American Right landed on the opposite pole: conservatives like Mr. and Mrs. Orrell were dismayed that Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson had not backed the France colonial state more energetically in the first place, to ensure a continued Western barricade against Communism in Southeast Asia. The Left grew to wish the U.S. had never undertaken the fight against revolutionary

50 R. W. and May Orrell, "A Time for Caution," Our Country No. 57 (October 1968), copy in the Special Collections Library, University of Virginia. The affluent Orrells had also been active protesters of the U.N. invasion of Katanga, as chapter 6 suggested.

51 For instance, in 1967 Henry Steele Commager wrote in the New York Times magazine, "In the struggle against Communism...we have allowed ourselves to be maneuvered into the position of opposing revolution and what some of these people [in the formerly colonized world] think of as progress." Quoted in John Ehrman, The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Policy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 23.
nationalism in Vietnam; the Right wished the U.S. had undertaken it more thoroughly and more aggressively. Vital center liberals split as some came to believe the United States had not sufficiently supported world revolutions; conservatives argued that even the small degree of U.S. support had been dangerous and counterproductive to the best interests of the nation. Although this dissertation cannot fully explore how the war in Vietnam, the most important U.S. foreign policy topic of the late 1960s, fueled the rise of the conservative counterrevolution, the suggestive example of the Orrells indicates that the Right applied the lessons learned in the early-1960s Cold War crises in Africa to the U.S. fight in Southeast Asia.

"I have conducted my entire political life on a basis of color-blindness," declared Senator Barry M. Goldwater late in 1967, three years after he swept the Deep South's electoral votes in his ill-fated bid for the presidency and racked up just shy of 90 percent of Mississippi's white votes. His profession of color-blindness served as a preface to his views on U.S. policy toward Rhodesia, a nation of nearly 5 million black Africans where a quarter of a million whites held a complete monopoly on political and economic power. In November 1965 the white leader of Rhodesia, Ian Smith, issued a "unilateral declaration of independence" from Great Britain. Following British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's lead, President Lyndon Johnson placed sanctions on the southern African state—leaving Barry Goldwater, in his words, "dumbfounded."

Reminiscent of the conservative response to Katanga's declaration of independence half a decade earlier, the Republican giant thundered, "Surely Rhodesia has proved itself as well fitted for independence as any of the other nations who rush for independence we so eagerly backed," a subtle dig at the liberals who had urged U.S. support for the decolonization of other parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

Goldwater wrote these words while on a visit to the white-ruled state in southern Africa. Lauing Rhodesia's economic vibrancy and touting its virtues as a U.S. trade partner, he insisted that U.S. sanctions and the recently imposed U.N. boycott of Rhodesia were "indefensibly wrong." "It is wrong on the basis of principle. It is wrong on the basis of reason. It is wrong on the basis of plain
common sense. ... Rhodesians, all of them, regardless of race, creed, or color, are worthy of our support." In short, Goldwater extended the same foreign-policy perspective that had guided his thinking since the early 1960s: to win the Cold War, America had to stand by its friends and had to prioritize the fight against Communism over issues like racial apartheid or anticolonialism.

Yes, he acknowledged, "there are more white people than black people in the government of Rhodesia," but no international power intervened to force the United States to overcome its "dismal record" of racism, and, similarly, Rhodesia should be "left alone" to sort out its internal political problems. Goldwater considered Rhodesia a worthy American ally; the internal practices of the southern African nation should not matter so long as Rhodesia stayed on the correct side of the Communist-free world divide. True to his avowal of color-blindness, Goldwater cast no aspersions on Rhodesia's black population nor betrayed any hint of a racial slur. Yet his article on Rhodesia did slip in a reference to "a new reverse racism" that he detected in the United States—a trend, as he saw it, whereby liberals curtailed the rights of white Americans in order to extend rights to African Americans and other minority groups. Likening "reverse racism" in the U.S. to the situation in southern Africa, Goldwater implied that the U.S.–backed sanctions had unjustly trampled on the rights of white Rhodesian settlers, and he insinuated that a genuinely "color-blind" policy would protect the interests of "all" residents of southern Africa, "regardless of race, creed, or color."¹

However doggedly Goldwater maintained that his support for white-rulled Rhodesia was based on strategic national interest rather than racial politics, the American political coalition that coalesced in defense of Rhodesia confirms what this dissertation has aimed to demonstrate: southern opponents of racial equality easily integrated their political positions with the national conservative vision for American power in the world. The leading faces of the conservative counterrevolution could insist fiercely, as Goldwater did, that they stood for color-blind values; still, the racial dimensions of the Rhodesian issue were patently clear, and those who had vehemently defended the South’s system of Jim Crow segregation flocked to the conservative crusade to defend Rhodesia.

For instance, a reprint of Goldwater’s 1967 report from Rhodesia appeared in the monthly publication of a small but vigorous conservative group, the *American-Southern Africa Review*, formerly called the *Friends of Rhodesian Independence* newsletter. Formed in 1966, the Friends of Rhodesian Independence (FRI) roster of “co-chairmen” included J. Evetts Haley, a fiercely conservative Texan who had served on the board for the staunchly segregationist Federation for Constitutional Government (FCG), and the membership committee included Mary Dawson Cain, who had been an enthusiastic backer of the Mississippi Citizens’ Councils, and another FCG leader, Mrs. F. R. Carlton of Dallas, Texas. In their public appeals for American support for Rhodesia, the FRI was not so as concerned about maintaining a pretext of “color-blindness.” Instead, they spoke

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freely about "the hardy Anglo-Saxon pioneers of Rhodesia," who were valiantly struggling to withstand the onslaught of "the powerful 'liberal' news media...spewing their false propaganda." The FRI did not hesitate to portray Rhodesia as one of the sole surviving outposts of "civilization and Christianity" on the African continent, nor did the organization shy away from depicting white Rhodesia's enemies as "primitive," Communist-trained "terrorists" who sought nothing less than the "destruction of Western civilization."³

Small grassroots conservative organizations across the South and the nation rallied in support of Rhodesia. For southerners who were still inflamed and infuriated about the successful civil rights movement in the United States, the Rhodesia case allowed them to combine all the arguments they had been making since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. As they had argued in the case of Hawaiian statehood that cultural heritage determined a people's fitness for self-rule and democratic rights, white southerners disputed whether black Rhodesians were prepared or equipped to

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participate in self-government. As they had argued in the case of Katanga, white southerners claimed that white Rhodesia had demonstrated its ability to preserve “stability,” law and order, and responsibility; thus, they saw white Rhodesians as having earned the right to assert their independence. And, as they had after the postcolonial crisis in the Congo, white southerners contended that international sanctions grossly violated the “rights” of white Rhodesians—the settlers, pro-Rhodesian forces noted, who had brought civilization, Christianity, hospitals, clinics, and schools to southern Africa—just as they believed that American liberals cared only about the rights of African American and not about the rights of white, taxpaying, home-owning, law-abiding American citizens.

All of these perspectives blended seamlessly with the position that Goldwater and leaders of the national conservative movement had assumed on Rhodesia, further evidence that perspectives on U.S. Cold War policy helped facilitate the development of a new conservative coalition in American politics.

By the latter half of the 1960s, after the President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act in July 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. had moved his African American

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5 For an example of this way of thinking, see Howard E. Kershner, “A Realistic View of Rhodesia,” in American Southern African Review (January 1968), copy in folder 7, box 13, Anderson Papers, ORE. Kershner, mentioned in Chapter 6, was a conservative Christian, head of the Christian Freedom Foundation. His article, which openly praised the “white people who have pioneered in establishing civilization” in Rhodesia and claimed that the destruction of Rhodesia’s white regime would return the country to “savagery” and “witchcraft,” appeared directly after the reprint of Goldwater’s “color-blind” column in this issue of the newsletter.

6 See also American African Affairs Association, “Report on Rhodesia: April 1967,” copy in series A77, reel 12, RWC. The American African Affairs Association looked quite like a reconstituted version of the earlier American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters; its chairman were William A. Rusher (publisher of the National Review) and Dr. Max Yergan; other prominent members were Ernest van den Haag (chief investigator in the 1961 “fact-finding” mission to Katanga), Thomas Molnar (described in chapter 5, who urged the U.S. to back France in its fight with Algeria), L. Brent Bozell, Clifford Forster, Frank S. Meyer, and Russell Kirk.) James J. Kilpatrick was one of the authors of the 1967 report on Rhodesia.
freedom struggle into a new phase, transitioning into the urban North and
talking about economic inequality, poverty, and the U.S. war in Vietnam. White
resistance and counter-protests similarly shifted shape; open calls to preserve
racial segregation had given way to discussions about law-and-order, the
individual rights of homeowners, taxpayers, and parents, and freedom from
federal interference. Indeed, like Goldwater suggested, even erstwhile
segregationists often expressed these views in a color-blind fashion. Yet, as the
Rhodesia example attests, the basic foreign-policy framework that conservatives
constructed left plenty of room for the politics of race.
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